Chapter V

Intifada as a Tool of Diplomacy

The Palestinians seemed to have been subdued, dismayed, disarrayed and fragmented following the dispersion of the PLO from Beirut in August 1982. They suffered further setbacks after the confrontation between the PLO and the Syrian army in Lebanon in 1983. However, the undaunted fedayeen, without being unnerved, carried on the guerilla attacks along with their Lebanese allies against the occupying Israeli forces in Lebanon. When the resistance forced the U.S. marines and the Israeli forces to withdraw from Lebanon by 1984-84, the PLO made diplomatic moves through Egypt and Jordan to start negotiations with the U.S. for Palestinian self-determination. When it did not yield any tangible result the fedayeen groups made clandestine preparations for resistance in the occupied territories. Although they were not responsible for igniting the intifada which was a spontaneous but consistent outburst of Palestinian masses— a historic inevitability—against Israeli occupation, the ordinary, unknown people of Palestine and innocuous cadres of the fedayeen groups provided the invisible leadership to the two million Palestinians. The five-year-old intifada—relatively non-violent—was the highest form of
Palestinian diplomacy through mass uprising as it vigorously pursued the following agenda:

i) End to the Israeli occupation;

ii) Establishment of the independent Palestine State.

In order to implement this political agenda the intifada set up a 'parallel state' with its own administration in the Gaza Strip and West Bank (including Jerusalem): a de facto Palestinian State. The on-going intifada also established the following points which became the infrastructure of PLO's diplomacy:

1) The U.N. General Assembly held a special session to discuss the intifada;

2) Failure of the Israeli Defence Forces to suppress the mass uprising convinced the Israelis that Israel cannot keep the occupied territories under occupation;

3) Israelis, who were in the grip of fear psychosis that what they gained in the 1967 war might prove to be their 'waterloo', argued in favour of 'Territory for Peace';

4) The United States indicted Israel for gross violations of Palestinian human rights; and

5) The United States realised the inevitability of the establishment of the independent Palestine State as all other options were closed.
Intifada

One of the most important landmarks in the history of Palestinian revolution was the beginning of intifada (shaking off or uprising) against the Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip on 8 December 1987. It was sparked by a seemingly minor but tragic incident wherein an Israeli military vehicle ploughed into a line of cars and vans killing four Palestinian workers in the winter evening of Tuesday, 8 December 1987. The news was broadcast over the Israeli radio as a matter of routine - another incident that was expected to freeze the Palestinians only. The funeral of the deceased Palestinian workers that night in Jabalya refugee camp exploded into mass demonstrations. Palestinians attacked the Israeli police post inside the camp and the soldiers used live ammunition as well as tear gas to quell them.\(^1\) Since an Israeli had been stabbed to death on the main street of Gaza City two days earlier, on 6 December, Palestinians believed that it was an Israeli act of retaliation. Israeli soldiers then shot dead a 20 year old in the funeral demonstrations and Gaza erupted like a volcano.\(^2\)

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turmoil spread outside the camps into towns and villages. Israeli patrols even besieged the main government hospital in Gaza, seizing wounded Palestinians from the wards and dropping tear gas from helicopters onto the hospital buildings.

The Arabic newspaper Al-Fajr, published from East Jerusalem, pronounced the death of the four Palestinians to have been "maliciously perpetrated." 3 Even the mayor of Nablus, Hafez Toukan - an Israeli appointee - protested the murder of the four innocent workers and declared a day of mourning in the city. A week-long curfew could not calm the situation in Jabalya camp. Demonstrations quickly spread like wildfire to the west Bank, where Palestinians expressed open defiance of Israeli military rule. For the outside world the eruption of intifada was a big surprise as any kind of uprising in Gaza was ruled out for various reasons. General Ariel Sharon had suppressed the back of insurrection in the 360 square kilometre Gaza Strip in the late 1960s when he was the field Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Command. The Israeli government had ruthlessly crushed strikes by professionals and the municipality in 1981-82. Many people in Israel

thought the Palestinians of Gaza were still in the slumber of deep silence or too much traumatised to risk another uprising.

This scenario of Gaza was totally wrong as the Gazans have a long tradition of resistance. After all Gaza was a hell-hole for the Israeli soldiers in the late 1960s. In 1985 and 1986 Gaza was seething with discontent and unrest. Political and professional groups were strengthening their organisational structures and establishing new alliances that later provided a valuable underpinning for the intifada. 4 Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was deeply worried about the situation. On 6 December 1987, just after the stabbing incident, he had proposed to the Knesset's Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense that Israelis pull out of the Gaza Strip. Peres suggested that Israel demilitarise and surround the Strip, leaving the Gazans to their own devices. Peres had argued that Jewish settlements in Strip did not provide any security or benefit to Israel and therefore should be dismantled. 5 The 2000 Israeli settlers were much chagrined and angry.

5. Ibid., p. 2.
But the Palestinians of Gaza interpreted Peres's statement "as a fruit of their acts of resistance." It also indicated that Israel could be forced to yield. The Palestinians were burning with rage and fury. But the outside world ignored that until the smouldering fire of intifada engulfed the entire occupied territories for about six years (1987-93).

A Rebellion of the Poor

The intifada began not only as a national uprising to throw off the yoke of Israeli occupation but also as a rebellion of the poor, an awesome outburst by the forsaken and forgotten at the bottom of the social ladder.

Wave after wave of the deprived and despised setting at the base of Palestinian pot blew the top off and let their fury spew into the streets. Crowds of refugees bonded by a solidarity of despair whipped themselves into raptures of release for their pent-up rage, tearing up paving stones, overturning garbage bins, and showering traffic with volleys of stones.... Unfazed even by rifle fire, the men in the mobs tore open their shirts, hurst out their chests, and continued to press forward amid din of war cries and wails of mourning. 6

From all over the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Jerusalem came an outburst of protest that echoed throughout the world as the oppressed roped up to

end the two-decade old brutal Israeli occupation. What Israel had deliberately refused to see splashed across the TV Channels throughout the world via the satellites.

Two Israeli journalists, Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, piece together the incidents in their book *Intifada*:

All that had been suppressed, quashed, shelved, ignored, papered over, pushed aside, and swept aside under the carpet for two decades now forced its way out into the open, tearing through the veil of hypocrisy and self-deceit that what Israel had practiced over twenty-one years was a benevolent occupation.7

**A Revolt Against Brutalisation**

The climate in Israel not only denied that Palestinians were entitled to political rights, it pointedly ignored the disgraceful conditions in which so many of them lived.8 Indifference and disdain made the lot of second - and third - generation of refugees particularly bitter. Not a finger or voice was raised to help them. Israel behaved - perhaps unwillingly but certainly consistently - as though it was intent upon legitimising norms of discrimination and abuse, kneading people who had come under its rule into a spineless mass.

7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
devoid of any will of its own. After decades of a reign of negligence, torture and brutalisation, Israel woke up from its slumber on a cushion of apathy to the terrifying road of cyclone. Israel has never been able to realise the potentials of human elements within the Palestinian resistance. There is truth and hard reality in what Yasser Arafat said: "Ultimately we will score over the Israelis. Israel is afraid of losing its man power but we are not. We will therefore win the war." For Israel it was easy to bomb the PLO headquarters in Tunis through the most modern devices attached to its aircraft killing the Palestinian leaders but difficult to face a stone throwing nine year old Palestinian child in the occupied territories. That is where Israel conceded its most spectacular defeat.

Diplomacy of Non-Violent Resistance

The intifada was a spontaneous outburst. The power of non-violence was overwhelming considering their lack of preparation for disciplined non-violent struggle and given the severity of Israeli repression in the form of beatings, shooting, killings,

9. Ibid.
10 Yasser Arafat's discussion with the author in New Delhi in 1983.
house demolitions, uprooting of trees, deportations, extended imprisonments and detention without trial, and so on. The Palestinians during the intifada showed tremendous restraint. The 1 percent or so of the intifada constituted low-level violence involving mainly stone throwing. People of the world saw on their TV screens this level of violence. Specific instructions were issued by the PLO and the leadership of intifada not to use fire arms. With a few exceptions the orders were carried out. Palestinians see the stones as ways of expressing their defiance and rage about the injustices and sufferings inflicted by the Israelis. Compared to shootings and beatings, the limited action of stone throwing is very mild. The hurling of stones by Palestinians at the Israeli military was intended to be symbolic. Stones were necessary in their non-violent uprising as Palestinians were facing the worst type of enemy, the Zionists who according to Arnold Toynbee have perpetrated bigger crimes than the Nazis.

While some Palestinians are somewhat skeptical about the viability of a fully non-violent struggle,

others think it would be highly advantageous. A Palestinian leader summed up:

By our use of non-violent resistance and the limits we have placed on violence, we have neutralized the Israeli atomic bomb, the airforce, the tanks, and even machine guns. Now we should act so as to neutralize even the rifles. 12

Ostensibly Israel knew how to face the menace of armed fedayeen but it did not know how to face the unarmed youths, adolescents, children and women of the intifada, the unarmed fedayeen.

The PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat found significance in the new uprising. Commenting on the events of first few days of intifada, he said that he found significance in the fact that the people in Khan Yunis (Gaza) forced the Israeli army back by sheer numbers and, of course, by their determination not to be cowed by armed strength. "People's power had achieved results in Gandhi's India and Acquino's Philippines, so why not in Palestine"? asked Arafat.13

12 Ibid.

Actors in the Intifada

There were mainly three actors who led the two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank (including Jerusalem). They were: (1) Unified National Leadership (UNL) comprising the PLO groups; (2) Hamas; and (3) Islamic Jihad. While these groups co-ordinated the intifada activities the Palestinian masses emerged as the real heroes of the uprising.

The Unified National Leadership (UNL)

The relationship between the PLO leadership in exile and the Palestinians of the occupied West Bank and Gaza was really difficult. The PLO was banned in these areas and no Palestinian could claim to be a member of the PLO without risking arrest. But the PLO maintained its clandestine presence there with overwhelming Palestinians owing allegiance to it. This was witnessed through various public opinion polls and also through the Municipal elections in 1976. The 1976 West Bank Municipal elections were held after a mini-intifada took place early that year, closely on the lines of 1936–39 uprising.  

14 Mehmood Hussain, "Palestinian Uprising in West Bank", Socialist India (Delhi), 20 April 1976, p. 10.
The 1976 pro-PLO victory at the polls was so decisive that Israel refused to hold hustings once again. Eventually the elected Palestinian mayors were deposed, deported, imprisoned or killed by Israel.

The various guerilla groups of the PLO, like Al-Fatah, the PFLP, the PDFLP (DFLP) and the Palestine Communist party maintained clandestine cadres, cells, and several front organisations in the occupied territories, and their number had grown considerably since 1982 when the PLO evacuated from Beirut losing independent base of operation.\(^{15}\)

The PLO provided many of the services like medical relief and social networks to the occupied territories. It had also given funds to the Municipalities after the 1976 polls. Ideologically the Palestinian nationalism (of the PLO) had absorbed other political cross-currents of the occupied territories except Hamas. Although Hamas was viewed as a challenge - or an alternative - to the PLO, the two movements coordinated their activities during the intifada.

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As the *intifada* swept across the whole of West Bank and Gaza through the mass upsurge like a tornado or tempest no power on earth could hold it back. From the mass uprising a new leadership sprang up that tried to rein in the run away violence and steer the Palestinian people onto a more orderly course of struggle against the Israeli occupation authorities. The top echelons of this new force cloaked itself in mystery as a secret authority called the Unified National Leadership (UNL) - also known as the Unified National Command (UNC) - took up the leadership and coordinated it with further intensification of a greater magnitude.

The emergence of the new leadership was, as one of its prominent members put it: "an attempt to instal a conductor and pass out sheet music to an orchestra in which all the instruments were playing in the same meter but not at the same pace." 16

The birth of the Unified National Leadership brought forth new leaders who were mostly underground. This was because of the historical experiences of the Palestinians since the mid-1930s and 1970s. They had learnt sufficient lessons from the past debacles, not to expose the leadership which the

16 Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, no. 7, p.188.
Israelis would try to annihilate through their military, Shin Beit (the Israeli intelligence), and the security agents. The UNL's immediate success raised its members to a pinnacle of popularity and glory. The leadership became the helm of the intifada that continued relentlessly for more than five years to give the final blow to the Israeli occupation.

The Israeli, western and even a section of the Arab media portrayed it as a challenge not only to Israel but also to the PLO leadership in Tunis. However, right from the beginning the PLO was involved in the uprising through its various fedayeen groups which maintained clandestine relations with their branches in the occupied territories.

PLO in Action

On the occasion of the 23rd anniversary of the Palestinian revolution in January 1988, a few weeks after the intifada started, Yasser Arafat said that the anniversary was being celebrated in the midst of the atmosphere of epic steadfastness and the torrentuous people's revolution unleashed by the Palestinian masses and their militant revolu-
tionary vanguards in all parts of Palestine with unprecedented daily heroism, magnificent battles and confrontations against the fascist terrorist and racist enemy. Calling it Israel's seventh War against Palestinians, Arafat said:

In every confrontation, you are creating a miracle and making out of the sacred stones of Palestine a national weapon, by which you frighten all enemies. You are transforming your blood into swords confronting the enemy's military machine. You are unfolding your revolution and terrentuous people's uprising like a wave upon wave in all parts of West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Galilee, the Triangle and the Nageb joined in the political confrontation of the 'Iron Fist' which has been transformed by the enemy into a savage and criminal war, namely his seventh war, against us. 17

The first year of the popular uprising should have put to rest any doubts and misgivings about the pre-eminence of the PLO in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The massive demonstrations and general strikes which characterised the early months of the intifada were organised by the Nationalist activist. It was the Unified National Leadership (UNL) which took on the political leadership of the revolt. By most accounts it enjoyed the full as well as voluntary support and confidence of the

vast majority of Palestinians under occupation, and this was precisely because it was indistinguishable from the PLO.\textsuperscript{18} The mist that covered the \textit{intifada} was cleared as it entered the second year in December 1988. It became clear that the uprising was made possible by using the extensive PLO infrastructure which had been assiduously nurtured over the years in the occupied territories but also that it could not have been sustained without it.

While playing cat-and-mouse with the Israelis, it was impossible for the Palestinians to ignore the PLO. The PLO is Palestinian people and the Palestinian people is the PLO - this slogan was also popular in the occupied areas. There was a symbiotic relationship between the Palestinians of the occupied territories and the PLO. While the Unified National Leadership (UNL) directed the mass revolt and received the required assistance from outside, the executive committee of the PLO took political decisions and made diplomatic moves at the international level with a view to achieving the shared goal of the two - an end to the Israeli occupation.\textsuperscript{19} Both were organically inter-related and complementary to each other. The intensification of the \textit{intifada} increased the bargaining power of the PLO in international diplomacy.

\textsuperscript{18} Muin Rabbani, no. 15, p.20.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
The UNL was a local grouping born out of the spontaneous outpourings and outbursts of the masses in the occupied territories. It had to function clandestinely by force of circumstances, whereas the PLO leadership represented Palestinians everywhere and had international experience but not the intimate minute-by-minute knowledge of conditions in the occupied territories. The relationship between the two were like the relationship between the bedroom and the kitchen (intifada) on the one hand and the drawing room (PLO in exile) on the other. While the UNL was doing the domestic chores the PLO was talking to the guests in the drawing room. The activities of one room had its impact on the other. It is also a logical division of labour between the two. The Palestinian modus operandi became most obvious during the Palestine National Council (PNC) session in Algiers in November 1988, when the "external branch" (the drawing room) proclaimed statehood - PLO behaving very much like a government-in-exile - launching an international diplomatic offensive for recognition while the "internal branch" (the bed room and the kitchen) organised demonstrations in defiance of Israel's tightest security measures and prolonged curfews. A 20- year old
young Palestinian refugee put it: "The intifada has become the voice of the Palestinian people. The world can no longer remain deaf to it." 20

The creation of a national voice from inside the occupied territories was regarded as a significant personal and political achievement by not only refugees but also by the other Palestinians. They also believed that the PLO would "broadcast" their voice which would reverberate all over the world, especially in the West. Intifada created a unique situation that enabled the PLO to fire the diplomatic salvoes. 21

The UNL Strategy

As the intifada began to intensify the argument whether the PLO was behind it or not became almost irrelevant. The Palestinians of the occupied territories, through their actions and leaflets, defined their political demands more clearly precisely and succinctly than in any political programme declared earlier. The uprising did not require the PLO leadership from Tunis to influence it. The Unified National Leadership (UNL) - comprising all political trends in the West Bank and Gaza - formulated the demands

21 For details see Chapter VI.
which were distributed through its first leaflets. They were perfectly in harmony with the PLO's main demand for the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and for an independent Palestinian state. Since these demands were backed by the courageous mass resistance to the occupation they became more effective than all of the PLO's declarations combined. Ultimately these demands became the basis for peace talks later. The Palestinian masses of the uprising provided the much needed fuel to the PLO to fire its diplomatic guns.

The most pertinent question that bothered the Israelis was: who were the leaders of the Unified National Leadership? It was, indeed, difficult for the Israelis and Palestinians to answer. For the first time the people in the resistance decided not to identify any individual leader not only for reasons of Palestinian safety but also to put forth before the U.S., the Arab countries and the world at large a struggling Palestinian masses who have risen in revolt against Israeli occupation which was much worse than even the Nazi atrocities. The

prolonged uprising for more than five years proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the outbreak of a revolution does not require a charismatic, dynamic leader or theoretician to give orders from the top or to have a preconceived plan. The intifada has also proved that the masses - men, women, youths, adolescents and, above all, children - are the real heroes. What they required was a unified leadership to guide and coordinate the movement through an effective strategy. To put it in the words of Jamil Hilal, a leader of the PDFLP:

It is wrong to view the movement inside (the territories) just as an operational network that carries out the decisions of the leadership in exile. That will only stunt the growth of an organised mass base. Strengthening the role of leadership inside means removing obstacles to the creation of a unified center of command... that will direct the day-to-day struggle while serving as the communication link with the leaders of the PLO. 23

As soon as the intifada spread like wild fire all over the occupied territories the various PLO groups made an attempt to put forth a unified command to lead the movement. The PDFLP and Al-Fatah activists became active. Mohammad Labadi along with his Democratic Front comrade Nasser Juabah made efforts to publish handbills to inspire the people to revolt.

