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The rise of the Islamic movements in Palestine

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THE RISE OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN PALESTINE

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Political Science

San Jose University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Omar M. Ahmad

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ABSTRACT

THE RISE OF ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN PALESTINE

By Omar M. Ahmad

The conflict over Palestine is rooted in deep ideological, religious, and national divisions. Tensions which had been building up for decades exploded in the 1987 Palestinian Uprising which led to the crystallization of a new thinking and of a new political and social structure in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Madrid peace process, which led to the September 1993 agreement between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel, largely overlooked this new structure and thus rather than lead to peace could potentially lead to more violence and instability.

This paper will explore such inconsistencies by placing the conflict in its historical perspective, analyzing the Intifada and its impact on both the Palestinians and Israel, and discussing the current peace process, explaining the reasons and motivations behind the process, what the accords mean for the Palestinians, and how the accords have and will interact with the post-Intifada Palestinian political and social structure.

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CHAPTER ONE

Background

Palestine

Palestine stretches along the eastern Mediterranean littoral bordering on Lebanon and Syria to the North, Jordan to the East, the Sinai Peninsula and the Gulf of Aqaba to the South. Palestine has historically been and remains a fertile land with good rainfall, a few small rivers, and water wells capable of irrigating a large stretch of the plain between Haifa in the North and Gaza to the South. In 1900, Palestine was populated with about 1 million people: most were Muslims, about ten percent Christians, and about 1.5% Jewish. All of them spoke the Arabic language and belonged to the Arabic culture and civilization.¹ However, Palestine has been ruled by various peoples in the past. Originally inhabited by the Canaanites and the Philistines, later rulers included Greek, Persian, Roman, Arab, European-Crusader, Hebrew, Egyptian, and Turk. In 635 A.D. a Muslim army conquered Palestine and, over time, most of the people in the region converted to Islam. The original people of Palestine have continued to live in their land for thousands of years. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, British forces under General Allenby occupied Palestine in 1917, beginning a new phase of the conflict initiated by the British, promoting the idea of settling Jews from Europe in Palestine.

The Zionists' Dream

The idea of creating a Jewish state in Palestine originated at the end of the 19th century with the notion of finding a homeland for the Jews of Europe. Theodore Herzl, a journalist who worked as the Paris correspondent of a Viennese newspaper, had largely become oblivious to his Jewish origins. The shock of French anti-Semitism, in the

Dreyfus case, convinced him, however, of the need to rescue the world's Jews from their historical plight.² In 1897 he established a Zionist organization then tried to negotiate, on its behalf, with the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. His aim was to purchase Palestine, but the Ottoman Sultan refused his request. Herzl was able to convince some of the British Cabinet Ministers of the need for a Jewish homeland. Some of those ministers were in powerful positions when Britain colonized Palestine after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. After the death of Herzl in 1904, Vladimir Jabotinsky, a Russian Jewish journalist, became the prime Zionist spokesman. Jabotinsky was able to create the first Jewish Legion to fight alongside the British army for the colonization of Palestine. During World War I the Zionists saw an opportunity to win support for their program and they succeeded in securing, from the British, a declaration known as the Balfour Declaration. Arthur Balfour, then British foreign secretary, wrote to the Jewish financier Lord Rothschild a letter that embodied the declaration, stating:

His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.³

The Balfour Declaration has been described by a prominent Jewish contemporary as a document in which "one nation solemnly promised to a second nation the country of a third."⁴ The Declaration had no legal validity; the British at no time owned the land nor did they possess any authority over any piece of Palestine. The Declaration was made even though the inhabitants of the land neither knew of nor approved of it. Balfour on August 11, 1919, in a memorandum to his successor Lord Cruzon wrote:

[For] in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country.... The four great powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.⁵

The Balfour Declaration conflicted with other agreements and promises the British made to the Arabs. Sharif Hussein of Mecca, the Ruler of the Hijaz, was asked by the British to revolt against the Ottomans, promising him a united Arab empire from Egypt to Iran in return. At the same time that the British were promising both the Zionists and Sharif Hussein control over Palestine, they along with the French agreed to divide the area between themselves in what is called the Sykes-Picot agreement.

The British Mandate Over Palestine

In the autumn of 1917 Allenby, the commanding officer of the British army, invaded Palestine and entered the city of Jerusalem on December 11, 1917, placing the city under martial law. The liberation of what Allenby called the most famous city in the world was what the Prime Minister of Britain wanted for Christmas.⁶ The League of Nations granted Britain the mandate over Palestine in 1922, depriving the Palestinians of self-government throughout the period of the mandate. The Zionists were against such self-government as long as Jews were the minority in Palestine.

The mandate facilitated Jewish immigration to Palestine; between 1923 and 1932 only slightly more than 80,000 European Jews entered Palestine.⁷ But as a result of Nazi Germany and Hitler's oppression of Jews the number of immigrants rose sharply so the Jews who were one-twelfth of the population became one-third of the population by 1946.

The Palestinians were in constant rebellion over both the Jewish immigration to Palestine and the British colonization of their land, with large uprisings occurring every

two to three years. Prisons were full of Palestinians who had committed no crime except rejecting the Zionist agenda and British support for Jewish immigration to Palestine. The British Government helped the Jews settle in Palestine in any way it could, but also functioned as a police state for the Palestinians.

The majority of Jews who immigrated to Palestine settled in the most fertile land, namely the northern part of Palestine known as Marj Ibn Amer and the coastal plains between Haifa and Yafa. These parts of Palestine have always been under intensive agriculture for centuries as witnessed by the reports of various travelers. Contrary to the Zionist claim that they made the desert bloom, they neither settled in the desert nor did they make it bloom.⁸

Zionist Acquisition of the Land

Most of the land that the Zionists were able to buy and occupy was state-owned land. The Ottomans who ruled Palestine previous to the British occupation had taken possession of a large percentage of the land from farmers who had been delinquent in paying land taxes to the government. Also some Governors of the Ottomans were able to pay the tax to the government and in effect get the deed of the land. After the British occupied Palestine they claimed that they inherited the state-owned land. The Jewish Agency had only to choose the land it wished to acquire and the British obliged by having it transferred to them. The Jewish Agency chose their lands in accordance with a militarily laid-out plan of settling strategically located areas. The "government" would affect in the land registry the following typical scenario: The Keren Kayemeth's representative would apply for leasing the land in question for 99 years at the rate of one Palestinian Pound (\$4.00) per year per one hundred acres of land. It is illegal for an

occupying power to sell state owned land, but through such methods, the British government was able to transfer large parts of land to the Jews.

It was becoming clear that Jewish immigration in Palestine was inspired, promoted, and financed by Zionist organizations with one political objective: the creation of a demographic nucleus that would lead to the domination of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state. The Palestinians opposed the flow of Jewish immigrants into their country. Their opposition took the form of protests, demonstrations, riots, civil disturbances, and in some cases military action.

Izz-Din Al-Qassam was a member of the ulama⁹ who organized military action against the British army in 1932 to protest its policy of settling Jews in Palestine. In 1935 Al-Qassam led a battle against the British army in Yabud, located in northern Palestine, where he lost his life and some of his people. This incident gave birth to the 1936-1939 uprising in which the Palestinian society, as a whole, revolted and turned all of Palestine into a no-man's land. The British Government responded by issuing the White Paper of 1939.

The White Paper of 1939

The 1936-1939 uprising convinced the British that continued Jewish immigration to Palestine would cause serious prejudice to the rights and position of the Palestinians. The British government subsequently issued a White Paper in 1939, in which it declared its intention to limit Jewish immigration to 75,000 persons over the next five years and grant Palestine its independence at the end of ten years. After the end of five years no further Jewish immigration would be allowed except with Arab consent. The Zionists mustered all the power they could to fight against the White Paper both inside and outside of Palestine. Under pressure from the United States and international

Jewish organizations, the British government referred the matter to the United Nations in 1947. Earlier in the decade, Ben-Gurion, one of the Zionist leaders in Palestine, had convened a Zionist Congress in New York with the participation of 600 delegates. The Congress had demanded that Palestine be established as a Jewish commonwealth integrated into the structure of the new democratic world. This Congress signaled a shift in the Zionist strategy from depending on the British to depending on the Americans in their quest to acquire and establish a homeland in Palestine.

United Nation Partition Plan

Following World War II, the Palestinians, as an integral part of the Arab World, were engulfed by a surging tide calling for general political liberation. The Zionists too began to agitate for repeal of the White Paper. The situation in Palestine deteriorated on all fronts. Defying the White Paper provisions, the Zionist leadership began using arms to forcefully help Jewish refugees from Europe enter Palestine. The British, who feared provoking the Palestinians into renewing their armed struggle, resisted Zionist incursions. The Zionists responded with terrorism. Groups such as the Haganah, the Stern Group and the Irgun, which had been previously founded in secret, began operations designed to humiliate individual British administrators and force them into submitting to their demands. Unable to sustain the situation, the British government referred the matter to the UN.

The subject of the future of Palestine was discussed at two sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1947. The UN Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP), appointed by the General Assembly, suggested two plans for the future of Palestine: a majority plan and a minority plan. The majority plan proposed the termination of the mandate, the partition of Palestine with the subsequent creation of an

Arab state, a Jewish state, and a corpus separatum for the city of Jerusalem which would come under a special international regime to be administered by the United Nations. The Arab and Jewish states were to be linked by an economic union. The minority plan also envisioned the termination of the mandate, but proposed the establishment of a federal state consisting of an Arab and Jewish state with Jerusalem as its capitol.

