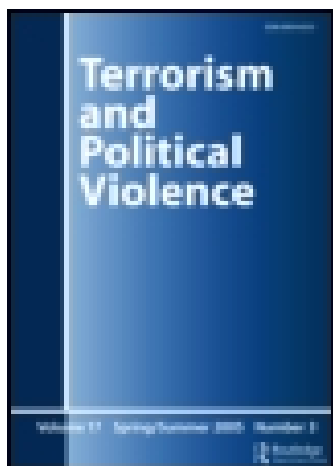


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The Palestinian intifada: An analysis of a popular uprising after seven months

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The Palestinian *Intifada*

An Analysis of a Popular Uprising After Seven Months*

Ariel Merari, Tamar Prat and David Tal

Intifada (literally: shaking) is the term commonly used for the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli administered Territories, that erupted on 9 December 1987. It is neither a unique phenomenon in the history of political insurgency, nor the first of its kind in the annals of the Palestinian struggle.

Nevertheless, beyond its immediate political importance as a part of a long, multi-faceted nationalistic struggle, the *intifada* is of great interest as a case study in itself. This article examines the basic causes of the *intifada*, the general background and precipitating events, the main features of the uprising and the course of development during its first six months, the organization and leadership of the uprising and relevant PLO strategy. The last section of the article places the *intifada* in the historical context of the Palestinian struggle and draws more general conclusions concerning the changing strategies of insurgency.

Background Factors and Processes

The one basic motivation underlying the *intifada* is, no doubt, the aspiration of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to end the Israeli occupation. However, there have been ancillary factors as well. Interviewed about the implications of the occupation, Palestinians of all callings say that beyond the obvious frustration of national political aspirations there are also many personal grievances. They mention the daily humiliation of living under a military rule that treats them as hostile until proven otherwise; the indignities experienced upon working in Israel and encountering Israelis, employers and others, who treat them at best with suspicion. They also point to the indignity of their social-economic position *vis-à-vis* the Israelis as a cheap and willing labor force for jobs the Israelis do not want. They resent the Israeli argument that under the occupation their standard of living has improved remarkably. While acknowledging that their situation is better in many ways, they point out the huge continuing gaps between Arab and Jewish living standards.¹

An examination of Palestinian complaints with objective data will not

*Although the article was submitted before the dramatic events of November and December 1988, it contained novel materials on the mechanisms of the *intifada* which convinced us to publish it in its original form and have the authors add a brief postscript. – The Editors.

be attempted in this article. True, one cannot ignore basic facts, such as the existence of an Israeli security apparatus whose task is to counter risks possibly posed by Palestinians in the Administered Territories; the inferior socio-economic status of most Palestinians compared to Israelis; or, the density of population in refugee camps.² However, the only criterion by which one can judge whether certain living conditions constitute sufficient reason for uprising is the subjective feeling of the people in question.

The *intifada* erupted almost 20 years after Israel conquered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The basic conditions under which the Palestinian inhabitants of these regions lived have not changed over the years. Why, then, have they not rebelled earlier? A simple explanation is that some time had to elapse for the sentiments mentioned above to brew before they culminated in an outburst. Furthermore, it is likely that during the two decades of Israeli rule the Palestinians entertained hopes that an Israeli withdrawal would be forced by some external force. When these hopes failed to materialize, the Palestinians were thrown into despair.

There is another psychological angle, however. The period of 20 years constitutes a generation and the new Palestinian generation is significantly different from that of their parents. The fathers, who grew up under Jordanian rule in the West Bank and under Egyptian rule in Gaza, were relatively content with Israeli occupation. Used to the Jordanian and Egyptian ironhanded responses to any sign of uprising or insurgency, they were cautious not to confront the authorities directly. The sons, born in 1967 and after, know no other life, cannot compare Israeli occupation with harsher regimes, and, therefore, are less afraid to challenge the representatives of the Israeli government. Furthermore, the post-1967 generation has not been directly exposed to the shock of the swift Israeli victory in the Six Day War and to the feeling of hopelessness generated by that demonstration of overwhelming military superiority. It should also be remembered that it was only under Israeli rule, following the emergence of the PLO in its present form, that Palestinian national identity crystallized. The fathers had to undergo a significant change of political thinking in order to adopt the concept of national identity, while for the sons this notion seemed obvious. For the youth, therefore, frustration of national aspirations has been more difficult to live with. The young generation has also been more aware of the socio-economic disparity. The improvement of education under Israeli rule, including the establishment of several universities and colleges, has resulted in a vocational frustration among the better educated Palestinians in the Territories. Thus, a young generation, more militant and hateful towards Israel, has grown adult and started to express its political views. The youth identified openly with the use of violence as a legitimate and effective means to achieve