23 Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ri, no. 7, p.191.
Following the deportation of PDFLP leader Dr. Azmi Shueibi to Jordan in late 1986, Mohammad Labadi was clandestinely coordinating the Front's activities in the West Bank. In the last days of December 1987 he printed the handbill bearing the signature of the "Unified National Command to escalate the Uprising in the Occupied territories." It clearly enunciated the strategy and tactics of the intifada.

Labadi's handbill called upon the "heroes of the stone and firebomb war" to "redouble the revolutionary content" of their protest, "shake the oppressive regime down to its foundations," and create "inviolable unity" around the PLO, "the sole legal representative of our Palestinian people". Labadi further wrote: "The neo-fascists will be forced to accept facts determined by your uprising, which paves the way to national independence: "let us fly the flag of Palestine from the walls of Jerusalem the holy". After pronouncing the broad strategic goal of liberation it prescribed the tactics - the means by which its aims could be achieved - which were adopted by the masses of the uprising:

All roads must be closed to the occupation forces... Its cowardly soldiers must be prevented from entering refugee camps and large population centers by barricades and burning fires...

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
Stones must land on the heads of the occupying soldiers and those who collaborate with them. Palestinian flags are to be flown from minarets, churches, rooftops and electricity poles everywhere... We must set the ground burning under the feet of the occupiers. Let the whole world know that the volcanic uprising that has ignited the Palestinian people will not cease until the achievement of independence in a Palestinian state whose capital is Jerusalem. 26

It is, indeed, interesting to know how the coordination between the PDFLP and Al-Fatah took place inadvertently in an ironic way. When Labadi's handbill was being printed at an underground press in Isawiyeh, just under the terraced houses on the outskirts of French Hill, at the eastern edge of Jerusalem, the Darwish Brothers - Moussa and Ali Darwish - informed that similar handbills bearing the signature "Palestine Nationalist Forces" had been printed two days ago. Juabah and another comrade Abd-al-Rahim al-Baghdadi took no time in guessing that it was no one but Al-Fatah. They were indeed glad to learn about the unity in inadvertent action. Hence Labadi gave his post-factum approval to the Fatah leaflet bearing the date of 8 January and dated his own 10 January 1988. 27

Thus the unity in action was established between the PDFLP and Al-Fatah followed by reconstituting the four party coordinating committee which existed

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26 Ibid.  
27 Ibid, pp. 194-95.
in Jerusalem prior to the upsurge of the intifada: Al-Fatah, the PFLP, the PDFLP and the Communist Party of Palestine. But its new name was Unified National Leadership (UNL) or Unified National Command (UNC). The UNL was a continuation of the coordinating committee which had existed earlier and which Faisal Husseini had tried to revive before his arrest in mid-1987. The UNL filled up the vacuum. The Unified National Leadership (UNL) organised the general strikes successfully. It also ensured the participation of a larger segment of society, especially members of the middle class – the merchants and businessmen. Martyrs Day used to be celebrated in the mosques followed by demonstrations all over the occupied territories including Beit Jala, Salfit, Dura and Bethlehem which had been quiet earlier.28

Together with the ultimate strategic goal the UNL leaflets spelt out a number of interim ones: the withdrawal of army from the cities, towns, and refugee camps; the eviction of Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Minister, from his house in the Old City of Jerusalem; the repeal of the emergency regulations, which included the administrative detention, deportation, the demolition of houses, and other collective punishments; the release of detainees; a halt to the expropriation of land and the establishment of new settlements; the abolition of value

added tax; and above all the dispersal of the municipal, village and refugee-camp councils and the holding of democratic elections in the occupied territories. 29 The first UNL leaflet's new slogan—"No sound will silence the voice of the intifada"—sounded like a revolutionary rhetoric but in the five years that followed it was proved that its every word came from the very core of the hearts of the masses.

Civil Disobedience

The next logical step of the intifada was non-violent civil disobedience very much like Mahatma Gandhi's movement in India. The editor of Al-Fajr, Hanna Siniora, called for the civil disobedience movement which spread like wild fire in the occupied territories. 30 It started as a protest against the deportation of Palestinians. Palestinians boycotted the Israeli products starting from the Israeli cigarettes and soft drinks. It was followed by non-payment of taxes.

29 Ze'ev Schiff and Ehd Ya'ari, no. 7, pp. 193-94.
30 Daoud Kuttab, no. 28, p. 5.
Influence of Gandhism

Long before the intifada started Mubarak Awad was working on the theory of non-violence to be applied in the Palestinian context. In the late 1960s he was jailed by Israel. After spending 15 years in the U.S. he came back with a doctorate in Psychology and started the Centre for the Study of Non-Violence which, the Israelis suspected, was being financed by the PLO. Mubarak Awad offered guidance to villagers whose land had been confiscated by the occupation authorities. He also organised quiet demonstrations, planting olive trees and other welfare activities. In order to apply the Gandhian philosophy in the Palestinian context he gave a call for a limited Palestinian "swadeshi": Palestinians should buy only the products manufactured in the occupied territories at least one day in a month - the first Monday of every month. As his small experiments failed for lack of organisational network, he turned to writing. Awad, in fact, partly filled the gap created by the PLO's two-pronged policy of armed struggle from without and forebearance within, so that his Centre for the Study of Non-Violence became an address for Palestinians with all kinds of grievances. 32

31 Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari no.7, pp. 240-41.
32 Ibid.
Awad translated Gene Sharp's classic on the benefits of non-violent resistance into Arabic. In the beginning of the intifada, he published Frontier Gandhi Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's biography, *A Soldier of Non-Violence in Islam*, to bring home the point that the philosophy of non-violence was compatible with the Muslim tradition. These books, however, were barely noticed by the people he tried to reach. However, his call for civil disobedience, which was published in several versions in November 1986, was in much demand. Without denying the justice of an armed struggle Awad wrote: "I propose a better method at this stage. Non-violent means would go a long way toward paralysing Israel's destructive war machine" and allow broad classes of society to take an active part in the struggle, rather than just follow it over the radio. By winning over critical sectors of Israeli and Western public opinion, these methods would also lead to Israel's moral and political isolation.

Mubarak Awad suggested prayer protests, silent processions, the wearing of yellow badges or prison suits, and clean-up campaigns. He also suggested

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33 Ibid.
that when the Israelis go for new settlements, the Palestinian should throw themselves in front of the bulldozers as a mark of protest. They should block the roads. His argument was that if the Palestinians displayed their determination to die for their land, all would see that they had no interest in harming anyone. This, according to Awad, was the ultimate form of guerilla action and in the Palestinian context the concept of unarmed fedayeen was a revolutionary one. For this he prescribed 120 possible methods of non-cooperation with the Israeli authorities: boycot the Israeli military occupation authorities, collaborators and court; non-payment of value added tax, violation of curfews; and setting up of "shadow administration" or "completely autonomous infrastructure" as nucleus of future independence. Awad's ideas became popular during the intifada but he was deported by the Israeli authorities though he resorted to hunger strike as a protest. That was Israeli authorities violent answer to the apostle of non-violence.

Mubarak Awad's ideas were incorporated in the Unified National Leadership's handbills which seized the imagination of the masses. The UNL made a

35 Ibid.
synthesis between violent resistance and purely non-violent methods in the Palestinian context. It, therefore, prescribed civil disobedience and non-cooperation along with the use of stones to confront the Israeli military authorities. When the Israeli repression was intensified the intifada also used guerilla attacks against the Israeli military targets. The stones were no match for sophisticated weapons of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), the settler Jews and the collaborators. Hence in the Palestinian context the intifada used relatively less violence than was expected.

Hamas - The Islamic Resistance Movement

One of the last organisations to enter the Palestinian revolution - outside the PLO framework - is Hamas which was born out of the intifada. The emergence of Hamas - the Islamic Resistance Movement - marked the beginning of the true political revival of the Islamic Forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the face of Israeli occupation on the one hand, and the national secular forces led by the PLO on the other.
For a long time, Islamic fundamentalists were dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood - Ikhwan al-Muslimin - the only organisation of its kind which had its roots in Egypt. The Brotherhood's aim has been to raise the level of Islamic consciousness. According to its teaching, liberation from occupation will happen only when the people have become true Muslims and God will then help these committed Muslims to rid themselves of foreign or secular rule and establish an Islamic state.\(^36\) The Muslim Brotherhood had shied away from active resistance against the Israeli occupation. That was the reason why it could not emerge as a popular Palestinian organisation. \(^37\)

This situation underwent a cataclysmic change with the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising. For the first time Brotherhood played an active role in the resistance. This was done through Hamas, the organisation it created from its own ranks expressly for that purpose. \(^38\)

Hamas soon overshadowed its parent organisation the Muslim Brotherhood and became a dominant political organisation in the occupied territories, especially

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\(^36\) Daoud Kuttab, "Fundamentalists on the march", Middle East International, 24 October 1997, pp. 8-10.