The Arabs opposed both plans on the grounds that it was illegal to grant aliens and foreigners parts of their land, while the Zionists mobilized all of their forces to secure a UN vote in favor of the partition. They were able to enlist the support of President Truman, who put the weight of the United States government behind the plan, against the wishes and advice of his Secretary of State and other advisors. The partition passed the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947 by a vote of 33 to 13 with 10 abstentions. The partition plan was unjust to the Arabs and deemed iniquitous, both in terms of population and in terms of land ownership. In terms of population, the Jews constituted in 1946 less than one-third of the inhabitants of Palestine. Only one-tenth were original inhabitants of the land and the rest newly emigrated from Europe.¹⁰

As for land ownership, the Palestinians in 1945, owned more than 26 million donoms,¹¹ while the Jews owned almost a million and a half donoms of land. Jewish ownership represented about eight percent of the land, but the partition granted them almost two-thirds. The partition resolution was received with a wave of protests and demonstrations from the Arab side and jubilation on the part of the Zionist Jews. The British government subsequently decided to end their mandate over Palestine in May of 1948. As the British withdrawal took place, Arabs and Jews found themselves on different levels of preparation. The Arab side could muster little more than emotional speeches because of their severe lack of preparation and long-years of British policy against them, while the Jews had 100,000 trained men ready to seize the land and take

over the country with two major aims: attaining more land and removing the Arab population through policies of ethnic cleansing.

The Haganah and its shock troops, the Palmach, had been training for this day for years. They pounced upon unarmed Palestinian villages and wiped out several of them prior to the official end of the mandate on May 15, 1948. Through their terrorism, and the massive massacre of the innocent--including women and children--they caused many Palestinians to become separated from their lands to save their lives. In most cases Jewish army trucks eagerly transported them beyond the borders the Zionists had set for themselves. The Zionist argument that Palestinians left by themselves after the Arab leaders called upon them to vacate their villages has no basis in fact. People do not just leave their homes, belongings, houses, food, and money because of a call. It was the terror, the bombs, and the bullets that drove those innocent people out of their homes. Massacres of children, women, and even animals convinced the Palestinians to leave their homes and vacate Palestine. For example, in the city of Dir-Yassin, all the men, women, children, and animals had been massacred, sending a clear message to all nearby villagers.

The Zionists wanted an exclusive Jewish state, therefore they drove the Palestinians out of their homes. French Orientalist Maxime Rodinson, himself a Jew, observed that to establish the Jewish character of the state is "the prime aim and postulate of Zionist ideology."¹² Dr. John Davis, former commissioner general of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), has said that "the extent to which the refugees were savagely driven out by the Israelis as part of a deliberate master plan has been insufficiently recognized."¹³ John Glubb, the English commander of the Jordanian army, described what he saw in these words:

It is quite essential to grasp the unique conditions of the struggle in Palestine. We have witnessed many wars in this century in which one country seeks to impose its power on others. But in no war, I think, for many centuries past, has the objective been to remove a nation from its country and to introduce another and entirely different race to occupy its lands, houses, and cities and live there. This peculiarity lends to the Palestine struggle a desperate quality which bears no resemblance to any other war in modern history.¹⁴

The number of Palestinians displaced in 1948 has been estimated at between 750,000 and 1 million persons, the UN in 1950 put the number at 950,000 persons.¹⁵

The United Nations, seeing itself in large part responsible for what happened in Palestine and for the suffering of the refugees, made a small effort to restore peace to the area by passing General Assembly resolution 194 on December 11, 1948. The resolution which Israel refused to implement, stated that:

The refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property for those choosing not to return, and for the loss of, or damage to, property which, under principles of authorities responsible.¹⁶

The situation was explosive for years to come. Israel continued its military buildup; it adopted a policy to subdue the Arab states by massive raids, attacks, and reprisals. The 1956 joint attack with England and France against Egypt was an example of such attacks on the Arab states.

CHAPTER TWO

Recent History

The 1967 War

A little more than ten years after the Suez crisis, Israel again went to war against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Falsely attributing to Egypt an air raid on June 5, 1967, Israel attacked Egypt and Syria, destroying the bulk of the two countries' air forces while still on the ground.¹⁷

The 1967 war further aggravated the Palestinian refugee problem. The war led to Israeli occupation of the rest of Palestine and resulted in the displacement and expulsion of 410,000 Palestinians from what is called the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The United Nations sought to resolve the problem, but was unsuccessful because of the rift between the United States and the United Nations over Israeli action and aggression. Israel quickly began to colonize the newly conquered land and built settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, defying all international laws and all UN resolutions, particularly resolution 242. The Security Council adopted resolution 242 to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict; the termination of all claims or states of belligerency; and the acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all states in the area and their right to live in peace with secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force.

All efforts to get Israel to withdraw from the lands occupied in the 1967 war failed. Egypt and Syria opened hostilities against Israel on October 6, 1973 in an effort to recover their pre-1967 territories. Egypt was able to destroy the Bar-Lev wall east of the

Suez Canal and deeply penetrate into the Sinai desert. The Syrians also advanced into Syrian territories which were occupied by Israel. However the United States organized a large-scale emergency airlift of tanks, missiles, and aircraft to Israel. Also the United States supplied military information to the Israelis and helped them counterattack the Egyptians and successfully reverse some of the Egyptian and Syrian advances.

Camp David Accords

As an outcome of the 1973 War, Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt, became convinced that direct negotiations with Israel needed to be undertaken. Sadat took a surprising and controversial visit to Israel which ultimately led to the Camp David Accord in 1978, with the help of American President Jimmy Carter. As a result, Israel withdrew from the Sinai in 1982 but remained occupying the whole of Palestine and the Golan Heights. Furthermore, Jewish settlements continued to be established in the Occupied Territories, creating a great obstacle to future peace.

The Palestine Liberation Organization

With the support of Arab leaders, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in 1964 to represent the Palestinians in calling for the liberation of Palestine within its British mandate boundaries.¹⁸ Fateh (the Palestine National Liberation Movement), who at that time believed in liberating all of Palestine, took over the PLO in 1969. Fateh, the dominant movement controlling the political and military decisions of the PLO, is now in a struggle with HAMAS over the future of Palestine.

It was not until the late 1950s that some Palestinians began organizing themselves instead of waiting for the Arab leaders, especially Egyptian President Nasser, to liberate Palestine.¹⁹ By 1964, Yasser Arafat and his comrades had gathered the

nucleus of a guerrilla organization. In 1965, Fateh began to undertake some military operations in Palestine.²⁰ After the 1967 war, Fateh announced that it was transferring its headquarters from Jordan to the West Bank. Arms and explosives were ferried across the border. Fateh men went into the villages to try to arouse the peasantry. After a short period, Fateh renewed its operations on a larger scale than before the war.²¹ The Palestinian fighters, known as the fedayeen, began to draw enthusiastic applause in the Arab world. Inevitably, the fedayeen soon felt strong enough to take over the PLO, the institution through which the regimes had tried to keep them under control. It was not, however, until the Battle of Karamah that the fedayeen achieved their real breakthrough.²² On March 21, 1968, in an attempt to crush Palestinian resistance forces based in the Jordanian-controlled East Bank, Israeli forces descended upon Palestinian bases at Karamah Camp. The Israeli forces retreated, and Karamah, which means "dignity", became a symbol of hope following the humiliating defeat of Arab armies in the past.

Fateh envisioned establishing a "Democratic State of Palestine." All Jews in Palestine, not just those who were already there before 1917 and 1948, would be entitled to stay. In June 1970, the Palestine National Council (PNC) advocated a secular democratic state in historic Palestine for Jews, Christians and Muslims.²³

As the Fedayeen movement grew in size and in the number of its competing organizations, so did the frequency of its operations. Most of them were mounted by Fateh. Also, a whole range of ancillary services; clinics, hospitals, schools, and orphanages for the children of "martyrs" sprang into being. Their public relations departments were devoted to publishing fedayeen literature in many languages. Internationally, they won a certain amount of credit for what was seen as a more civilized, albeit hopelessly unrealistic, presentation of their case-- the democratic state.²⁴

However, the PLO had established itself once and for all as a political force, champions of their own cause which they promoted not only in defiance of Israel, but, where necessary, of the Arab regimes. Militarily, the fedayeen were never able to defeat Israel or to cause very serious destruction. But, they sought to disguise this fact from the world and from themselves. Another cause for the PLO weakness was the Arab regimes, who spawned whole new organizations of their own to compete with Fateh. The continuing severity and efficiency of Israel in using their complete aerial supremacy against the fedayeen along the Jordanian borders and in Jordanian villages was an external cause for the fedayeen's military shortcomings.²⁵ In September 1970, King Hussein of Jordan, who feared the increasing power of the fedayeen--many of whom proclaimed their desire to replace the Hashemite Kingdom with their own revolutionary order--waged a fierce battle against them. The Palestinian forces withdrew from Jordan and established their new bases in Lebanon.

In January 1973, the Palestine National Council (PNC), under the leadership of Fateh, called for an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip--approximately 23% of historic Palestine.²⁶ In November 1974, PLO chairman Arafat addressed the UN General Assembly and expressed the Palestinian national will to struggle for self determination as well as work for peace. In December 1976, Arafat expressed willingness to establish the Palestinian state on any liberated Palestinian soil.²⁷ In March 1979, the PLO opposed the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, which had no provision for a Palestinian State or PLO participation. It was also rejected by the vast majority of Arab leaders and people.