a settlement.³

These radical political views reflect another factor that influenced the eruption of the *intifada* – the disappointment felt in the Territories following the collapse of Jordanian–PLO political cooperation. The cancellation of the Hussein–Arafat accord in February 1986 signaled the limited ability of the PLO to advance the goal of the liberation of Palestine. On the one hand, it probably led to despair, but on the other hand, it strengthened the young generation's tendency toward self reliance.

The erosion in the PLO's status should be dated back to its defeat in Lebanon in 1982. The collapse of the PLO's independent base in Lebanon resulted in a considerable loss of its political independence *vis-à-vis* the Arab states. Furthermore, the organization's image as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people was threatened by subsequent inner strife. These two factors were the main causes for the PLO's loss of clout in the Arab world and its deteriorated international prestige. Still, for the Palestinians in the Administered Territories, especially in the West Bank, Arafat's cooperation with Jordan created, for a while, hopes of peaceful termination of the occupation. Thus, the realization of the PLO's weakness was postponed. The collapse of the joint move in 1986, however, exposed the PLO's impotence, leaving the Palestinians in the Territories with no light at the end of the tunnel.

The war in Lebanon had further repercussions which, added on top of the basic factors mentioned above, facilitated the development of the *intifada*. Following the loss of its base in Lebanon, the Territories had become, more than ever before, the focus of the PLO's activity and interest. Alongside the political cooperation with Jordan, aimed at establishing a Palestinian state in the Territories, the PLO competed with Jordan for the support of the population. The PLO has thus made intensive efforts to reinforce the population's identification with it as a national leadership and to strengthen its position by establishing a political–and–economic infrastructure. These efforts included, for instance, the expansion of activity of youth movements, the financing of newspapers, and the channelling of money to support professional, social and charity associations.⁴ The net result of these efforts was a certain measure of broader support for the PLO among the masses and the strengthening of an organizational infrastructure for unarmed and primitively armed forms of struggle.

In the wake of the loss of the PLO's stronghold in Lebanon, Israel and the Territories became the main arena for the armed struggle as well. The Palestinians in the Administered Territories thus became a major source of recruitment and support for the PLO's various clandestine terrorist cells. Anti-Israeli incitement and more covert means of recruitment have been utilized for this purpose. Most intensive efforts were made by Fatah,

which had based its operational offices in Jordan to that aim. The free and frequent passage of Palestinians to and from Jordan was exploited by PLO member organizations to recruit and infiltrate back operatives and to channel money, orders and arms.⁵

These efforts bore fruit: terrorist activity in Israel increased significantly in mid-1985 and dropped again in mid-1986, following the expulsion of Fatah's terrorist organs from Jordan.⁶ An analysis of the tactics employed indicates, however, the impact of local mood on the willingness to take violent action: many of the attacks which accounted for the increase in the scope of terrorist attacks since 1985, were carried out by unorganized individuals, using improvised and home-made arms and selecting random targets.⁷ While Fatah leaders admitted that they encouraged 'self-reliance' of local cells as to the choice of place, time, arms and specific targets of attacks,⁸ many of the attacks were actually carried out by individuals who had never been recruited to existing terrorist organizations but were impressed by Fatah's incitement and general directions for violent action.⁹ The relevant conclusion for our discussion is that the post-1982 effort of Fatah and, to a lesser extent, of other PLO organizations to mobilize the masses in the Territories to an active, violent struggle fell on fertile ground of growing anger against the occupation. The net result was the deepening, intensifying and channelling of anti-Israeli sentiments to violent methods.¹⁰

Another consequence of the war in Lebanon that contributed to the eruption of the uprising was an impression, shared by Palestinians within the territories and in the PLO, that Israel's strength and determination was declining. They pointed to the Israeli sensitivity to human losses that was reflected in public reaction to the war in Lebanon and ultimately led to the Israeli withdrawal. Their far-reaching conclusion was that a similar war of attrition in the Territories would lead to an Israeli retreat there as well.¹¹