\(^37\) Ibid.

in the Gaza Strip with a magnitude that parallels that of Al-Fatah.

Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood had been founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna and gradually spread to other regions of the arab world. Al-Banna, in his attempt to revitalise the Islamic call, laid emphasis on three elements: revival, organisation, and upbringing.

The Brotherhood's relation with Palestine dates back to 1935 when Hasan al-Banna sent his brother Abd al-Rahman al-Banna to spread the message. In 1945 the group established its first branch in Jerusalem followed by other branches in other towns of Palestine. The other source of inspiration for Palestinian Islamists is Izz al-Din al-Qassem, a Robinhood like figure and the leader of armed resistance in the 1930s.

After the creation of Israel in 1948, and annexation of West Bank by Jordan, the Brotherhood maintained good and cordial relations with Jordan punctuated

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by occasional tensions. Its activities in West Bank were confined to the social and religious spheres. In the Gaza Strip its relations with Egyptian administration were problematic and the Brotherhood was banned. After 1967 the Brotherhood continued to concentrate mainly on what it described as "the upbringing of an Islamic generation" through the establishment of religious schools, charity associations, social clubs, and so on. The Brotherhood's emphasis on the Islamic restructuring of society and religious education seemed to have little relevance for Palestinians who were seeking liberation from foreign occupation. The various fedayeen groups had greater appeal and the apathy of the Brothers to resistance compelled many of them to desert the organisation. At times members of the Brotherhood were attacked by Palestinians on charges of collaboration with Israel. As the Muslim Brotherhood was staunchly anti-communist the West had found a natural ally in it to counter communism in the Arab World during the cold war period. It, therefore, did not indulge in anti-U.S. or anti-Zionist activities.

40 Ibid.
Once the intifada started the centre of attention was focused on Sheikh Ahmad Ismail Yassin, an expert on Islamic law, who lived in the Zaitoun quarter of Gaza. The thin, round-faced Yassin was almost totally paralysed as a result of an illness in those December days of 1987. But his intelligent mind was razor sharp. His style of speech was tense, caustic, gruff and was spiced with quotations from the Holy Quran and other sources. Because of his illness he rarely left his house and found it difficult to lecture or to write. Earlier in 1984, despite his grim and failing health, Yassin was sentenced to a term of 13 years in prison as 60 rifles were recovered from his house. He was, however, released after one year as part of the Jebril prisoner exchange but was not allowed to resume his position as Chairman of the Islamic Congress although he remained as the supreme leader.

As the uprising continued and the pressure on him mounted, a reluctant Yassin relented more and more. For over two years the Brotherhood was undergoing a slow process of "Palestinization", shorting its accent from broader scope of the "Islamic nation".

41 Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, no. 7.
and the "community of believers" onto the more nationalist concerns. At the outset of uprising some of his followers urged him to abandon his policy of tarbiyeh (education) and da'awah (preaching) in favour of more militant line of nationalist resistance. Yassin took up the leadership of the uprising as he found that the members of his Brotherhood had already been overtaken by the militant mood in the streets.\textsuperscript{42} Intifada was a unique revolution in which the leaders followed the masses.

In January Yassin got in touch with his colleagues in West Bank. He assigned Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Brotherhood activist in West Bank and one of the young preachers at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque, to establish with his colleagues a branch of Hamas there. Hamami became the liaison between Sheikh Ahmad Yassin on the one hand and Hamas command in the west Bank and the Brotherhood command in Jordan on the other.

It was in February 1988, after the establishment of the Unified National leadership, that Yassin took the momentous step of creating a new Islamic radical organisation which would operate clandestinely.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., pp. 221-22.
Its nomenclature was "Hamas" - an acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement (Harakat al-Mugawama al Islamiya) whose literal meaning is "enthusiasm" "courage, or "zeal". This sharp deviation from the Brotherhood's approach of non-resistance was not an easy decision for Yassin who had earlier instructed his followers not to carry arms. In order to protect the institution of the Islamic Congress, which he had built with a good deal of efforts and care, he did his best to create the impression of a distinction between Hamas and the older public movement, Islamic Brotherhood. 43

The command structure of Hamas was decided at a meeting in Yassin's home. Three Islamic Congress activists were appointed to serve as a command: one to be responsible for political affairs, the second for military matters, and the third for propaganda, especially the printing and distribution of handbills which, however, required Yassin's personal approval. 44 The Gaza Strip was divided into five districts, each headed by an operations officer. A special liaison, Jamil al-Tamini, was appointed to maintain regular contact with Brotherhood activists in the West Bank. Contact was also

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
made with most of the members of religious establishment and well-to-do businessmen who were reluctant to cooperate with the new underground organization. The young recruits forced their elders to support Hamas whose cells gradually appeared in the West Bank cities and towns, especially in Nablus and Tulkarem.

The first to be recruited from the Brotherhood were its "umal" (full activists) whose cells were amalgamated into an "usrah" or "Shu'abah" (branch). These activities centred around certain mosques that were often used to conceal stress of "cold weapons" (knives, clubs, and the like), secret correspondence and even people wanted by the authorities. 45 Yassin became the bearer of the code name "100", and a special secret apparatus was created for him called "Majed", which became its security and intelligence arm. It collected evidence against collaborators who were executed. It invented a new system of concealing firearms and other "hot weapons" (usually acquired from Israeli soldiers) and a method of "corresponding" about these caches by making tiny gashes on tree trunks and electricity poles. In course of time this super secret arm was used to set fields and forests ablaze in Israel and torch

the shops of strike-breakers in Gaza. It also attacked Israeli soldiers. Hamas became popular after the second month of intifada and played a leading role in Gaza, and by the summer of 1988 it became a force to be reckoned with.

Sheikh Yassin's idea of creating a separate organisation was a tactical move. His calculation probably was that in case intifada collapsed the Brotherhood would disclaim Hamas and escape Israeli retribution for its participation. But if the intifada succeeded the Brotherhood could derive benefit by claiming Hamas as its own. Also in order to inject a new meaning, new blood and dynamism into the resistance movement Yassin floated Hamas which succeeded in seizing the imagination of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. It was an achievement for the Brotherhood which could get rid of the stigma of collaboration with Israel.

**Ideology of Hamas**

The ideological orientation of Hamas is revealed through its charter issued on 18 August 1988. Hamas's aims, objectives and strategies are explicitly

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46 Ibid.

47 Ziad Abu-Amr, no. 38, p. 11.
stated in the charter. 48 With this Charter or the Covenant Hamas opened a new chapter in the Palestinian revolution outside the PLO framework. It is a direct challenge to the PLO charter. Hamas preaches a doctrine distinctly its own and establishes itself as a separate political entity. The Charter hailed a new era in the history of the Muslim Brotherhood and the changeover to an open, energetic and dynamic struggle against Israel. Hamas calls itself a branch of Muslim Brotherhood Society. Quoting from the Quran, the Charter intends to infuse a new dimension to the resistance.

The Islamic Resistance Movement: Islam is its system. From Islam it reaches for its ideology, fundamental precepts, and world view of life, the universe and humanity, and it judges all its actions according to Islam and is inspired by Islam to correct its errors. (Article 1).49

Hamas identifies itself as a link in the long chain of the Jihad against the Zionist occupation, which is connected and tied with the initiation (of the Jihad) of the martyr Izz al-Din al-Qassem and his Mujahid brothers in 1936.


49 Ibid., p. 123
Even though the Islamic Resistance Movement looks forward to fulfil the promise of Allah no matter how long it takes because the prophet of Allah (saas) says:

The Last Hour would not come until the Muslims fight against the Jews and the Muslims would kill them, and until the Jews would hide themselves behind a stone or a tree and a stone or tree would say: Muslim or Servant of Allah there is a Jew behind me; come and kill him; but the tree of Gharqad would not say it, for it is the tree of the Jews. (Article 7)

Enunciating its strategy in Article 11, the Islamic Resistance Movement firmly believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf (Trust) upon all Muslim generations till "the day of Resurrection." It is not right to give it up nor any part of it. Neither a single Arab state nor all the Arab states, neither a king nor a leader, nor all the kings or leaders, nor any organisation - Palestinian or Arab - have such authority.

The Hamas rules out any kind of "international conference" or peaceful solutions "to solve the Palestinian problem." "As far as the ideology of the Islamic Resistance Movement is concerned, giving up any part of Palestine is like giving up part of its religion. The nationalism of the Islamic

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50 Ibid., pp. 124-125.
51 Ibid., p. 125.
resistance movement is part of its religion." (Article 13). It further explains that these conferences are neither able to deliver the people their rights nor do justice to the oppressed. "Those conferences are nothing but a form of enforcing the rule of the unbelievers in the land of Muslims. And when have the unbelievers justly treated the believers." 52

It preaches Jihad as a solution to the Palestine problem and calls the initiatives, options, and international conferences "a waste of time" and "child's play".