In April 1981, the PNC approved a plan calling for an international peace conference, Palestinian statehood, and security for all states in the region, including Israel, within the 1967 armistice lines. After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982,

which destroyed most of the Palestinian bases in southern Lebanon, the PLO forces left Lebanon; dispersing their forces in different Arab countries. American President Ronald Reagan, directly thereafter, announced his plan for peace. The Arab League Summit in Morocco also announced a plan which was accepted by the PLO and PNC in later months.²⁸ Clearly, pressure from the superpowers, Europe, and the Arab countries; lack of direct power over Israel; and the increasing influence of Israel in the region, pushed the PLO to make more concessions in order to participate in any kind of peace process.

Inside Palestine, Fateh--starting in the early seventies--had begun working to establish its institutional bases among the Palestinians. Fateh came to control the budgets and administrations of many important public institutions in Palestine. Most of the universities, Arabic newspapers, cultural and study centers, folklore and theater groups, and social institutions were either established or supported by Fateh. Also, Fateh controlled the labor unions and student governments. The Fateh organization inside Palestine took direct orders from their leadership outside the country.

When the mass uprising in December 1987, known as the Intifada, erupted inside Palestine, the PLO at first was undecided about whether it was appropriate to support what could be a short term phenomenon. However when they saw that the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were intent on continuing their Intifada and that a different organization, HAMAS, was in the leadership position--thus challenging their leadership of the Palestinians--they decided to become actively involved in the Intifada.²⁹ The Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU), representing the PLO in the occupied lands, issued its first communiqué on January 8, 1988. The Intifada gave the PLO an instrument to politically pressure the Israelis and to push for more peace efforts from the United States and the rest of the world. The PLO told the United States and Israel that the Muslim fundamentalists were a threat to peace

in the region, and if a peaceful solution could not be achieved through the PLO, a lot of changes would take place in the region which would hurt US and Israeli interests.³⁰

To help pave the way for PLO participation in the peace process, the PNC in November 1988 proclaimed an independent Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, accepted Resolution 242 as well as a UN-sponsored international peace conference, and rejected terrorism.³¹ In December 1988, after the US announced its intention of opening talks with the PLO, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling for an international peace conference. In May 1989, Arafat declared that the Palestine National Covenant (which called for the total liberation of historic Palestine from the Israelis) was no longer valid.³² As a result, the US and the European countries agreed to let the PLO represent the Palestinians in the peace conference. Two years later, in October 1991, after the Gulf War which increased US influence in the region, the first peace conference meeting was held in Madrid, Spain. During a year of negotiations, the PLO continued to make more and more concessions to Israel and agreed to stop the Intifada as well as to control HAMAS inside Palestine. The effect the PLO negotiations had on the people inside Palestine was reflected in the struggle between HAMAS and the PLO.³³

Life Under Occupation

From 1967 to 1982, Israel's military government demolished 1338 Palestinians homes in the West Bank alone. Over the period, more than 300,000 Palestinians were detained without trial for various periods by the Israeli security forces. In the Occupied Territories it was illegal to fly the Palestinian flag, publish or possess "subversive" literature, or hold a press conference without permission. The Israeli government which had long been treating the Palestinians, living in the West Bank and Gaza, as second class citizens--using them as slave labor and depriving them of education, health care,

and other social amenities--became all the more vengeful and repressive after its shameful defeat in Lebanon. The Israeli government ran bulldozers through Palestinian camps, flattened shanty homes, and made roads for the use of Israeli security forces. At the same time, it built numerous houses for Jewish settlers in the occupied territories. Any demonstrations and protests by Palestinians, living in the West Bank and Gaza, against atrocities and brutalities were suppressed by force. Despite worldwide condemnation for the violation of human rights, the Israeli government continued following an "Iron Fist" policy based on tyranny and oppression. A whole new generation of Palestinians was born in the West Bank and Gaza Strip after two decades of Israeli occupation. These youth, who grew up under harsh and sub-human living conditions, learned to fight for their rights and freedom through non-violent means.

The Israeli occupation had become one of the most despotic regimes on earth. As in all totalitarian regimes, it is the secret police which wield absolute power over the population: in this case, the Israeli secret police, over the Palestinians living in the territories. The formal name of the Israeli secret police is "General Security System." The popular name is its Hebrew acronym, Shabak. The agency is rigidly compartmentalized into two separate branches: one dealing with Israeli citizens (whether living in Israel or in the territories) and the other, more important branch, dealing with the inhabitants of the territories. In the territories, there is no need to bring a suspect before a judge within 48 hours. He can be kept incommunicado for as long as 18 days without seeing a judge and can be denied access to a lawyer. The authorities can ask a military judge to remand him several times for up to a maximum of 90 days. He can be denied visits from his family.

Shabak systematically inculcates racism into its agents during their training process. This training methodology has been discussed in interviews granted to the

Hebrew press by retired Shabak agents, usually in the wake of scandals which have occurred regularly since 1987. The agents description of the "Arab mentality" in interviews, was obviously parroted from Shabak training. It is supposedly shared "by all of the Arabs" and differs both from the "Jewish mentality" and the "mentality" of other nations.

CHAPTER THREE

The Intifada

December 8, 1987

In November, 1987, at a summit of Arab Leaders in Amman, Jordan, the various Arab kings and presidents indicated for the first time that their primary interest was not Palestine but the Iraq-Iran war. The people living in the occupied land had already suffered twenty years of humiliation and suppression and were angered that their cause had been almost neglected by the Arab leaders in the Amman summit. This signaled that the time had come for a revolt inside the land of Palestine. On December 8, 1987, an Israeli army tank transporter smashed into a line of cars driven by Arab workers who had just passed the Erez military checkpoint at the northern entrance to the Gaza Strip. Four workers were crushed to death and seven were seriously injured in the accident--witnessed by hundreds of laborers returning from jobs in Israel. Three of the dead men were from nearby Jabalya refugee camp. Their funerals that night turned into a huge demonstration of 10,000 camp residents who contended that the accident was intentional retaliation for the killing of an Israeli merchant the day before. The next day, several leaders of popular and professional institutions in Gaza held a press conference in West Jerusalem with the Israeli league for Human Rights to discuss the deteriorating economic and security situation. While they were speaking, reports came in of more demonstrations in Jabalya camp and the shooting death of a twenty-year-old man, the first martyr of the Intifada.

Gaza Strip residents fueled the uprising with demonstrations that sometimes numbered in the tens of thousands. During the demonstrations, the Palestinians carried

flags and symbolic coffins, chanted various nationalist slogans, and vowed to avenge the latest martyr. Youths controlled neighborhoods in the cities and closed off the entrances to their camps with stone barricades and burning tires. When soldiers entered; residents pelted them with stones, debris, and petrol bombs. Local merchants closed down their shops and laborers who worked in the 1948-occupied land refused to go to their jobs. The power of the Palestinians came from their sheer numbers and open defiance of Israeli authority. The demonstrators chose their targets carefully; setting afire military vehicles and Israeli buses, attacking police stations, smashing Israeli bank windows, and even storming an Israeli army outpost in the middle of Jabalya. On days of total strikes, when transportation was also supposed to halt, even cars bearing Gaza's distinctive gray license plates might come under a hail of stones. Yet there were no attacks on any of a dozen Israeli resort settlements and no Israeli fatalities--or even serious injuries--from the several million stones that must have been tossed.

Gaza's Palestinians, the majority of whom have lived in camps for forty years, knew there would be a terrible price to pay for their open defiance of Israeli rule. Authorities tried to confront every protest with live ammunition, then found there were too many people and too many incidents to deal with easily. Troops were doubled, then tripled and eventually increased to five times their usual number.

By mid-January, tents were set up in Ansar II detention camp in Gaza City to hold 800 detainees. Another 400 youths were sent north into Israel, to a military prison, where conditions were equally appalling.

Intifada in the West Bank

At a Birzeit University rally on December 20, 1987, students, many of whom had not yet undertaken activities in support of the uprising, intoned the names of

Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza: Balata, Jabalya, and Shati. A clandestine radio station began broadcasts calling itself 'The Voice of Jerusalem - a Palestinian Arab broadcast for the liberation of land and man'. Everyday the extremely popular radio peppered its broadcasts with odes like 'O, Hebron' and the dramatic reading of names of towns and villages. On December 21, the leadership of the Intifada called for a general strike in the West Bank as well as in Gaza, marking the first day that the West Bank officially entered the uprising. The participation of East Jerusalem Palestinians in the uprising and their open insistence that East Jerusalem was occupied territory became another major setback for the Israelis. On January 23 authorities invoked emergency powers in East Jerusalem and imposed a curfew in the city for the first time since 1967. The violent clashes since then have dispelled the myth of a unified city. Increased Israeli violence and collective punishment served to popularize resistance. New sectors of Palestinian society actively participated in resistance activities. Shopkeepers, for example, throughout the uprising have played an important role in maintaining the momentum of the resistance by their strict adherence to daily and general strikes. After only three hours of business, shops closed at 11 A.M. on a daily basis. Israeli-made products increasingly disappeared from shops as the call, from the leadership of the uprising, for a boycott widened.

Leaders of the Intifada

Three main groups have led the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza. The Unified Command Leadership, which consists of all the major PLO factions namely Fateh, the PFLP, the DFLP, and the PPP. The second, the Islamic Resistance Movement

(HAMAS), which was established in 1987 in its organizational form but had previously existed in the occupied lands in other forms. The third major group is the Islamic Jihad based mainly in Gaza. All three organizations distribute monthly directives in the West Bank and Gaza, calling upon the people to undertake strikes and take actions against the occupiers.