A linked development that also had practical implications in the territories was the prisoner swap conducted in May 1985. The release of 1,150 convicted terrorists in return for three Israeli soldiers held by Gibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), served as another indication of the alleged deterioration of Israeli steadfastness. The exchange also resulted in a decrease in the fear of individuals to engage in insurgent activities, being a clear demonstration that even a long prison sentence may turn out to be surprisingly short. Furthermore, most of the released prisoners returned to their homes in the Territories and took an active part in organising a subversive infrastructure.¹²

Another factor which contributed to the eruption of the *intifada* stemmed from the emergence of fundamentalist Islamic organizations in the Territories, mainly in Gaza. The Islamic resurgence itself can be attributed to a significant extent to the repercussions of the Iranian revolution, but also to the influence of Egyptian Islamic fundamentalism. The Islamic activists

conveyed the message that the PLO programme was narrowly nationalistic and thus diverged from the true goal of establishing a single Islamic state throughout the Middle East. Adoption of the rule of Islam was introduced as the only road leading to the solution of the Palestinian problem. The fundamentalist Islamic organizations set up a social-educational infrastructure and some of them also established terrorist cells.¹³ They offered both ideology and an organizational framework for open resistance to the Israeli occupation. The significance of the Islamic appeal in Gaza was demonstrated in October 1987, when a series of riots broke out following the uncovering of Islamic Jihad cells.

In sum, growing despair of a seemingly endless occupation, shared by a young, daring and hate-filled generation, was met by incitement, ideological preaching, and organizational opportunities offered by the PLO and fundamentalist Islamic organizations. The ground was ready for the eruption of an uprising. The timing of its breaking was determined by a series of incidents which served as the match that lit an explosive laden drum.

Against this backdrop, several events can be identified as the immediate precipitators of the *intifada*. The Arab summit in Amman in November 1987 virtually ignored the Palestinian problem and thus made concrete the futility in waiting for an Arab-initiated advancement of a solution for the Palestinian problem, demonstrating at the same time the PLO's weakness in the inter-Arab arena and its failure to advance the Palestinian cause. Later in the same month, a Palestinian gunman landed with his glider near an army camp in Northern Israel and killed six soldiers before he was killed himself. This attack was a source of pride for the Palestinians in the Territories and was perceived by them as another indication of Israel's growing weakness.

The General Course of Events of the *Intifada*

The *intifada* was sparked by a traffic accident in the Gaza Strip on 8 December 1987, involving an Israeli truck and a Gazan car. Four Palestinians were killed in the accident, and rumors spread that the event was a deliberate act of revenge perpetrated by the brother of a Jew who had been murdered in Gaza by Palestinians two days earlier. Although the rumors were false, they led to vast riots in the nearby Sajayah neighborhood. During the next two days, the riots spread all over the Gaza Strip and then, starting from the refugee camp of Balata, near Nablus, to the West Bank as well. Early in this initial stage, the uprising assumed several characteristics that were maintained in the following months. Geographically, the uprising engulfed the whole of the Administered Territories. Although the main foci were the cities and the refugee camps around them, riots and other phenomena associated with the uprising reached practically all villages, usually leaping

rapidly from place to place. The main expressions of the uprising included violent demonstrations, usually accompanied by petrol bomb and rock throwing at Israeli soldiers, making road blocks by hurling large rocks and setting automobile tires on fire, and by commerce and labor strikes. The immediate triggers of local outbursts have sometimes been rumors – usually unfounded – about attacks by Jewish settlers or their alleged arrival at the village. More often however, rioting and demonstrations have been initiated by local agitators who were not necessarily active members of Palestinian nationalist groups. Among the frequent precursors for outbursts – especially in the early stage of the *intifada* – were the killing of rioters or bystanders by the IDF, expulsions of activists to Lebanon, as well as leaflets written by the local leadership and radio broadcasts of Palestinian groups from neighboring countries (these are discussed below).

Several weeks elapsed before the Israeli government and the military authorities, as well as most, if not all, academic observers realized that the events in the territories were more than large-scale local disturbances and that they were not an ephemeral outburst. In accordance with the optimistic assessment of the Israeli authorities, the Israeli forces in the Territories were reinforced in a rather slow pace during the first fortnight of the uprising. The prevailing mood among the Israeli political leadership and military command ranged from depreciative optimism to uncertainty and perplexity. Meanwhile, the disturbances gained momentum rather than subsided. On 21 December the Israeli Arab citizens held a general strike, accompanied by disturbances in several Arab localities within Israel proper, to express their sympathy with the Palestinians of the Territories, on what was called ‘a Peace Day’.