Propounding its strategy against Zionism Hamas says that the problem of liberating Palestine is related to three spheres: the Palestinian sphere, the Arab sphere, and the Islamic sphere. Since Palestine is an Islamic land accommodating the first Qibla, 53 The third Holy Sanctuary, 54 the place where the "ascent" of Prophet Mohammad to "heaven" took place, "the liberation of Palestine is obligatory for every Muslim", no matter where he is (Article 14)

52 Ibid., p. 126
53 Qibla: The direction in which the Muslims face during prayer. During the formative period of Islam, Muslims faced Al-Aqsa Mosque (Jerusalem) during prayer. It was later on that they faced Mecca. The incident is recorded in the Holy Quran.
54 The Third Holy Sanctuary refers to the authentic narration of the Prophet in which he mentions the sanctity and blessings of Bayt al-Maqdes and the rewards of praying at Masjid al-Aqsa. The first and second holy places
Contrary to popular belief that Hamas was against the PLO Article 27 of the Charter made it clear:

The Palestine Liberation Organisation is closest of the close to the Islamic Resistance Movement, in that it is the father, the brother, the relative, or friend; and does the Muslim offend his father, brother, relative, or friend?55

Although Hamas is against secularist ideology it does not criticise the PLO for adopting it. What it says is that being affected by the then prevailing situation the PLO adopted the idea of a secular state and they (Hamas) considered it. If the PLO adopts Islam the Hamas would be its soldiers. "Until this .... the position of the Islamic Resistance Movement toward the Palestine Liberation Organisation is the position of a son toward his father" 56 This was, of course, a Hamas tactics not to antagonise the PLO before it became strong enough to do so.

The Hamas makes an appeal to the Arab countries surrounding Israel to open their borders for the Mujahidin of the Arab and Islamic countries so that they can take their role and join their efforts with their Muslim brothers of Palestine.

56 Ibid.
We shouldn't lose this opportunity to remind every Muslim that when the Jews occupied immaculate Jerusalem in 1967 they stood on the stairs of the blessed Masjid al-Aqsa loudly chanting "Muhammad has died and left girls behind".57

While sounding jingoistic on the one hand, it preaches tolerance for other religions on the other hand. "In the shadow of Islam it is possible for the followers of the three religions - Islam, Christianity and Judaism - to live in peace and harmony...." (Article 31)58 It also ensures the followers of other religions security over their person, property and rights. (Article 6). Hamas also defines in the Charter the role of women in resistance, social welfare, education, art and writing. Giving positive interpretation to the shari'at law it said women do not require the permission of husbands and parents to come out of the houses to throw stones at the Israeli forces.59

Palestinians are basically a secular people. Despite the Zionist provocations invoking religion to justify their colonisation, aggression, repression and genocide, the Palestinians, since 1948, never

57 Ibid., p. 131.
58 Ibid., pp. 131-32.
59 Mehmood Husain, no. 39.
resorted to religion in their resistance against Israel. It is for the first time since Palestine was wiped off the world map that a prominent section in the occupied areas resorted to religion as a part of their resistance nationalism. The rise of Hamas could be attributed to the failure of the U.S. and Israel to open dialogue with the secular PLO.60 The humiliation of the Palestinians, attempt to obliterate their national identity, the worst type of Israeli repressions, killings, tortures, demolition of Palestinian houses, the aggressive action of the armed Jewish settlers in the occupied territories and the failure of all other ideologies gave birth to Hamas. It is the Islamic answer to Zionism.

Hamas does not claim to be an alternative to the PLO. But its repeated reference to Islam is seen as a kind of challenge to the PLO. Hamas condemned the PLO's acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 242 and 338 and its recognition of the state of Israel. It has also rejected the idea of co-existence with Israel after the establishment of independent Palestine. Hence, it has opposed the PLO-Israel Accord of 13 September 1993. Since the Hebron massacre it has launched violent attacks

60 Ibid.
against Israelis, and seen as the main threat to the peace process.

**Hamas Strategy**

Yassin's greatest achievement was his takeover of Al-Azhar, the Islamic University in Gaza. Purging the PLO factions, a group of academics headed by Drs. Abd-alaziz Ghantisi, Mahmoud Zahur, and Mahmoud Siam - all known disciples of Yassin - turned the faculty and student body of 700 men into a reserve of disciplined "soldiers". In the West Bank many of the members of the Brotherhood held important positions in the religious establishments (founded by Jordan), in the small Islamic college in Hebron, and in a score of charitable societies. In Nablus they controlled the allocation of welfare to 10,000 needy families, granting loans and scholarships, hiring lawyers for detainees, paying compensation for property damaged by the Israeli army, and running orphanages, homes for the aged, and a high school.

The key to much of the success of intifada was the unity of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Unified

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61 Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, no.7, p.225.
63 Ibid.
National Leadership (UNL) in spite of Israeli media's portrayal otherwise. All these three groups coordinated their activities. When 18, 19, 20 March (1990) were all declared strike days by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Unified National Leadership (UNL) respectively people felt three days of strike was too much and Hamas willingly withdrew its strike call in the Gaza Strip and Islamic Jihad theirs in West Bank. The truce between Hamas and PFLP activists in Khan Yunis in1990 was cited by the Israeli press as an example of extremists of right and left uniting. Support for both Hamas and leftist groups had grown since the intifada. Hamas military activities were intended not only to strike at the occupation authorities but also to embarrass the PLO's negotiations at the international level.

The Hamas resistance fighters proved themselves to be too tough to be cracked by the Shin Bet, the Israeli intelligence wing. In April 1988 it came out with 16 page handbook entitled The Jihad fighter Facing Interrogation and Torture. It was an attempt by Hamas to teach its disciples

64 Ibid.
65 Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, no. 7, pp. 232-32.
how to see themselves against the worst physical and psychological torture that the Israelis applied. The hand book promised that those who proudly defied their interrogators would be rewarded for the sanctification of Allah. It would not be claimed that Islam was superior to secularism unless Hamas cadres were known to "spit out their blood and teeth under the whip". According to the handbook, an iron will was needed to withstand deprivation, beatings, whippings, electric shocks, and threats: "We must remember that the enemy's strength is naught compared to the Allah's grace". Faced with a detainee who organised silence, the Israelis were doomed to failure in one of the two ways: if the torture grew worse, their barbarism would get exposed; if they stopped, the prisoner would come out winner. Detainees were also warned not to believe an interrogator who told them that other prisoners had already confessed, even if he trotted out a number of detainee's friends and showed him statements with their signatures. A prisoner was to tell his interrogators from the start that he knew the secrets but would die under torture rather than reveal it.

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66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
Another Hamas handbill warned how not to fall into the trap of Israeli Shin Bet which was trying to hook agents through hashish and other drugs. It caught young women in its net by having "stray dogs" (Palestinian collaborators) seduce them: "They keep pictures of the couple and the letters passed between them, threatening the girls with exposure unless they agree to serve the Intelligence (pepole)." The handbill also warned that the Shin Bet was known to photograph girls in their underwear while they were trying on dresses in shops and then blackmailing them into informing on their friends. Parents were warned not to let their daughters roam about on the way home from school. They were also warned that they did not visit hairdressers and shops unchaperoned. Youngmen were warned of alcohol, pornography, and loose women who flirt around the streets. Whether due to all this detailed advice or simply to a greater dedication to their cause, the Hamas cadres displayed far greater tenacity during interrogation than their PLO counterparts. They also displayed strong qualities of leadership in the prison and detention camps that many other Palestinians were drawn into their groups,

69 Ibid., p. 231.
adopting Islam as a way of life and joining the underground movement. Hama...rolled prudery from an embattled tradition to a weapon of the underground Islamic radicals; and sometimes it even called the intifada by different names: sahwah (awakening) or infijar (explosion). While Arafat promised a homeland Hamas promised something beyond - the paradise.

The popularity of Hamas could be attributed to the dedication and sincerity of its cadres in providing critically needed services and organizing community activities. Hamas runs the best social service network in the Gaza Strip. It organized zakat (alms) committees to which all Muslims are supposed to donate seven percent of their income. The zakat is donated to the poor and needy who need it. Unlike other political factions in the strip, Hamas has understood the fact that under prevailing conditions influence on the ground is first through social work. Structured and well organized, Hamas is trusted by the poor to deliver its promises and is seen as far less corrupt and subject to patronage than its secular nationalist

70 Ibid., p. 233.
71 Ibid., pp. 231-35.
counterparts. In Gaza people acknowledged that Hamas is the only group they trust to disburse UNRWA food donations to the Palestinians.