It was natural for the Unified Leadership to emerge because every member of the Unified Leadership was actively involved in PLO activities in Tunis and the PLO has traditionally worked as the Palestinian peoples most notable political organization. The new leaders of the Intifada were the Islamists who emerged after forty years of working underground in universities and colleges. Their publications and teachings had emphasized the importance of remodeling the Muslim individual and the necessity of combating the corruptive influences of the secular and godless society in which the Palestinian Muslims were forced to live.

The main difference between HAMAS and the PLO is the manner in which they view Palestine. HAMAS considers negotiations with the enemy over the land of Palestine--which they define as all the lands between the Mediterranean sea and the Jordan river--an act of treason. Therefore, HAMAS did not support the Peace Conference as a way to regain part of Palestine. Instead, they called for the liberation of the whole of Palestine. The Islamic Jihad held very similar views on the negotiations.

Over time many conflicts have developed between HAMAS and the PLO over issues ranging from the control of universities to the calling of strikes. All of these conflicts were resolved by the leadership of the PLO, outside Palestine, who met with the leaders of HAMAS to discuss their problems and agree on an action plan to resolve them. For example, the PLO ceded control over the Islamic University in Gaza to HAMAS. Recently the PLO invited HAMAS to join the Palestine National Council, but rejected

HAMAS' request for forty percent of the Council's seats, a figure which HAMAS claims represents their true strength in the occupied territories.

What Did the Palestinians Accomplish in the Intifada

The Intifada was in many ways a blessing to the Palestinians. It reinforced the Palestinian people's feelings of identity and gave them hope. It increased the people's aspirations to live in freedom with pride and dignity.

One of the results of the Intifada was the Declaration of the Palestinian State in exile. In 1989 the Palestinian National Council (PNC) declared a State in exile and opened the way for the PLO to participate in the Peace Conference, which was later held under International sponsorship with the help of the US, Russia, and the United Nations. The Intifada, therefore, accomplished a number of unprecedented things and strongly influenced the future of the Middle East as a whole. First, Palestinian collaborators who had previously supported the occupation were encircled and gradually rendered ineffective, as the entire mass of people under occupation came together in a bloc that opposed occupation. Even the class of merchants and shopkeepers played a major role in this transformation. Secondly, the old social organizations that depended on the notables, on large families, and on the traditional hierarchy were largely marginalized. A new set of institutions emerged and provided alternative social and economic structures for fields which had formerly been dominated by the occupying regime; such as health, education, agriculture and the provision of an adequate food and water supply. The new alternative social situation that emerged was national and independent. It represented a first step in the appearance of the Palestinian state, formally announced in Algiers on November 15. Thirdly, the role of Palestinian women was substantially altered. The Palestinian women had been seen essentially as a helper and a housewife--in short, a non-

public person in a male-dominated public domain. During the Intifada, however, women came to the fore as equal partners in the struggle. They confronted Israeli troops and shared in decision-making. No longer left at home and at the margins of the struggle against occupation, Palestinian women fought the Israeli occupation--like their men--with every means they had available to them.

The Uprising's Impact on Israel

The Palestinian uprising stripped away the credibility of Israel's external propaganda and its internal ideological defense mechanisms, as political rationality steadily retreated before the state's frantic response to the anti-colonial revolt in the occupied territories. This led to a polarization which penetrated all of Israel's political parties, broke the existing boundaries of the national political consensus and forced the Israeli society to confront difficult questions. As the uprising continued, the fissure in Israeli society became deeper because of two basic issues: negotiations with the PLO and recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination, including the establishment of a state. The Intifada made the Palestinian question the primary agenda item for the first time ever in an Israeli electoral campaign.

Israel's political groups proved unable to formulate a coherent response. During the Intifada some groups in the Likud moved closer to Tehiya and others toward the right wing of Labor. Similarly, some groups in Labor moved closer to Mapam and the Citizens' Rights Movement while others moved towards the Likud. This polarization within each bloc created a new center in the Israeli political structure comprising of groups from both the Likud and Labor who opposed negotiations with the PLO and a separate Palestinian state, but also refused to annex the occupied territories. This was the political foundation of the "national unity" government.

Ariel Sharon, the former Housing Minister, articulated the program of this new center in March 1988, when the Labor Party began to speak of "American pressure" in the form of the Shultz initiative. Sharon drew a line which, he said, no amount of US government pressure could breach. According to Sharon, the Likud and Labor agreed on the most important points concerning the future of the occupied territories: (1) United Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel; (2) The Jordan River will remain forever Israel's eastern border; (3) No non-Israeli military force will be allowed to enter the West Bank of the Jordan River; (4) Israel is responsible for the internal and external security of the land to the west of Jordan; (5) There will be no foreign sovereignty in "Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip"; (6) There will be no Palestinian state west of Jordan; (7) Settling the refugee question should be part of any solution; (8) The Golan Heights are an integral part of Israel; and (9) The Arabs of the occupied territories should maintain their present nationality and should be given relatively broad authority to administer their internal affairs without interference.³⁴

The recomposition that drew together factions from Likud and Labor to form this new center drove others from Labor to the Zionist left and from the Likud to the extreme right. The new right consists of groups from the Likud, the National Religious Party, Tzomet, Moledet, and Tehiya. They demanded annexation of the occupied territories and regarded Jordan as the Palestinian state. They rejected autonomy for the territories and called for increasing the suffering of the Palestinians in the territories until total "transfer" could be achieved. These parties were responsible for the settlers' lobby. The new Zionist left included groups from Labor, Mapam, and the CRM. They were the first to voice their readiness to negotiate with the PLO under certain conditions, accepting Israeli withdrawal from most of the territories and recognizing the principle of partition. A fourth political bloc, the non-Zionist ultra-orthodox parties (Agudat Yisra'el,

Shas, and Degel Hatorah), placed political issues as a third or fourth priority and maintained a flexible position on the territories which resulted in a right-wing atmosphere during the early years of the Intifada. The fifth bloc in Israeli politics is composed of the non-Zionist left parties -- the Communist Party, the Progressive List for Peace and the Arab Democratic Party. They have consistently supported a Palestinian state in the occupied territories.

The Israeli Response to the Uprising

The Likud relied on one basic propaganda line: calling for direct negotiations with the Arabs and simultaneously anticipating their results -- "peace for peace" as Shamir continually declared. Despite the uprising, the Likud introduced no change in its political program. However, it would be wrong to assume that the Likud was not affected by the uprising. During the uprising, Moshe Arens, Dan Meridor, and others from the Likud proposed "unilateral autonomy," a plan in which they rejected annexation and proposed to leave the question of sovereignty open. The Labor party seemed confused during the uprising. The right wing of Labor accused Foreign Minister Peres of being defeatist and dragging Israel into an international conference adventure more dangerous than the status quo; while the left wing accused Defense Minister Rabin of carrying out Likud's policy in the territories. Labor's political line was based on the "demographic threat"--fear that the Arabs might become a majority in Israel if Israel insisted on keeping all the occupied land.

The program of the extreme right-wing parties, religious and secular, presented the clearest response to the uprising: 1) suppress the uprising with all necessary force; 2) increase settlements; 3) annex the territories; and 4) "persuade" the Palestinians to emigrate. The uprising precipitated an important change in Mapam and the CRM.

Mapam had left the Labor Alignment in 1984 when the previous national unity government was formed and ran independently of the Labor party for the first time since 1965.

The Intifada and Security

The uprising sparked an unprecedented debate over the strategic importance of the occupied territories for Israel. Hundreds of high-ranking officers contributed to this discussion through dozens of interviews and symposia. One group of senior officials believed that the occupied territories represented the most important strategic defense factor for Israel in a coming war and should be kept under Israeli control even if this prevented peace. This view was especially strong in the early years of the Intifada when peace with the Arab World was not on the agenda. These officers believed that Israel should adopt Kissinger's notion that no-war arrangements are better for Israel than peace agreements. A second group of officers was willing to give up most of the territories with certain security arrangements. A third group of officers regarded the territories as a burden threatening internal security and increasing the likelihood of a future war. They called for negotiations with the PLO and did not object to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The Intifada and the Economy

While Israeli statements minimized the impact of the Intifada on their economy, there was also a certain Palestinian illusion in the early stage of the uprising that they would be able to deliver a heavy blow to the Israeli economy by instituting total disobedience. This notion, derived from an abstract understanding of civil disobedience, was divorced from the actual situation. The struggle against the occupation has

essentially been a political struggle with important economic, social, and cultural aspects- not an economic struggle with political aspects. Strikes, boycotts, and refusing to pay taxes are primarily political tactics to mobilize as many people as possible into a struggle against occupation. But the results did indeed transform the occupation into an economic burden for Israel. Shlomo Gazit summarized the Israeli economic policy in the West Bank at the beginning of the occupation: 1) "Political and security" considerations should be placed above economic considerations. 2) While planning for economic activity in the territories, priority should be given to the needs of the Israeli economy. 3) There should be no Israeli investments in the economy of the territories. 4) The Palestinian economy should have safety valves (open bridges, availability of work in the land taken by Israel in 1948).