After two weeks of indecisive Israeli response, the IDF changed its tactics: on 23–24 December stronger measures were taken in an effort to subdue the uprising. The army significantly reinforced its units in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Demonstrations and riots were confronted by larger military forces, with the intention of breaking a demonstration in its very initial stage before it gained momentum. Hundreds of demonstrators and incitors were detained and, due to a special procedure, were instantly brought before a judge. Curfews have been used extensively and, for their duration, have been generally effective in bringing calm to an area. This measure has usually been applied locally, generally following an outburst of disturbances in a city or a village. In particularly tense periods, however, curfews have been imposed on a large area, such as the whole Gaza Strip. Efforts of the *intifada*’s leadership to bring about a mass violation of the curfews have so far failed.

The Palestinian labor strike, particularly the call to ban work in Israel, has been only partly successful. The lack of alternative sources of income, especially in the Gaza Strip, has probably been the crucial factor in this

regard. The commercial strike, on the other hand, has been generally maintained, despite Israeli efforts to break it. The Israeli authorities' helplessness about handling it has been evidenced in the frequent vacillations among attempts to force merchants to open their stores by breaking their locks, by forcing them to keep the stores closed even during the times allowed for commerce by the *intifada's* leadership, and by ignoring the strike altogether, hoping that economic necessity would eventually bring the strike to a natural end.

The greatest source of pressure on the Israeli government and military authorities during the first weeks of the uprising was, probably, international criticism, especially American public opinion as reflected by media coverage. At that time, criticism was mainly aimed at the 'trigger happiness' of Israeli troops that resulted in fatalities among demonstrators and rioters. By January this criticism brought the faltering Israeli authorities to a different approach. While more restrictive concerning the use of firearms, they encouraged or at least allowed widespread use of non-lethal beatings of rioters and intentionally rude searches of houses that sheltered them. This new tactic failed dismally in the wake of greater international outcry and domestic criticism and was stopped as a policy in a matter of weeks.

Despite the popular enthusiasm among the Palestinians in the Territories, the Arab World's encouragement and prominent international attention, the combined impact of the Israeli countermeasures achieved some temporary results: by the beginning of January 1988 the intensity of the disturbances was significantly reduced and many striking laborers returned to work in Israel. Nevertheless, these changes were only superficial and hopes for an end to the uprising were premature. The seeming trend toward pacification was broken abruptly in early January. Among the events that triggered the re-inflammation of large scale disturbances were the killing of a woman from a small village near Ramallah by the soldiers, during a violent demonstration on 3 January, and the announcement of a decision to expel Palestinian activists who had been accused of having a key role in orchestrating the uprising. Both occurrences swept the territories into a renewed wave of violent demonstrations and riots.

The first external indication of an attempt to coordinate centrally the *intifada* was the distribution of 'Leaflet No.1' on 9 January, signed by the 'Popular Committee for the Civil Rebellion'. The leaflet detailed several instructions to the population. These included a demand, directed to the Palestinian employees of the civil administration, to resign their jobs, and a call to the population to boycott Israeli-made goods and to withhold tax payments. The structure of this leaflet set the pattern for the next to follow: they usually praised the rebellious population, referred to recent events, instructed the population about their daily activities and set a schedule of events for the coming days. From Leaflet No.3, which was distributed on

18 January, the numbered leaflets were signed by the 'United National Leadership of the Uprising'. Generally these leaflets have been considered as representing the central leadership of the *intifada*, although other entities have concurrently distributed leaflets of their own. The spirit of competing leaflets was generally similar to those of the United National Leadership's. However, some differences and, at times, even antagonism, could be detected.