Hamas Diplomacy

Hamas has maintained good relations with the Muslim Brotherhood of Jordan which has provided it with a wide range of doctrinal, moral, political and material support. Hamas has also enjoyed the support of Islamic movements of Egypt, Gulf states including Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Algeria and Tunisia, and also the Islamic communities and organisations of the U.S. and Europe. 73

Hamas maintained relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states up to the Gulf War. But its relations with these countries deteriorated in the post-Gulf war period. Hamas agreed with that of the PLO's position which opposed the Iraq's invasion of Kuwait but strongly opposed the massive foreign military intervention in the region. 74 However, it improved its relations with Iran after the Iraq-Iran war. Following the Gulf war it further improved its relations with that country opening an office in Tehran. It is said that Iran is providing military training to Hamas cadres both

73 Ziad Abu-Amr, no. 38, p.16.
74 Ibid.
in Iran and at pro-Iranian Hizboallah bases in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{75} Dissenting opinion — and indeed an opposition and Islamic Jihad at a conference held in Tehran to protest the convening of the Madrid Peace Conference in October 1991. As Iran is opposed to Arafat it wanted to use Hamas to counter his influence.

Hamas depends for its finances on a number of sources: local contributions, donations from individuals and Islamic movements abroad, and some of the governments. However, Hamas has maintained that it does not receive donations from government sources.\textsuperscript{76} This position of Hamas remains nebulous — at best contested. In the post-Gulf war period its financial position dwindled as Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Movements of those countries stopped giving funds. Iran, a new donor, was reported to have given $13 million.\textsuperscript{77} It is not clear whether these funds come from the governmental sources or from private parties. The PLO, at the instance of Yasser Arafat, gave financial support, at least once, to Hamas. Some of the Arab regimes have tried to use Hamas against the PLO.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} Al-Burayq, 25 December 1992, p. 13 quoted in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} Sara M. Roy, no. 72, p. 29.
The PLO invited Hamas to participate in the Palestine National Council but it demanded 40 to 50 per cent of the seats as a precondition to join this Palestinian Parliament-in-exile. It was impossible for the PLO to meet this condition. Hamas is opposed to the PLO's abandonment of revolutionary slogans and shift to political pragmatism. This enabled Hamas to fill the resulting ideological and doctrinal vacuum at a time of increasing disillusionment in the nationalist programme.78

Even Israel was lenient towards Hamas in the initial phase thinking that it would reduce the effectiveness of the PLO. The differences between Hamas and PLO were blown out of proportion by the Israeli and the western media. Halil Koka, a founder of Hamas, made it clear in Kuwait after his deportation from Gaza: "we recognise the PLO as the leader of its constituent organisations", but he delineated the ideological differences. He further added:

After all the Jews are brought together in Palestine not to benefit from a homeland but to dig their grave there and save the world from their pollution. Just as the Muslim pilgrim redeems his soul in Mecca by offering up a sacrifice, so the Jews will be slaughtered on the rocks of al-Aqsa.79

78 Ziad Abu-Amr, no. 38, pp. 15-17.
79 Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, no.7, p. 235.
After the Hamas's Charter was released Israel and the U.S. were alarmed to see the Islamic answer - that was silent since the beginning of the Palestinian struggle - to Zionism which was the pioneer in using religion to justify their occupation of Palestine in the 20th century. A number of Israeli experts were of the opinion that the "fundamentalists" posed a far greater threat than the PLO. Rise of Hamas increased the bargaining power of PLO in international diplomacy.

When Israel failed to extinguish the intifada fire it resorted to deportations. Sheikh Yassin was arrested in May 1989 and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. Dr. Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi took over as the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Prominent Hamas leaders of West Bank, Hussain Abu Kwik, Fadil Satih and Hosan Yusuf, were among the 415 deportees expelled by Israel in December 1992. The mass deportations of December 1992 was aimed at weakening Hamas and the intifada. However, the armed actions by the martyr 'Izzal-Din al-Qassem Battalions' of Hamas were not affected, as Israel could not succeed in arresting any of their leaders.
The deportation of 415 Hamas people drew worldwide sympathy for the activists and the Palestinians, and accorded an international stature to Hamas. Israel was reviled at the U.N. and all over the world.

Although Hamas enjoyed a great deal of popularity, its performance in the 1993 elections to Gaza's Engineering, Medical and Bar Associations was far from satisfactory. It was reduced to the minority position. In the post-Accord period it has emerged as the main opposition group to the peace plan. Its popularity is not because of its Islamic tenets but because of its nationalist aspirations to liberate the whole of Palestine.

Islamic Jihad

The disillusionment with Muslim Brotherhood led to the creation of the Islamic Jihad movement in the early 1980s, several years before the emergence of Hamas. Fathia al-Shaqiqi and Abdal Aziz Auda, the two 1948 refugees who grew up in Gaza and studied at Cairo University, founded the Islamic Jihad

in the occupied territories. Both were influenced by the trends within the Muslim Brotherhood Society in Egypt, and notably by the militant Islamic groups that had emerged from the ranks of the Egyptian Brotherhood in the mid-1970s, al-Takfir wa al-Hijra (The Atonment and Holy Flight), and Tandhim al-Jihad (The Jihad Organisation).  

Ideologically, the Islamic Jihad shares with the Muslim Brotherhood the same basic precepts concerning the need for the establishment of an Islamic state and for the application of Islamic principles in an Islamic society. The main difference between the two groups lay in the place of Palestine in their priorities and how to liberate it. For Muslim Brotherhood, the first priority was the Islamic transformation of society, which it saw as a pre-requisite to the liberation of Palestine. Brotherhood was of the opinion that armed struggle (Jihad) could not be undertaken until the society was reformed, until secular ideas were abandoned and Islam adopted. But Islamic Jihad, putting the priorities differently, advocated armed struggle

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81 Ziad Abu-Amr, no. 38, p.8.
as its strategy for political action without waiting for the Islamisation of society. 82 This organisation rejected the Brotherhood's reformist approach and traditionalist ideas and practices in favour of revolutionary action by an Islamic vanguard. For the Islamic Jihad, the problems of Arab society cannot be solved by gradual measures or truce, and patching but by "decisiveness and revolution". 83

Islamic Jihad rejected the Muslim Brotherhood's policy of coexistence with the Arab regimes, especially those having strong ties with the West like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan. the Jihad called it an "actual security belt for Israel" and regarded the Arab regimes and Israel as "two faces of the same coin; they are both the fruit of the Western invasion of the Arab World." 84 While the Brotherhood criticised Iran after the Iraq-Iran war broke out, Jihad considered Ayotollah Khomeini as an important source of ideological inspiration.

83 See Ibid., p. 9.
84 Al-Fajr, 28 August 1987.
Islamic Jihad's commitment to the armed struggle against Israel suddenly made it an enemy of Israeli military occupation forces. The earlier policy of fundamentalists' tacit support (for Israel) had backfired because many of the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood moved to the Islamic Jihad for its wider appeal and popularity. 85

This new phenomenon was welcomed by the Palestinian nationalists because priority was being given to the resistance against occupation. Al-Fatah cooperated with Islamic Jihad in its training. For the Islamic groups, cooperation with Fatah was needed in the important areas of supplying funds, military training and weapons. 86 The members of the Islamic Jihad became popular following the sacrifices they made in 1987 while resisting the Israeli military even before the intifada began.

During the intifada Islamic Jihad's revolutionary armed wing known as the Islamic Vanguard joined the revolutionary upsurge. Its speciality was guerilla attack on the Israeli military targets. It was less exposed on the streets. Its leaders including Abdal Aziz Auda were arrested and put

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85 Daoud Kuttab, no. 36, p. 10.
86 Ibid.
into the jail. Its ideologue Bashir Moussa Nafa, who maintained good relations with Al-Fatah in Jordan and the Iranian government, guided the movement during the intifada. But the three Fatah officials, Bassem Sultan Hamdi, Marouin al-Kiali, and Mohammad Hassan Bahis, who were coordinating with the Jihad activists, were expelled by Jordan under pressure from the U.S. at the instance of Israel. After they reached Linassol, they were killed in a booby-trapped car engineered by Israel.

The Islamic Jihad, a numerically weak organisation, suffered the second setback in May 1988 when Israeli occupation authorities arrested many of the members; and three months later, Ziad Nahal, one of the leading figures, was deported. Jihad became popular for its rhythmic slogans which seized the imagination of the Palestinians during the intifada:

"Oh Shamir, tell Rabin/that we are the sons of Saladin" "Oh Rabin, tell Shamir/my great and mighty people to fear." 88

Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Jihad is not opposed to the PLO. Despite its Islamic view of history and disapproval of PLO's political

87 Ze'ev and Ehud Ya'ari no.7, pp. 228-29.
88 Ibid.
programme and diplomatic moves it does not see itself as an alternative or a rival to the PLO. Rather it complements the PLO. The Jihad cooperated with Al-Fatah in its attack against the Israeli military targets in occupied territories. That is the reason why the Brotherhood accuses Islamic Jihad of being "Islamic Fatah". It carried out some spectacular attacks against Israel when the implementation of the accord was delayed.