Agricultural products constitute about one-third of the West Bank's production. The proportion of the West Bank labor force engaged in agriculture has declined from 46% in 1968 to 27% in 1985, and in Gaza from 32% to 18%. West Bank exports constitute only 2-4% of Israel's agricultural exports. In the West Bank, 54% of the wage-earning labor force is employed in Israel, while in Gaza the figure is 67%. In 1986 Israel's exports to the occupied territories were valued at \$780.3 million, about ten percent of its total exports and 1.5% of the Israeli GNP. The same year, the occupied territories exports to Israel amounted to \$289.1 million. Israel collected \$383 million in taxes from the occupied territories. The residents of the occupied territories also pay a value-added-tax on all purchases and services from Israel. Palestinian workers in Israel save Israeli employers about \$500 million due to lower labor costs. This does not include the large amount of money the Israeli treasury saves in social security benefits that Palestinians do not receive despite deductions from their paychecks. In all, the Palestinian laborers account for \$1 billion in net revenue for Israel. While the balance of

economic power could not enable the Intifada to defeat Israel economically, it did make the occupation a losing economic proposition for Israel. In March 1988 the Governor of the Bank of Israel gave a press conference in which he minimized Israel's economic losses due to the Intifada.

Palestinians boycotted Israeli products whenever an alternative local product could be found. Demand for fresh beef dropped by 70%, creating a crisis for Israeli ranchers, because Arabs are the main consumers of fresh (as opposed to imported, frozen) meat. In response, the army considered providing troops with fresh meat instead of the frozen meat they usually consumed. By March 1988, the purchasing power of Arab residents of the territories had decreased by 35% due to diminished income and the boycott of Israeli products.

On December 15, 1988, the Finance Minister estimated that production losses during the first year of the Intifada were equivalent to 2.5% of the total production of the business sector. Three sectors were especially hard hit: textiles, construction, and tourism. The Israeli textile industry depends considerably on subcontractors with small and medium size workshops in Israel which employ Palestinians. The loss of production in the construction sector--caused by the absence of Palestinian workers--was estimated at \$16 million monthly, equivalent to eight percent of the economic activity of the sector.

Through March 1988, tourist reservations registered a four percent drop because reservations had been booked before the Intifada. In April, Jerusalem hotel reservations were down forty percent compared with the previous year. The ministries of finance and tourism in August 1988 set up a special team which allocated \$2.2 million for publicity and marketing and postponed all payments due to the government from hotel owners. For all of 1988 the decline in reservations compared with 1987 was expected to total fifteen percent--a direct loss of \$110-150 million to the hotel industry alone. The

comprehensive loss in the tourist industry in 1988 may have been as high as \$500 million.

Former Minister of Economy Gad Ya'acobi estimated that the total cost of the Intifada to the Israeli economy in 1988 exceeded \$900 million. But the economic aspects of the Intifada must be set in their political context. As more and more Israelis refrained from residing in the territories and others left, the Ministry of Housing decided to increase the construction of apartments in the territories by 33%, from 1500 units in 1987, to 2000 in 1988.

The Intifada did not accomplish anything significant in the area of foreign economic pressure on Israel. The refusal of the European Parliament to approve the EEC agreement with Israel in March 1988 was not based on political convictions. The parliament later approved the agreement by a vote of 314 to 25 with 9 abstentions. The uprising had no impact on the \$3 billion of US aid Israel received in 1988.

Israel's request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees from the United States was initially rejected by the US government because of settlements in the occupied territories. The US insisted that if Israel wanted the loan money, it had to stop building settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Peace Conference

One direct result of the Intifada was the peace conference held in Madrid then moved to the United States. Israel and other Arab states sat together to discuss the Middle East conflict. Palestinians from the occupied territories were included in the talks, which took place under the supervision of the United States and Russia. Israel refused to attend the conference under United Nations sponsorship. Also, the PLO was officially excluded from the talks because Israel, at the time, refused to deal with the

PLO as a representative of the Palestinian people. But everyone knew that the Palestinian negotiating team would not have attended the conference without the approval of the PLO and its leader Yassir Arafat.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Islamic Resistance Movement

The Muslim Brotherhood Movement

Four years after the official collapse of the Ottoman Empire, an Egyptian school teacher, Sheikh Hassan Al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood Association, March of 1928 in Ismaeliah. The Brotherhood Movement was not specifically or exclusively political. Hassan Al-Banna wrote:

You are not a benevolent society, nor a political party, nor a local organization having limited purposes. Rather, you are a new soul in the heart of this nation to give it life by means of the Quran....When asked what it is for which you call, reply that it is Islam, the message of Mohammed, the religion that contains within it government, and has as one of its obligations freedom. If you are told that you are political, answer that Islam admits no such distinction. If you are accused of being revolutionaries, say, "We are voices for right and for peace in which we dearly believe, and of which we are proud. If you rise against us or stand in the path of our message, then we are permitted by God to defend ourselves against your injustice."³⁵

The Muslim Brotherhood began as a movement for the reform of individual and social morality, based on an analysis of what was wrong with Muslim societies. Members believe that laws of Islam could provide the basis of society in the modern world.

With respect to an international agenda, the Brothers believe that any people who say Islam is part of their homeland; and because Palestine was suffering the most, the Brothers gave it special attention.³⁶ In 1935, Sheikh Hassan Al-Banna sent Abdul-Rahman Al-Banna and Mohammad Al-Hakeem to establish a branch of his organization in Palestine. They were met by Amin Al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who

expressed his thanks to the Brotherhood's solidarity with the Palestinian people. With the outbreak of the 1936-1939 uprising, the Brothers established a special committee to support the Palestinians. The committee distributed materials about the plight of the Palestinians; organized demonstrations, petition-signing, and fund-raising efforts; and lobbied the Egyptian government to intervene on the Palestinians' behalf.³⁷

By 1947, more than 25 branches of the Brotherhood Society were established in different cities and villages of Palestine, with membership estimated at around 20,000.³⁸ In the 1948 war, members of the Brotherhood Society participated in the fight against the Zionists. Many Brothers came as volunteers from other countries to help in the Palestinian struggle.

The 1967 Arab defeat, by Israel, marked the demise of pan-Arab nationalism and the rise of an Islamic revival. The PLO's adjustments of its long-term objective--liberating all of Palestine, to a more narrow one of establishing a West Bank-Gaza state, and finally to a confederation with Jordan--was confusing and disappointing for many youth in the occupied territories. On the other hand, the Islamic movement gave a clear vision for the future and a well-defined answer to the Palestinian question.³⁹ Furthermore, the Islamic revival was helped by the fact that the Arab-Islamic culture and religion did not separate politics from religion.

HAMAS

HAMAS, a quasi-acronym for Harakat al-Muqqawwama al-Islamia or The Islamic Resistance Movement, issued three communiqués in the first few weeks of the uprising: the first, on December 14, 1987, called for an escalation of resistance; the second, at the end of December, chastised the Arab governments for their silence; and the third, praised the popular unrest.⁴⁰ Leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood movement held

their first meeting on December 8, 1987, to discuss the strategy of the main incident that had begun the uprising. The meeting was held at the house of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the founder of the Mujama al-Islami in Gaza, and attended by six leaders of the Brotherhood Movement in Gaza.⁴¹ The six leaders were Dr. Abdel Aziz Rantisi, Dr. Ibrahim Al-Yazuri, Sheikh Salih Shihada, Isa al-Nashar, Mohammad Shama, and Abdel Fattah Dukhan. They agreed to form a separate entity to deal with the new situation in Gaza, which would be loosely connected to the Brotherhood Movement. The newly formed organization was named HAMAS.

On February 11, 1988, a leaflet was issued identifying HAMAS as the Muslim Brotherhood's arm of strength. HAMAS' active role in the uprising and the growing awareness of its relationship to the Brotherhood, gave the Brotherhood much needed credibility--because of the PLO's constant criticism against the Brotherhood for their lack of resistance to the Israelis. HAMAS also gained structure and means from the Brotherhood.

The Muslim Brotherhood had a number of means at its disposal in spreading their message to the people. Aside from the various associations it had established throughout the West Bank and Gaza--libraries, schools, health clinics, social clubs, and sports clubs--the organization used zakat⁴² to help thousands of needy families.⁴³

The main platform the Brotherhood used in spreading their message to all kinds of people was the mosques. The number of mosques rose from 600 to 1350 mosques between 1967 and 1987. Most of the Brotherhood's achievements in the past forty years were at the disposal of the newly born HAMAS. That was the main reason for the success of HAMAS, in a relatively short period of time.

Ideology of HAMAS

Ideological tenets of the Muslim Brotherhood were clearly discernible in the communiqués of HAMAS from the beginning of the uprising, and their coherence was preserved throughout.⁴⁴ HAMAS devoted a great deal of space to ideological positions, setting forth in simple terms a historiography of the Palestinian question since the beginning of the century. Concerning Palestine, HAMAS' charter states that:

The land of Palestine is an Islamic trust (Waqf) upon all Muslim generations until the Day of Resurrection. It is no right to give up nor any part of it, It does not belong to an Arab state or to all Arab states, nor to a king or president, nor to all kings or presidents nor to an organization or to all organizations.⁴⁵

The solution for the problem of Palestine in the opinion of HAMAS lies in uprooting the state of Israel and establishing an Islamic state in its place. The charter mentions three spheres of influence connected to the Palestinian question--Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic--each has its role in the struggle against Israel.⁴⁶ HAMAS derives its ideology from Islam. Concerning Jews, who have a special status in Islam as being the people of the book, they are to be protected and dealt with justly and fairly. Islam's attitude to Judaism stems from the Quran, the Muslims' Holy Book, which identifies with the Jewish religious tradition. For Muslims, Noah and Abraham, Jacob and Isaac, Joseph and Jonas, Moses and Aaron, as well as David and Solomon are prophets of God whose names may not be even mentioned without invoking God's blessing upon them. On this basis, what was associated with these prophets in Palestine was honored and preserved by the Muslims as their own.