With the emission of the leaflets, the pattern of the uprising was established. Furthermore, what began as a spontaneous, chaotic expression of discontent assumed more clearly defined objectives, although self-perpetuation was the most salient and immediate goal. Obviously, from the start the *intifada* was a protest against Israel's holding of the Territories. Yet, an alternative for Israel's rule has not been delineated, nor have the practical stages of a strategy to achieve it been set clearly. However, the directives of the United National Leadership leaflets were apparently intended to achieve a first step towards independence: the separation of the Palestinian community in the Territories from the Israeli economic and administrative systems. The means to achieve these aims were, from the very beginning, unarmed, albeit violent, mass demonstrations, riots, stone-throwing attacks on Israeli security forces and civilian transportation, and severe punishment to Palestinians who did not obey the directives, including murders of Palestinian policemen who failed to resign, the lynching of Palestinians accused of cooperating with the Israeli authorities, the burning of stores kept open in defiance of the leaflets' decrees, and lesser forms of harassment. Until mid-April, the PLO explicitly called upon the population to refrain from using firearms, in order to retain the world's sympathy and to make it harder for Israel to respond in force. Although the fundamentalists advocated in their leaflets the use of arms, on the whole, the *intifada's* weapons were stones, fire bombs, clubs and metal spins.

Recurring waves of violence took place in the next months in various places in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Whereas some of the riots and demonstrations seemed to be spontaneous, others were planned. Leaflets called the population to participate in violent demonstrations to mark special dates that followed each other in an endless chain. Such were the 'Day of Rage,' the 'Day of the Land', and so on. Fridays have been also prone to violence: Friday is the Muslim day of rest, when the believers congregate in mosques and are exposed to preachings, which have often been inciting and sometimes resulted directly in rioting. Every ninth day in a month was prone to violent activity, too – to mark the beginning of the *intifada*. Disorders took place in the wake of special events as well, such as the visits of the US Secretary of State Schultz and the assassination of Abu Jihad.

Although the idea of the *intifada* continued to enjoy broad popular support of the Palestinian population of the Territories, three months

after its onset the uprising lost some of its innate momentum. Changes in the intensity and scope of violence have increasingly become a function of episodic events on the one hand, and countermeasures taken by Israeli authorities on the other. Thus, March was characterized by the waxing and waning of disorders and disturbances, mainly in the West Bank, with the exception of East Jerusalem where, due to a mass reinforcement of several thousand policemen, violent demonstrations have, by and large, been quelled, although the commerce strike has been maintained in accordance with the orders of the 'United Leadership'. In contrast to the restive mood of March, the first half of April was quiet. The relative calm ended abruptly with the assassination of Abu Jihad on 16 April, whereupon the West Bank and the Gaza Strip erupted violently. However, by the last week of April, the riots were significantly reduced and relative order was again restored.

Whereas the Israeli efforts in the earlier phase of the *intifada* focused on restraining the violent demonstrations, since the spring of 1988 increasing attention was directed to forestalling the uprising's leadership attempts to bring about the collapse of the Israeli administrative control of the Territories. In reality, however, this ambitious goal has had no chance of success as long as Israel has been determined to continue its rule of the Territories, for the simple reason that both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have never been an economic autarchy. Indeed, in response to the *intifada's* leadership call to stop income tax payments, the Civil Administration authorities made the granting of various licenses, for example, for travel abroad, and to export or import goods, conditional upon proof of income tax payment. Clearly, what was at stake was not the tax money per se but its symbolic meaning, evidenced by the fact that these licenses continued to be sought by the local population. A more comprehensive method of enforcing tax payment was used in late April in the Gaza Strip: old identification cards were announced invalid and the issuing of new ones was made contingent upon proof of income tax payment.

As of late June 1988, the end of the *intifada* is not yet in sight. Although the intensity of the disturbances has declined since the outbursts of the first few weeks and mass demonstrations have practically ceased, most of the elements of the uprising still exist on a more limited scale. These include sporadic stone-throwing and petrol bomb attacks on military patrols and civilian Jewish transportation, a partial commerce strike which continues to follow the orders of the uprising's leadership, and murders of those suspected of collaboration with Israeli authorities. Despite the unquestionable support of the uprising by the Palestinian population, the United Leadership directives have been only partially fulfilled and, in some cases, ignored altogether. Thus, a demand for the immediate resignation of all Palestinian policemen serving in the Territories resulted in a resignation

rate of at least 80 per cent after a policeman who had refused to resign was murdered in Jericho; a similar demand for the resignation of the other Palestinian Civil Administration employees as well as Israeli appointed mayors and members of municipal councils has been, by and large, ignored. The limited ability of the uprising's leadership to draw the population into a direct confrontation with Israeli security forces was demonstrated, for instance, when a call to break into schools, which had been closed by the Israeli authorities, was totally disregarded. Apparently, at the time of writing a temporary equilibrium has been reached, in which the continuing rebellious mood of the Palestinian population of the Territories is countered with partial success by Israeli measures, including detentions, curfews, administrative sanctions, and more determined and forceful methods of riot control. Strangely, the declining intensity of the uprising has not been accompanied by a parallel decrease in the rate of Palestinian casualties. A monthly tally for the period of December 1987 through June 1988 shows that the average number of fatalities has remained at the level of approximately one per day.