Role of Graffiti

Right from the beginning of the intifada, graffiti supplemented the leaflets of the UNL and instructions passed by word of mouth. Walls on the main streets in the towns and villages in the entire occupied territories were alive with Arabic slogans which were artistically painted. In the absence of press freedom the graffiti became the newspaper. If the leaflets of the UNL or Hamas or Islamic Jihad were like the national dailies, the graffiti served the purpose of local newspapers. It also provided a voice to the grass roots of the intifada. The recurring symbols were the clenched fist, the "V" sign, the rifle, the flag and

the map of Palestine. The fist represented the strike force of the Palestinians; the "V" the Churchillian sign for steadfastness in the face of adversity; map, flag and gun were often combined, as with the PFLP mural which was sometimes painted in the distinctive chequered pattern of the Keffiyeh; and "Fatah" was written into a Kalachnikov submachine gun.

Wall writings were the directions of the intifada to organise strikes, civil disobedience, non-co-operation, boycott of Israeli goods etc., and also to boost up the morale of the masses against Israel's barbaric acts. "We will not be deterred by the demolition of houses,". The Israelis are not stronger than the United States. The Palestinians are not weaker than the Vietnamese." The graffiti covered almost all subjects and no space was left untouched. On every garbage bin the Palestinians wrote "Israel", or "Shamir's Office". The then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was referred to as a donkey, Rabin as a monkey and Sharon as an elephant. Swastikas and references to Nazism-Fascism were something very common. Palestinians made it clear that they were facing the twin evils and that Nazism

90 Ibid., p. 17.
is the other name of Zionism. The graffiti slogans were often lyrical and rhythmic: "We don't want the Shekel, or the dinar, we want the currency of Aby Ammar" (Yasser Arafat). All these graffiti slogans aimed at influencing the course of international peace conference. It was the subjugated people's attempt to be heard in the international diplomacy.

Hamas used to write in green with the Dome of the Rock or the Quran often with a finger pointing towards heaven; Fatah in black; and the left groups in red. The red star signified the Democratic Front (PFLP), the hammer and sickle the Communist Party. It was Hamas that gave the slogan "no left, no right, Hamas is the light" and yet its actions proved its tactical unity with the PFLP and PDIL. "No to liquidationist solutions" and "the Baker Plan will not save the Shamir Plan" were common to all rejectionists.91 "Fatah" was written all over the occupied territories with pictures of Abu Jihad, PLO's Defence Minister killed by the Israeli commando squad on 16 April 1988, embracing Arafat. When Abu Iyad, PLO's Prime Minister, was assassinated by Israel in 1992, his pictures appeared

91 Ibid.
on the walls. When Israel organised the Rishon Lezion massacre in May 1990 the wall slogans called for revenge and for turning intifada into armed struggle.

Israeli forces launched war against the graffiti writers beginning with the first Palestinians who were shot dead in August-September 1989 while writing on their own walls. Many more Palestinians were killed for these most non-violent activities. The Israelis forced Palestinians to erase their graffiti. If it was found on anyone's house he or she was also fined. The Israeli soldiers launched clean-up operations with black paint and spray guns on their backs. By 9 June 1988 the orders were issued by Israeli military commander of West Bank that refusal to erase graffiti was punishable by a five-year prison sentence or a fine of 1,500 Israeli shekels - about $750 - or both. Those who were fined included Dr. Saeb Erekat who was later named as one of the delegates to Madrid Peace Conference.

**Prisoners' Intifada**

Another effective strategy of the five-year old intifada was hunger strike by prisoners. True to its Gandhian methods the intifada was reborn

92 Ibid.
in the Israeli prisons as thousands of prisoners went on hunger strike demanding improvement of prison conditions. The Israelis faced a great dilemma as they were haunted by the intifada both inside and outside the jails, inside and outside Israel. As rounds and rounds of peace negotiations starting from Madrid on 30 October 1991 did not move even an inch towards a peaceful solution, Palestinians in the occupied territories were plagued by ennui and boredom casting doubts on cessation of occupation. The failure of peace negotiators to produce any concrete results till the end of 1992 made the situation desperate. The Israeli Chief peace negotiator to the Peace Conference Eliyakim Rubenstein and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin admitted that the Palestinian community was discouraged about the lack of results.93 But the Israelis dismissed the hunger strike in prisons as a "political ploy" by groups which were against the peace negotiations. As the seventh round of negotiations was fast approaching the Israelis agreed to concede some of the demands on 15 October 1992. Israelis were torn between making important concessions to reduce the tension and tightening

up to show that they did not make concessions under pressure. The Israeli "concessions" were more to hoodwink the international public opinion and the peace negotiators than a reality. The soldiers acted unhesitatingly without any compunction; journalists were relentlessly beaten up and barred from covering violence; and Jewish settlers' revenge actions did not stop. Consequently the intifada was further intensified with violence. The Palestinian 'slave labour' revolted against the Israeli exploiters. This action was to supplement the hunger strike going on inside the jail. The prison commissioner Gabbi Amir had initially commented: "Let them strike. When they get hungry, they'll give up." Finally the prolonged hunger strike forced the Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal to make certain concessions. Although it was done under compulsion Israel tried to create a better image for itself at the seventh round of peace negotiations which had not gone beyond procedural wrangles, modalities and Israeli obduracy.

94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
Israeli Death Squads

While the violence from the intifada was inconsequential, the Israeli authorities increased their brutalities, torture of the worst kind and killings to suppress and terrorise the Palestinians. The "Algerianisation" of Israel's campaign against the intifada proceeded through the increasing use of official death squads.97 Besides the death squads the other similarity between the intifada and Algerian struggle was that in both cases extremist elements in the local settler communities emerged as a third party to the conflict between the government and the nationalists. The third party is the Jewish settler community whose number is around 120,000. An Israeli squad comes in uniform or without uniform and kills Palestinians irrespective of whether he has participated in the intifada or not. The victim's corpse was sometimes publicly paraded to strike terror into the hearts of the populace and no attempt was made to provide medical attention, which sometimes, when offered, was refused by the killers. The Israeli government shed up these murders and threatened the correspondents in Israel of Reuters and the Financial Times to cancel their accreditation and to expel them.98

98 Ibid.
Amnesty Report

The Amnesty International's Report covering the period from January through December 1991 illustrated the shameful state of affairs during the intifada:

About 18,000 Palestinians, including prisoners of conscience, were arrested in the context of the intifada (uprising) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Around 2,000 were administratively detained without charge or trial... Some 11,000 security prisoners and detainees were held at the end of the year, including about 350 administrative detainees. 99

The Amnesty report further added that thousands of Palestinians were tried by military courts on charges which included membership of illegal organisations and throwing stones or petrol bombs. They were usually held in prolonged incommunicado detention, not brought before judges during the first 18 days after arrest and denied visits by lawyers or families for longer periods. Confessions allegedly extracted under duress were often the primary evidence against them.

Many pleaded guilty apparently in order to avoid the pre-trial detention period lasting longer than a likely sentence. The much heavier sentences imposed on those convicted after trial also deterred many from confessing charges against them. 100

100 Ibid.
The Amnesty International also reported that 
Palestinian, detainees were systematically tortured 
or ill treated during the interrogation.

Methods included beatings all over the body, 
often concentrated on sensitive areas such 
as genitals; hooding with dirty sacks; sleep 
depprivation; shackling in painful positions; 
and confinement in small dark cells called 
"closets" or, when kept cold, "refrigerators."

Ever since the outbreak of intifada brutalities 
are part of the Israeli repressive measures. The 
following incident is one of examples of Israeli 
torture and brutalities: Four Palestinians were 
buried alive in the first week of February 1990 
at Salim, a village near Nablus. The Israeli 
soldiers, after beating the four young Palestinians, 
made them lie face down and walked on their legs 
and heads till they became unconscious. The soldiers 
then ordered the bulldozer to cover them with earth. 
Horrified villagers witnessed this gruesome ordeal 
and dug up the buried victims.

**Israeli Lawyer's Crusade against Israel**

During the intifada the Israeli judiciary turned 
into a farce. Felicia Langer, a renowned Israeli 
lawyer whose defense of Palestinians for almost

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101 Ibid.
102 J.P. Sharma, "Israel's War on Human Rights", **Patriot**, 
(New Delhi) 22 March 1990.
a quarter century had earned her both admiration and enmity, closed her law practice in May 1990. On the eve of quitting Israel as a mark of protest she condemned the Israeli judiciary for failing to protect Palestinians' human rights. According to her "there is no just legal system", neither exemplary nor otherwise.