Palestine is said to have a special place in the Islamic creed because Jerusalem was the first direction of prayer for Muslims. Al-Aqsa mosque, or Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem is considered the third most holy place of Islam after Mecca and Madina in

Saudi Arabia. So for HAMAS, Palestine, including Jerusalem, was the center of struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims in the past, therefore it is an individual religious duty for a Muslim to fight to regain Palestine.⁴⁷

The great flexibility and pragmatism that characterizes the ideology of HAMAS represents considerable strength. It allows the evolution and adaptation of Islamic thought to specific historical circumstances. The Islamists discourse of social justice responds to the despair of the Palestinian people about the disastrous economic situation and the lack of economic development in the Occupied Territories.⁴⁸

For HAMAS, the loss of Palestine to the Zionists and the creation of Israel occurred because the colonial powers, "in the capitalist West and communist East", wanted to weaken and dominate the Muslims.⁴⁹ The nature of the struggle against Israel was part of the contest between Islam and the West.

As for HAMAS' relations with the nationalist movement, the charter refers to the PLO as a "father, brother, relative, or a friend" of the Islamic movement and stress the fact that the two movements have a common plight and common destiny and face the same enemy.⁵⁰ At the same time, HAMAS sharply criticizes the PLO's secular course and its leadership, as well as its political program calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state that would coexist with Israel. The difference between HAMAS and the PLO was that HAMAS saw the liberation of Palestine as a religious rather than a national duty.⁵¹

Organization and Leadership

The initial leadership of HAMAS consisted of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and the remaining six founders of the movement. Later as the movement developed, leadership wings and committees were set up to take charge of political matters, security, military

operations, and the media. HAMAS has remained relatively simple and lacks the complex bureaucracy of the PLO. Overall leadership of the movement is entrusted to a consultative council whose members live inside and outside the occupied territories. HAMAS established cells and command centers regionally; but they are bound by the orders of a secretive, central authority.⁵² According to Boaz Ganor, an Israeli intelligence analyst:

HAMAS is run along hierarchical regional lines: the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are divided into a number of sectors, each sector comprising a number of secondary regions. The movement's various sections, it seems, maintain representatives on the regional level as well (in the secondary region). Those representatives report to regional and sector supervisors, the latter of whom are directly responsible to the heads of their sections.⁵³

The structure of HAMAS was divided into three branches; a political department responsible for formulating policies and taking care of organizational matters, an intelligence department in charge of HAMAS' secret activities, and a media department in charge of promoting the organization's policies. The daily resistance activities were delegated to HAMAS' young sympathizers called the Stone Throwing Arms.

The complexities involved in establishing such a structure were solved by making Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, in consultation with the six other founding members, the leading figure in HAMAS affairs. Prior to his 1989 arrest, Sheikh Yassin was the Director General of the movement. He assigned Sheikh Jamil Hamami, a brotherhood activist in the West Bank to establish, with his colleagues, a branch of HAMAS in the West Bank.⁵⁴

HAMAS was designed to allow the induction of members not affiliated with the Brotherhood. Several elements of the Brotherhood that were transferred to HAMAS

were eventually phased out and replaced by similar cells that remain highly secretive. Israel was able to crack down on these groups in the first two years of the Uprising.

HAMAS had established two main offices outside of Palestine. The Political Office was concerned with HAMAS' foreign relations and represented HAMAS at conferences and meetings that dealt with the Palestinian question. The second being the Information Office, located in Jordan, was responsible for preparing and disseminating all press releases concerned with HAMAS' statements and policy. These two offices are very active in their activities outside of Palestine, such as meeting with American officials and other European officials.

HAMAS Goals

HAMAS' long term goals were four : (1) the creation of an Islamic state on all of Palestine, from the sea [Mediterranean] to the river [Jordan River] (2) the returning of all refugees from the Diaspora; (3) the application of Islamic law in Palestine; and (4) the attachment of this state to the larger Ummah (the Islamic nation) and the inauguration of a Khilafah.⁵⁵

HAMAS' immediate goal was revealed in the January (1988) monthly communiqué, with the following objectives:

Release of detainees, rejection of the settlements, the policy of expulsion, administrative detention, brutalization of civilians and detainees, the denial of travel, harassment, the spread of immorality, bribery, corruption, entrapment in the nets of the secret service, the denial of right of return, astronomical taxes and other responsible occupation policies.⁵⁶

HAMAS and The PLO

In the late sixties there was cooperation between Fateh and the Muslim Brotherhood in the military field. This discontinued after the fedayeen left Jordan in 1970. During the seventies both groups were busy building their bases, institutions, and popularity inside Palestine. Of course, the environment and the resources were in the PLO's favor. In the early 1980s, competition between the PLO and the Muslim Brotherhood began since the Muslim Brotherhood took the lead in public activities and institutions. The most important field fought over was the university. Student government elections were considered to be the arena for representing the thoughts, ideas, and political vision of the Palestinian students and people, since these elections were the only ones allowed by the Israeli army.

In most cases, the Muslim Brotherhood won 40-50% of the votes. They won the student government if the other PLO groups were not together.⁵⁷ That meant, the Muslim Brotherhood had the highest popularity among the Palestinian factions. This situation caused a continuous struggle over student leadership, and in some cases lead to fist fights as in Bair Zait and the Islamic University in Gaza.⁵⁸

In other fields, the Muslim Brotherhood worked hard to spread their message and to influence the Palestinians through public and popular activities, and institutions-- the same as the PLO. Nevertheless, the Muslim Brotherhood kept informing the PLO of their positions over the solutions to the Palestinian issue, and they urged it to go back to its military practices, and to stop the concessions put forth in the peace process.

With the beginning of the Intifada in December 1987, the Muslim Brotherhood entered direct competition with the PLO. They used the name "Islamic Resistance Movement-- HAMAS" and styled themselves after "Jihad" in all informative, political, and military fields. After that, the relationship between HAMAS and the PLO passed

through different stages; depending on the conditions, levels of competition, the political situations, and the representative standards (of the Palestinians) in regard to the PLO.

It is beneficial to know HAMAS' relationship with the PLO. The HAMAS charter states that:

The PLO is closest of the close to HAMAS, our nation is one, plight is one, destiny is one, and our enemy is the same. When the PLO adopts Islam as its system of life we will be its soldiers and firewood of its fire which will burn the enemies.⁵⁹

HAMAS refused the political position of the PLO in recognizing Israel and establishing a Palestinian state on part of Palestine. In the summer of 1988, HAMAS was willing to participate in PNC, but because of the PLO plan to give up more than 78% of Palestine, HAMAS canceled its plan of participation. HAMAS, in its evaluation of the PLO recognizes its accomplishments, but at the same time it criticizes many of its policies.⁶⁰

Unfortunately, the PLO has considered HAMAS as an enemy who wants to take over leadership of the Palestinians. That is why they have tried every possible way to control and decrease the role of HAMAS. Early in the Intifada, the PLO ignored HAMAS totally through its official media and official statements. That was possible because of the weakness of HAMAS' media coverage. However, inside Palestine the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) staged a propaganda campaign against HAMAS and tried to break HAMAS' calls for strikes or demonstrations, but they failed.⁶¹ Then the western media focused more on the role and size of HAMAS and said that "the message of HAMAS received the support in Palestine, since that renewed the Palestinians' hopes of liberating Palestine."⁶²

The PLO found that there was no way to avoid talking about HAMAS so they used another method -- raising doubts and slandering HAMAS. The PLO questioned

HAMAS' establishment, its history, its relations with some Arab regimes and the way it was treated by the Israeli government, in order to lower the popularity of HAMAS among the Palestinians and stop the cooperative tendencies among some nationalists in the PLO. They feared that time was not on their side, and that HAMAS could take advantage of the historic period that was occurring.⁶³

When the PLO realized that its tactics with HAMAS were not working well, and HAMAS' influence was growing, the PLO adopted a new tactic and started to court HAMAS, in an attempt to contain it. With this reasoning most of the PLO leaders said many good things about HAMAS, for example, Arafat said that the 'PLO supports HAMAS who want to liberate Palestine through the Jihad.'⁶⁴ HAMAS and the PLO held many meetings to coordinate their efforts and the PLO declared that HAMAS was part of the PLO, which forced HAMAS to condemn that statement. It was clear that the PLO was trying to assure the Americans that it was controlling the active forces in Palestine and it had the power to stop the Intifada. The end came when HAMAS refused to participate in the PNC on April 7, 1990, unless its requirements were fulfilled, which were contradictory to the PLO peace efforts and because of Fateh's role in the PLO. Of course, the PLO did the opposite by declaring the independence of the Palestine state, accepting all UN resolutions and condemning any kind of violence against Israel. In contrast, HAMAS rejected all PNC resolutions.⁶⁵

On July 8, 1990, the PLO attacked HAMAS by an offensive article published in its magazine 'Falasteen Al -Thawrah.' The PLO conflicted with HAMAS in order to defame the reputation of HAMAS and to stop the Intifada.

Inside Palestine, Fateh attacked many HAMAS members and worked to stop many of their activities. Then both HAMAS and Fateh issued a joint statement declaring their agreement on solving some of the problems between them.⁶⁶ In this statement,

Fateh declared its recognition of HAMAS as a true participating group in liberating Palestine and recognized HAMAS' rights in many of the disputed issues relating to the Intifada.