Organisation and Leadership

The *intifada* did not start according to a strategic plan. Its eruption was spontaneous and the first days of its course were marked by a lack of leadership and coordination. In an interview given by Arafat on 29 December 1987, he admitted that the PLO could not claim to be the initiator of the uprising, rather it should be credited to 'the people'¹⁴ (some of Arafat's later declarations, however, contradicted this statement). George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), said that the uprising erupted because of the situation of the occupation, although he credited the PLO for it as well.¹⁵ In Israel, security sources maintained that the uprising started as a spontaneous outburst of young people in the refugee camps, rather than as a result of PLO planning and instruction.¹⁶

Presumably, the crystallization of a leadership echelon, communication and command channels with the population, and execution organs in the field was a process that required some time. The distribution of leaflets was the first clear indication of the existence of a leadership or, at least, an attempt to direct and coordinate the uprising. Leaflets were commonly used in the Territories by the various member organizations of the PLO even before the *intifada* and indeed, the first leaflets to be circulated in the initial stage of the uprising were issued by these groups. As has already been mentioned, the first in a series of numbered leaflets issued by an apparently central coordination body in the Territories appeared on 9 January 1988, in the name of the 'Popular Committee for the Civil Rebellion'. The name of the 'United National Leadership of the Uprising' appeared first in Leaflet

No.3, circulated on 18 January 1987, and has been maintained ever since. The identity of either body is vague and the attempt to portray its structure and composition is based upon sources that should be taken cautiously.

According to some reports, the United Leadership was organized and started operating in late December 1987.¹⁷ This organ is, reportedly, a coalition consisting of 15 members from Arafat's Al-Fatah, Habash's PFLP, Hawatmeh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Palestinian Communist Party, and the Moslem Fundamentalists.¹⁸ The leadership communicates with the general Palestinian population through the numbered leaflets (21 leaflets have been published through mid-July 1988). These leaflets set, in general terms, the instructions for the uprising, such as ordering commerce strikes, calling for demonstrations on certain dates, and demanding Civil Administration employees to resign.

The human infrastructure which the uprising has relied upon is that of the established PLO-associated organizations. These cadres had been committed to the Palestinian nationalist cause long before the beginning of the *intifada*. Moreover, they could be easily accessed through their affiliation with existing organizations¹⁹ such as labor unions, professional organizations, youth and community organizations. A conspicuous example is the 'Shabiba,' Fatah's youth movement. This movement, which incorporates young people of various age groups, was legally active years before the uprising. Soon after the eruption of the *intifada* the *Shabiba* became the main instrument for getting people to the streets and enforcing the United Leadership orders.²⁰

The fact that PLO-affiliated organisations serve as instruments of the *intifada* raises the question, who really leads the uprising? Although it is hard to determine the extent and precise nature of the PLO's involvement, it seems that not only the daily management of events but also decisions of a strategic nature are, by and large, controlled from within the Territories, albeit in consultation with the PLO.²¹ Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) was mentioned as the coordinator between the PLO and the uprising's leadership, reportedly maintaining constant contact with the Territories until his assassination in April 1988.²² The assessment that the control of the *intifada* is done inside the Territories is based, *inter alia*, on the fact that the content of the United Leadership leaflets, the main source of policy directives for the uprising, has been faithfully broadcasted by both the PLO radio from Baghdad and its vehement political adversary, Jibril's Radio al-Kuds from Syria.

The United Leadership does not deal with the details of the *intifada*. These are the domain of local 'Popular Committees,' which have been established in every neighborhood, village and refugee camp. The Popular Committees are the organs which fill in the general directives of the

United Leadership in accordance with local conditions and enforce them by 'Shock Units'.²³

The link between the United Leadership and the local committees is, most probably, not hierarchical.²⁴ There is no evidence suggesting the existence of an orderly chain of command, through which orders of the United Leadership are transmitted down until they reach the street level. Neither is there an indication of other executive powers endowed upon the United Leadership, such as the authority to nominate or dismiss lower echelon commanders. Rather, it seems that the United Leadership directives reach the population at large through leaflets and are locally interpreted and executed by the Popular Committees in an independent fashion.