Nothing under the occupation could be exemplary. The Israeli legal system, even in Israel itself, is contaminated by all the maladies of the legal system in the occupied territories. As for the legal system in the occupied territories, especially now, even Kafka would be lost there. 103

While the Israeli judge jailed Munira Daoud, a pregnant Palestinian woman along with her three-and-half month old baby and another child for throwing stone at a settler Jewish guard for killing her brother, the Jews, who were killing Arabs, were set free. 104 This has, of course, been a practice of the state of Israel not to punish the Jews who kill the non-Jews (Muslims or even Christians) as "prescribed" in their religious scriptures. 105 It is

104 Ibid.
not only a racist but also a fundamentalist state thriving on terrorism. The intifada closed the economic advantages that the Israelis gained from the occupation. Felicia Langer said:

First there were the important economic advantages of the cheap labour and wide markets for Israeli goods in the occupied territories. Yesterday's (Israelis) workers became today's contractors because the labour was all Palestinian and it was cheap, from the occupied territories. 107

According to her the oppression was nothing new; the 'slave market' (of Palestinian labour) that was continuing since 1967 was closed; and the Israelis feel the economic loss. She held the Israeli society responsible for perpetrating oppression against the Palestinians. She further added: "Whatever we are doing to them - expulsions, house demolitions, land expropriations - is legal and legitimized. Whatever they do in response is terror, a terrorist act... 108

By May 1990, the intifada casualty figure was quite high: 800 Palestinians killed and 150,000 injured. 109

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107 "A Judicial System Where Even Kafka Would be Lost", no. 158, p. 28.
108 Ibid., p. 29.
109 Ibid., p. 30.
figures. Many of the dead and injured were not admitted to hospitals. The number of children shot dead by the Israeli forces or Jewish settlers was quite large. There were instances when the babies were shot dead or put in the jail.

**U.S. Report indicts Israel for Human-Rights Violations**

The Israeli repression intensified so much that even the State Department of the U.S. indicted Israel for trying to conceal facts. In its *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1988*, seven pages were devoted solely to the occupied territories. It eschewed previous omissions and circumlocutions aimed at protecting Israel's "image". The report admitted "a substantial increase in human rights violations" by Israel and unhesitatingly enumerated those abuses."110 Palestinian deaths at the hand of Israeli troops or settlers totalled 366 while woundings and injuries severe enough to be reported equalled more than 20,000 in 1988. It means, the report said, one Palestinian was killed a day and at least 55 others wounded or badly beaten.111

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111 Ibid.
This report of the State Department unveiled the veil of dissembling and sophistry to reveal the harsh reality of Israeli occupation which perpetrated barbaric practices. The report also included Israeli killings in the jails and suspicious deaths of Palestinian prisoners. The intifada succeeded in exposing Israeli's violation of human rights through the nightly TV.

Diplomatic Dimensions of the Intifada

The relentless uprising for more than five years made the point crystal clear that the Palestinians are the dispenser of their own destiny and that nothing can stop them from getting their independent, sovereign Palestinian state. Diplomatic dimensions of the intifada were very significant: the U.S. position vis-a-vis Palestine underwent a fundamental change.

Although in the initial stage the U.S. had asked Israel to firmly deal with the uprising its attitude underwent a sea-change as the intifada continued unabated. The RAND Corporation's Report of August 1989 on the Palestine question for the Office of the U.S. Secretary for the Defense called the intifada a "turning point" in the relationship between Israel and West Bank. It said, inter alia:
The West Bank Palestinians have now taken the struggle for their future into their own hands in an uprising that has shaped and confirmed their own political self-identity, a West Bank identity that did not exist before. The forces now unleashed — and the responses evoked in Israel, the United States, and elsewhere — have now made the ultimate emergence of a Palestinian state on the West Bank inevitable.... But no other solution any longer seems viable. 112

The report highlighted the independent spirit of the movement which grew deeper and more ineradicable as the intifada moved toward a third year. The report further said that an overwhelming show of force by Israel — resulting in immense numbers of Palestinian casualties, the imposition of draconian new administrative measures of repression and the expulsion of thousands of activists — could probably bring an end to the most overt manifestations of Palestinian resistance but it would not reverse the determination of the West Bank population to attain an independent Palestinian state.

The Palestinian self-confidence that emerged from the intifada ignited an unprecedented sense of cybernetic dynamism that fired the salvo of

diplomatic offensive. Conqueror Israel felt conquered. The Israeli attempts to create a schism between the Palestinians of the occupied areas and the PLO failed miserably. By creating such a rift between the two, Israel thought of giving some kind of "authority" to the Palestinians of the occupied territories - through the municipal elections. Israel's long drawn strategy of isolating the PLO did not work. The people of occupied territories accepted no one but the PLO as their leader, as pointed out in the RAND Report. 113 "The Israeli-American search for alternative leaderships to represent the Palestinians is to all intents and purposes dead," said the Report. 114 The UNL leaflets also condemned the so-called Jordanian option, whereby Israel was supposed to negotiate the future of the occupied territories with Jordan. Palestinians wanted nothing less than an independent state of their own. The popular committees of the intifada were running parallel administration, the infrastructure of the embryonic state. As John Kifner of the New York Times had pointed out: "the Palestinians had cut themselves off from the Israeli institutions and regulations." 115

113 Ibid., p. 164.
114 Ibid.
Intifada session of U.N. General Assembly

As the situation in the occupied territories rapidly deteriorated with the increase in Israeli repression to give a death blow to the uprising, a special session of the U.N. General Assembly was convened on 3 November 1988 to discuss the intifada under the agenda item entitled "Report of the Special Committee to investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied territories." 116 The General Assembly adopted resolution 43/21 on the intifada which, inter alia, condemned such acts as "the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and, wounding of the defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, collective punishment and detentions, as well as denial of access to the media." 117 The General Assembly also called upon all the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 "to take appropriate measures to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying

117 Ibid.
power, for the convention in all circumstances in conformity with their obligation under article 1." \(^{118}\)

The resolution, passed by 130 votes in favour to two against, with 16 abstentions, also requested the Secretary General to examine the situation in the occupied territory "by all means available to him" and to submit periodic reports on this matter."

The Israeli Response

Another dimension of the intifada was the support from the Palestinians of Israel proper. These Palestinians whose number could be estimated between 900,000 to one million came out openly in favour of the intifada. They organised demonstrations, rallies and public meetings supporting the uprising. Although their attempt to sail a ship of intifada from Cyprus to Israel was foiled these Palestinians succeeded in mobilising public opinion against the repressive Israeli regime. The intifada polarised the Israeli society. There was debate at the national level between those who argued for the expulsion of Palestinians and those who pleaded the end to the occupation. "But almost all Israelis, as evidenced by the statements of their leaders and the media, came to the conclusion that a return to

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\(^{118}\) Ibid.
the pre-intifada status quo was impossible," as Jamal R. Nassar put it. The Israelis were in the grip of fear psychosis as they realised that their invincible army failed to suppress the intifada. Some of the Israeli intellectuals and writers including Y. Harkabi, a military analyst, were of the opinion that Israel should open a dialogue with PLO; and if that was not done at an early date there might not be a state of Israel. The prolonged intifada led to the diplomatic isolation of Israel.

The Israeli confrontationist attitude became counter-productive. The economic blockade of the besieged Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza — stopping fishing activities in the Gaza coast, the rolling of citrus due to prolonged curfew and many other sanctions and retaliatory economic measures — failed to break the spirit of the masses.

During the Gulf War the intifada suffered because of the prolonged curfew in the occupied territory. Palestinian labourers could not come out of their houses to go for work across the 'green line'. But the Palestinians rejoiced when the Iraqi missiles hit different places in Israel.

They saw the war on television and danced in their houses and terraces. This was the in-house intifada which disturbed the Israelis. Whether inside the house or on the streets the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza were perceived as a major threat, and occupied Israel and ruled the Israeli mind psychologically.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had proposed municipal elections and limited autonomy in the occupied territories to counter the intifada, the Middle East peace process and the U.S.-PLO dialogue. The Shamir plan of 1989 was opposed by opposition parties after the Gulf War. The Israeli Science and Energy Minister Yuval Ne'eman, leader of rightist Tehiya, denounced the Shamir peace plan. He said that the Gulf war proved that the elections among the Palestinians would endanger Israel's existence. Ne'eman further said: "They already voted when they danced on the roofs as they watched Iraqi Scud missiles falling on Tel Aviv." The Shamir plan was finally abandoned.

The occupied territory became the biggest liability for Israel. The Israeli people were convinced that the intifada could not be

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suppressed by their army. They cast aspersion on its competence. Some Israeli leaders argued in favour of "territory for Peace". As Yossi Beilin, former Deputy Foreign Minister and Deputy Finance Minister, and a protege of Shimon Peres, put it:

"Our greatest victory, in 1967, has become our greatest curse, from a moral, economic and security point of view, and we have to get rid of this curse."

The crucial issue for Israelis was not Palestinian self-determination but getting rid of the occupied territories. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's plan of settling 800,000 Jews in the occupied territories to obstruct the peace process also failed as the U.S. did not support it.

Thus the intifada created the infrastructure on which the PLO launched its international diplomatic offensive to get a state at least in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was during the intifada that the de facto Palestinian state was created by the Palestinian masses. Its leadership remained underground and anonymous, certainly a plus point for the uprising. Palestinian masses were simultaneously the leaders and cadres of this unique revolution; and they were the real heroes who, in fact, set the political agenda for the PLO to translate the intifada into an international diplomatic victory.

121 Ibid., p. 37.