The honeymoon did not last, and Fateh, for all its purposes, insisted on attacking HAMAS physically. Fateh tried to limit the increasing influence of HAMAS, especially in escalating the Intifada. Fateh was trying to fulfill the Israeli and American requests in stopping the Intifada as the price for participation in the peace process.⁶⁷

In the last two years, HAMAS started to participate in all kinds of elections among the Palestinians and won many of them. It was natural for HAMAS to win the student governments in most of the universities, but winning in many labor unions and trade houses was a new phenomenon. HAMAS' winning of Ramallah City's Chamber of Commerce was a shock for everyone, because this city is always considered a secular, moderate one, especially with the respected percentage of Christians. It was a defeat for the political line--of the peace process--which the PLO adopted.⁶⁸ Also, HAMAS had worked with all other factions who opposed the peace process, and they issued many communiqués and held many conferences declaring their rejection of PLO participation in the peace conferences.

Again, in June 1992, Fateh adopted a plan to fight HAMAS violently. That happened because the PLO feared HAMAS' participation, in any general elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in electing a Palestinian representative for the proposed "Palestinian self-administration." The PLO knew that HAMAS would have 40-50% of the votes and Fateh, 30-35%. That meant the factions which opposed the peace process would get 65-70% of the votes--a disaster for Fateh. The violent plan was to kill many HAMAS leaders. As a result of the violence, many of HAMAS' members were killed or injured by Fateh.⁶⁹ Then on September 9, 1992, HAMAS issued its communiqué

declaring its refusal to participate in any general elections that lead to so called self-administration.

HAMAS Activities and Popularity

HAMAS was able to build on the Brotherhood organization, and use its infrastructure in expanding its activities and action. The new stage witnessed precise mobilization including general strikes, fasting, or days confronting the enemy. HAMAS also gave instructions for organizing the uprising in all aspects of daily life: appeals to merchants or landlords including threats against those who do not comply; not to raise the prices; warning against those thieves who would try to take advantage of the mass resignation of the Palestinian police force; exhortations to collaborators to repent; appeals to the population to defend itself against settlers, as well as advice on security measures; appeals for a return to the land; and development of a domestic economy so as to ensure the greatest possible self-reliance.⁷⁰ The mosques became the center for this social structuring of the uprising. In the political realm, HAMAS sponsored forums, political gatherings, and Islamic exhibitions--particularly on university campuses, that served as vehicles for its influence.⁷¹ By the first year of the Intifada, HAMAS was on an equal footing with the PLO in directing the Intifada. HAMAS' calls for strikes were fully answered; unmatched by any PLO factions except for Fateh. There is no doubt that HAMAS' actions, including the use of arms against military targets, have been a major factor in the continuation of the uprising--because of the movement's large following and quick mobility.⁷²

Sarah Roy, a visiting scholar at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, notes:

HAMAS runs the best social service network in Gaza Strip... Structured and well organized, HAMAS is trusted by the poor (Gaza's overwhelming majority) to deliver on its promises, and is perceived to be far less corrupt and subject to patronage than its secular nationalist counterparts, especially Fateh. Indeed, it is not only Palestinians who regard HAMAS in this way, but a growing number of foreign assistance providers as well. Some senior officials at United Nations Relief Works and Agency (UNRWA) in Gaza acknowledged that HAMAS is the only faction they trust to distribute UNRWA food donations to the people.⁷³

HAMAS has enjoyed tremendous support in the territories. An Israeli commentator notes:

Much more important is the message that HAMAS has recently brought to the attention of the public: a broad-base, violent, popular resistance against Israeli rule is possible without formerly rich institutions of the PLO ... All the methods of struggle that the PLO persisted in for almost 26 years have not yielded results such as those achieved by the HAMAS movement in Gaza. Their combination of mass demonstrations, systematic murder of suspected collaborators, and guerrilla attacks directed only at soldiers has been a successful formula for them.⁷⁴

In the absence of any democratic means of elections in the West Bank and Gaza, it is very difficult to gauge the real support of HAMAS in the Occupied Territories. Some idea can be derived from the local elections for student councils, Chamber of Commerce Councils and professional union elections. In Ramallah, a West Bank city near Jerusalem, HAMAS won over the PLO in its Chambers of Commerce Council. In most local elections HAMAS has scored equal to the PLO or surpassed it. A study conducted by Dr. Zahhar showed that HAMAS' candidates won 43% of the overall votes.⁷⁵

1992 Expulsions of HAMAS Leaders

The expulsions of more than 400 leaders and members of HAMAS in December 1992, was probably the biggest event that brought HAMAS to the world arena. As a result of continuous military attacks against Israeli soldiers, Israel expelled 415 Islamist sympathizers to South Lebanon. Most of the deportees were highly educated. According

to a study conducted in their camp in Marj Al-Zohor in South Lebanon, only 100 were Imams and Religious scholars and 208 were skilled professionals, students, or intellectuals; a minority were laborers. Because of media attention, the deportation of the Islamists proved costly to Israel.

HAMAS and Israel

Israel is confused when it comes to dealing with HAMAS. Here is an example of what Dr. Rafi Israeli wrote after Israeli expulsions:

Expelling HAMAS activists will not solve the heart of the problem, but will unnecessarily entangle us in the international arena, which is not prepared to view suffering people regardless of what the cause of their suffering is. Moreover, no one has yet succeeded to prove why releasing criminals and murderers into freedom in western countries where they can continue to work against us with renewed vigor, is a more severe punishment than keeping them here in strict detention with no televisions, newspapers and visits from relatives. Why do we not arrest these villains, try them in our courts and sentence them to the harsh punishments they deserve instead of subjecting ourselves to a torrent of rebuke, threats and criticisms from even our best friends?⁷⁶

HAMAS And the West

HAMAS' leaders have long considered cordial, if not friendly, relations with the West an important part of their political agenda. They are sensitive to Western fears that HAMAS might take its battle to European or American shores.⁷⁷ An example is their response to the European media's attempt to blame them for an assassination attempt on a PLO official:

We were surprised... with what some Western media outlets reported regarding the attempted assassination of Mr. Ibrahim el-Sous, head of the Palestine mission in Paris; and the slander of our movement's name in relation to these plans for the purpose of provoking the international and Western security apparatuses against the movement via allegation and accusations... tarnishing the movement with

the image of terrorism... HAMAS, which rejects these spurious attempts at slander totally and unequivocally, asserts that our fight is with the Zionists enemy and his presence in Palestine. It asks for no one's permission to wage its battles; yet at the same time, it does not transfer this fight to any external field and no such incident can be attributed to it.⁷⁸

When the State Department of the United States officially included HAMAS in its annual report on global terrorism published in 1993, HAMAS rejected the accusation and issued a statement in which:

HAMAS views with dismay the decision by the United States not only to place the movement on the State Department's list of "terrorist organizations," but also the unfortunate cessation of talks between the two parties. HAMAS will always welcome dialogue with Western nations interested in peace and justice in the Middle East.⁷⁹

HAMAS has concluded that the Israelis intend to maintain their occupation of Palestinian land indefinitely. HAMAS found this attitude unacceptable, so HAMAS issued its guideline to its military wing and published those guidelines in a letter sent to American and European embassies throughout the Middle East. The guidelines are:

(1) Military operations against Israeli occupation are confined to the area of conflict. HAMAS has not nor does it seek to conduct military operations in any other parts of the world. (2) Armed battles are conducted professionally. Brigade guerrillas are instructed not to mutilate, torture, or maul their targets during battle; (3) Foreign professionals and visitors to the region, many of whom come from the West are considered innocent civilians and therefore protected against any actions by the military wing.⁸⁰

In a Congressional Research Service report to Congress dated May 14, 1993, James Wootten, a specialist in National Defense wrote:

There is some validity to HAMAS' position. For one thing the State Department agrees that there have been no known HAMAS attacks outside Israel or the occupied territories. It is also true that HAMAS usually accepts responsibility for attacks against Israeli soldiers or militiamen but denies those on civilians or other innocents. An unpublished State Department chronology of major HAMAS attacks reveals linking HAMAS to some of the attacks is weak or entirely circumstantial. In

several instances, the only evidence was that perpetrators when captured or killed, sometimes days later, carried a HAMAS leaflet in their pockets.⁸¹

CHAPTER FIVE

The Peace Process And Conclusion

The peace agreement is a personal deal taken independently by Mr. Arafat, between himself, his loyalists, and the Israelis. For this reason, it lacks legitimacy. Furthermore, the concessions it calls for are one sided. Most importantly, it was presented as a peace pact, yet it indeed will prolong the life of the occupation, and therefore the absence of peace in a land which unfortunately, has been a theater of tragedy for the past 95 years.

Why was the deal made now?

Many factors determined the timing of the accord between Arafat and "Israel," all of which were to Israel's strategic advantage.

Foremost, the Intifada has taken a heavy toll on Israel in terms of the Israeli public's morale, loss of revenue, international opinion, and intelligence-gathering ability in the Occupied Territories. The Intifada has developed a myriad of new means to make the Occupation more costly to Israel.

Of primary concern to the Israelis is their loss of control over the West Bank and Gaza. Israel failed, despite pulling out all the stops, to contain the resistance. Israel proved unable to break the will of the Palestinian people despite the destruction of 2,346 homes, shoot-to-kill orders, assassination squads, collective punishment, and other means.