Some of the committees were established long before the *intifada* began.²⁵ The older committees were originally designed to serve welfare functions associated with the struggle, such as assistance to prisoners' families. Soon after the beginning of the *intifada* they undertook the day-to-day running on the local level, in addition to their original tasks.²⁶ The committees handle all operational activities of the *intifada*: organizing demonstrations, setting up roadblocks, painting slogans on walls, hoisting PLO flags, enforcing commerce strikes, and preventing Palestinian laborers of working in Israel.²⁷

An important role of the Popular Committees is arranging for economic assistance to the needy. The commerce strikes, curfews, and avoidance of work in Israel have all resulted in economic hardship for the population. The committees run a system designed to ease these pressures. They have established a welfare apparatus which supplies the needy with basic foodstuff. This aid has come from several sources: PLO money transferred illegally to the Territories, voluntary or extorted donations of local inhabitants, United Nations' Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) food rations given regularly to people having a refugee status, and money, food and clothing donated by Israeli Arab communities.²⁸ In addition, certain villages seem to be exempted from the violent activity of the *intifada* and allowed to continue routine life in order to serve as a logistic center and a regional source of supply.²⁹

The membership of the committees is estimated to range from several hundreds to about 3,000 men.³⁰ The anonymity of these low level leaders makes it very difficult for Israel's General Security Service (GSS) to trace, locate and arrest them. Another problem in this respect is that the network of informers built by the GSS in years has been severely damaged by the *intifada* and the readiness of the local population to cooperate with the GSS has declined. In any case, it is difficult to undermine this kind of local leadership, since it is based on a very broad and diffuse human infrastructure that enjoys massive popular support and is, therefore, easily replaceable.

The Intifada and PLO Strategy

The preceding sections of this article clarified that the *intifada* began as a spontaneous outburst of angry youth, driven by frustration of 20 years of Israeli occupation, and that it has later been conducted by a diffuse and decentralized underground. The PLO, therefore, did not plan the *intifada*, nor did it conduct it in actual terms after it started. Rather, the PLO has adjusted its strategy to the change in circumstances created by the uprising. The impact of the *intifada* on PLO strategy is discussed below.

Despite the setbacks suffered by the Palestinian nationalist movement in the wake of the 1982 war in Lebanon, PLO leaders have continued to maintain that time is on their side. They base this assessment on demographic, social and psychological factors operating within Israel and on political processes expected to occur in the Arab world. In the meantime, they have advocated an essentially passive strategy: steadfastness, rather than an active quest for a change. Their immediate concern was with keeping the Palestinian issue aflame, and with preserving the PLO's status as the recognized leadership and representative of the Palestinian people, until a change of conditions would turn the wheel in their favor.³¹

The eruption of the *intifada* was such a change. Although leaders of the PLO did not plan it, nor even anticipated it, they rapidly grasped it as a lever capable of promoting the PLO's strategic goals. In addition to focussing intense international attention on the Palestinian problem,³² one of its immediate practical results was the forestalling of an alleged Jordanian-Israeli attempt to establish a de facto shared control of the territories.³³

Beyond these achievements, the *intifada* gave new impetus to the PLO's political offensive. Arafat and other pragmatically-oriented PLO leaders have been trying to transform current world sympathy for the Palestinians into international political support for the PLO's demands. Thus, the PLO demanded that the UN convene an international conference with the participation of the UN Security Council and all other parties to the conflict, including the PLO. This conference is supposed to be 'effective', that is, authorized to impose a settlement.³⁴ This formula is included in the PLO's formal political platform, thus is accepted by all PLO leaders. Yet, there are various interpretations of its concrete implications. The more pragmatic in the PLO leadership believe that the *intifada* has created international circumstances that would facilitate by way of an international conference, the PLO's goal of establishing a Palestinian state through international pressure on Israel.³⁵ They initiated diplomatic and propaganda activity aimed at improving the PLO's image as a partner for a settlement. In January 1988, for example, they resuscitated the idea

of creating a government in exile, explaining that they expect such a step to 'open gaps in the dogmatic American administration policy'.³⁶ The idea was eventually rejected by the PLO's Central Council. In late May, Bassam Abu Sharif, a close aide to Arafat, published a seemingly moderate document including several positions on possible resolution procedures and principles.³⁷ Although it was not a formal document, it indicated the attitude of at least some PLO leaders who believed that the *intifada* had opened the way for concrete, major political gains that would be facilitated by tactical flexibility.