The 233 square miles of Gaza containing 800,000 Palestinian refugees has been 233 square miles of headache for the Israelis. The Israelis have nothing to lose by giving

away Gaza. On the contrary, they stand to benefit enormously from assigning the responsibility of maintaining security and fighting the national resistance movement, including HAMAS, to their new Palestinian partner. How ironic that Israel has assigned the PLO to end the Intifada, which began without PLO planning or even knowledge.

Over the six years of the Intifada, Israel lost its front line--the collaborator network--which was the backbone of its occupation machinery.

These collaborators were not secret informants, quite the opposite; they were known to other Palestinians and enjoyed an elevated social status bestowed by Israel for their help in running the Occupation. This help included turning in Palestinian activists. After the destruction of this collaborator network, Israel required another group to replace them.

It cannot be overlooked that Israel is in a financial crisis. Israel has been on the American dole ever since it was established. The pro-Israel lobby has been making a continuous effort to convince the American government and public that Israel is an indispensable strategic ally. With the end of the Cold War and subsequent Gulf war, this myth was shattered. Today, more and more Americans do not believe that it is in the best interest of the US to keep sending 6.3 billion dollars every year (which translates into 1,250 dollars for every man, women, and child in Israel) to a state that is a main cause of anti-American backlash--not only in the Middle East but across the Muslim World.

This explains another crucial reason for the Israelis to accept the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people--to replace the anticipated future loss of US aid. Israel sorely needs to replace its lifeblood of American aid, with revenues gained in the Arab and Muslim markets. However, the Arab boycott of the Jewish state has prevented it from trading with these potentially lucrative markets.

Arafat and his loyalists, ignoring the powerful leverage the Arab boycott has exerted on the occupation, exchanged it for a cheap, selfish deal.

A careful reading of the accord and observation of its consequences make it apparent that Israel has obtained what it wanted without giving up anything. Arafat has removed the chief obstacles, in the way of initiation, of Israeli relations with Arab and Muslim countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, and Indonesia, to name a few. Today the US is pressuring the Arab world to end its boycott not only of Israel but also of all companies that deal with Israel. Also, not to be overlooked, is the fact that the Islamic resistance is gaining increasing credibility as a national liberation movement. The Islamic trend within the Occupied Territories is of great concern to Israel as it witnesses Muslims turn toward Islam and away from secular ideologies.

Israel feels it can always strike a deal with secular apologists and opportunists. But Islam seeks to restore a comprehensive peace through justice, and liberate oppressed peoples. Israel's brutal practices toward the Palestinian people and their land, which have not varied at any time in the past five decades, before or after the signing of the Arafat-Israel Accord, make it apparent that Israel has no intention of seeking a just peace.

The rising popularity of the Islamic movement in the territories on various aspects of daily and customary Palestinian life is something which no oppressive Middle Eastern regime can withstand, because of the firm positions which these movements take on issues of human rights and justice.

The Intifada acquired an authentic momentum, from the spirit and strength of the Islamic resurgence, which reaffirmed the Palestinian people their historic and legitimate right to the land and the legitimate national right to resist the occupation.

The PLO's credibility has steadily decreased, placing it a weak second to the Islamist groups. Arafat has signed this agreement in the hope of safeguarding his disintegrating, divided faction of Fateh.

First, the agreement's terms are very vague, and written in such a way that the stronger party, namely Israel, can define their interpretation. For instance, does the term "Jericho" mean the area surrounding Jericho, or only the area encompassed by the Jericho city limits?

Secondly, it was signed by individuals lacking popular support and mandate. Many suspect that Arafat and his loyalists are merely attempting to fulfill his personal ambition to obtain a title.

Thirdly, it recognizes and legitimizes the Occupation. Many observers have concluded that the entire process of negotiations and the basis of the accord were deceptive. The Israeli assumption is that the only "loss" Israel had to absorb with this agreement was its recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, which by itself is not significant--especially after the disintegration of the organization.

When describing the agreement, propagandists used a key word: "mutual recognition." Thomas Friedman of the New York Times noted that there is nothing mutual about the accord: "Arafat's letter to Rabin is not simply a statement of recognition...It is a letter of surrender, a type-written white flag." The PLO recognized Israel without even requiring it to define its borders; without getting back one square inch of occupied land; without any resolution of the issue of Jerusalem; and without requiring Israel to renounce terrorism. In return Israel recognized the PLO's right to recognize Israel's right to exist. The PLO gave Israel everything and Israel gave the PLO the right to give it everything.

For his part, Arafat recognized the occupation, and renounced the use of "terrorism." Israel has succeeded in manipulating the use of this emotionally loaded term and virtually limiting its application to any resistance by Palestinians, while in fact it is something which Israel is guilty of, at a state level, by all accounts of Human Rights organizations. In Israeli parlance, any act of resistance against occupation is an act of "terror."

The accord would install a Joint Fateh-Israeli administration which would share the limited self-rule over the population of the West Bank and Gaza. According to chief political correspondent to "Yediot Ahronot," Shiffer, on September 2, 1993: "Shabak and PLO figures met to set a joint committee to reach a cooperative understanding in all matters concerning domestic security in the Gaza Strip." The intention is to prevent efforts "to disrupt an orderly transfer of authority to the Palestinian institutions to be set up by the PLO," particularly disruption by HAMAS. "Israel and the PLO, in recognition of their present interest in ensuring success of the peace process, will try to prevent all attempts by HAMAS to sabotage it and also after autonomy is already in force," said Deputy Defense minister Motta Gur.⁸² For the first time, Palestinians will officially be part of the Israeli political system.

The accord attempts to politically isolate any resistance to the Israeli occupation. It installs the PLO as the only representative of the Palestinian people--precisely because Arafat does not represent the national consensus. Israel has found in Arafat, and some of his loyalists, the willingness to put aside the Palestinian national (Muslim and Christian) claims to the land which constituted the basis of the creation of the PLO in 1964. Instead his party's self-interested agenda has been put first. Arafat's faction, through the agreement, hopes to rescue itself from disintegration resulting from decreasing political presence in the territories.

Importantly, the accord is non-binding. According to the terms of the "agreement" it is clear that it is not binding to the Israelis, moreover there is nothing limiting Israel from taking back whatever it may concede in the future.

As for the Israelis, they will be pursuing Palestinian activists, anywhere, any time, without a word said against it by anybody; furthermore, if any settler--who are all armed--kills any Palestinian or commits any act of "terrorism" he cannot be apprehended or detained by the Palestinian police. This is exactly like a black police officer--because of race--lacking the power to arrest any white person in the United States.

The accord is partial and discusses only secondary issues. The use of Palestinian power is strictly limited to use on Israel's behalf as Rabin stated in "Yedot Ahronot" September 7, 1993:

The four crucial issues around which negotiations with the Palestinians have revolved are: United Jerusalem, the fate of settlements, the redeployment of the Israeli army and the enforcement of domestic security in the Gaza Strip."⁸³

The Palestinians will have only limited self-rule, which means that the Palestinians will be sharing the little power this agreement offers them, with the Israelis. The accord does not grant Palestinian sovereignty. The accord effectively renounces UN Resolutions. By signing the agreement, Arafat denounced not only UN Resolutions which may be unfair in themselves, yet nevertheless represent international recognition of 47% of the Palestinian land as a Palestinian state and UN-recognized rights of legitimate resistance against the occupation, but also the charter of the very organization--the PLO--which Arafat claims to represent.

Jerusalem symbolizes the spiritual ties of millions of Muslims in every corner of the globe to the Holy Land. The omission of this critical issue demonstrates the seriousness of the flaws in the "agreement" and those who hatched it.

The refugees of 1967 and 1948, who make up the majority of the Palestinian people, have not been adequately addressed. Fully 70% of the Palestinian people are refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars. These people, and especially the 1948 refugees along with the loss of their land, defined the cause of Palestine and gave birth to the PLO.

Since the "agreement" does not even mention the Palestinians of 1948, it not only forfeits their right to return to their homes, but also the right to have their own state. The creation of this state was the *raison d'être* of the PLO. The agreement calls for the eventual implementation of limited self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza. Two thirds of the Gaza inhabitants and half of those who live in the West Bank are originally refugees whose homes and lands are in the territories seized by Jews in 1948. All these people feel betrayed by the PLO which was set up for the purpose of liberating the entire land of Palestine--"from the sea to the river"--and repatriating the refugees.

Other key points omitted from this accord include 98% of the land, the fate of Israeli settlements, 13,000--or so--currently imprisoned Palestinians. Furthermore, in return, there is no recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people, their historic and human rights, and right to independence. There is no mention of the most central issue; that the Israelis are occupiers, that there is a military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Instead, the Israelis succeeded in portraying themselves, to the world, as victims of the Palestinians, and imposed on Arafat's negotiators that the land is "disputed," not occupied.

The agreement's impact will be or already has been to remove the legitimate status of resistance against the occupation and destroy Palestinian national unity. It is certain that Israel has wanted, for approximately six costly years, to find someone to do its dirty work, namely, ending the Intifada, and what is more, any form of resistance against its continuing occupation of the territories.

It is to be expected however, that since the occupation continues, the UN charter acknowledges the right of Palestinians--like other occupied nations--to resist their occupation. In this particular instance the occupation will become double with the installation of the puppet Palestinian police force taking the place of the Israeli Border Guards.

The accord seems destined to render permanent the displacement of refugees, permanently deny claims to land lost since 1948 by Palestinians, create a new security zone to shield the occupation, and to compensate for loss of the collaborator network exploited by Israel before the Intifada destroyed it. The PLO has pledged to pre-empt any act of resistance against the occupation according to its official, Nabil Shaath.

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