Hardliners within the PLO, including some of Fatah's leaders, while acknowledging that the *intifada* has improved the PLO's international position, have maintained that the current balance of power is still in Israel's favor; thus, the time is not ripe for a political settlement acceptable for the PLO. In their view, any settlement reached now would impede the future struggle for the ultimate liberation of the whole of Palestine.³⁸ Continuation and escalation of the *intifada* would, however, eventually change the balance of power, not only by eroding Israel's international support, but also by taxing Israel heavily militarily, economically, socially and psychologically. The advocates of this conception have pointed out Israeli costs of the continuing conflict: the increased expenses of Israel's defense and police ministries, which have exceeded their budgets; the necessity to recruit reserve forces for prolonged periods, thus inflicting further damage to the already strained economy; the economic problems caused by the strikes of Arab workers; and, most important, the rifts within Israeli society, its political establishment, and even within its military establishment. The accumulation of these effects is expected by PLO hardliners to weaken gradually Israeli society and bring it, ultimately, to an unconditional, unilateral withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 with no PLO concessions.³⁹

Implied by this conception of developing the *intifada* into a war of attrition is a systematic effort to establish a clandestine infrastructure, which would both conduct the uprising and prepare the population for the severing from the Israeli economical system and administration currently supplying them with the most basic services.⁴⁰ Protagonists of this strategy have maintained that, however protracted this process might be, it would inevitably lead to a Palestinian victory.

It should be emphasized, that both 'pragmatists' and 'hardliners' have viewed the *intifada* as the most important strategic development in the Palestinian struggle for years and have supported its continuation by all means. The only basic difference in opinion related to the international political initiative. Thus, Arafat and the pragmatists have taken an active part in the effort to intensify the uprising and lead it to patterns of complete civil disobedience, expecting that the intensification of the *intifada* would

accentuate the urgency of the Palestinian problem in world opinion on the one hand and make Israel more willing to negotiate with the PLO on the other.⁴¹

During the first four months of the *intifada*, PLO spokesmen declared time and again that the organization had ordered the population in the Territories to refrain from armed attacks. This policy apparently reflected the realization that unarmed or primitively armed violence by civilians against heavily armed soldiers was the most effective in gaining international sympathy.⁴² Moreover, the Palestinian use of arms would give Israel an excuse, easily justifiable to world opinion, to use its superior force and totally repress the uprising.⁴³

In mid-April this policy was temporarily changed and a new phase of 'guerrilla warfare' was declared. In reality, however, PLO directives seemed to have had no effect in its implementation. Table 1 shows the breakdown of terrorist events in Israel and the Territories, by *modus operandi*, during the first six months of 1988 as compared with the corresponding period of 1987. The figures are derived from the data base of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies' Project on Low Intensity Warfare.

TABLE 1
FREQUENCY AND TYPES OF PALESTINIAN TERRORIST INCIDENTS
IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1987 AND 1988

| Type of Event | No. of Incidents in 1987 | No. of Incidents in 1988 |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Explosive Devices | 31 | 22 |
| Assault with handgun | 3 | 6 |
| Assault with other types of small arms | 1 | 4 |
| Throwing hand grenades | 8 | 4 |
| Knife attacks | 5 | 24 |
| Throwing Molotov cocktails | 40 | 201 |
| Property arson | 5 | 45 |
| Other | 10 | 33 |
| Totals | 103 | 339 |

In order to draw a meaningful comparison of 1988 and 1987 with regard to the intensity of terrorism, it is necessary to make a distinction between 'classical terrorism' (that is, clandestine operations carried out by small, organized teams) and events related to the uprising, which are usually part of mass behavior and take place in the context of violent demonstrations and riots. The great majority of the Molotov cocktails and property arson cases in 1988 belong to the mass behavior type. Without these categories the number of incidents in 1988 would be 60, compared to 48 in 1987. In other words, the frequency of 'classical terrorism' incidents in the first half of 1988 was only 25 per cent higher than that of the corresponding period

in 1987. The real difference was in the intensity of mass violence associated with the uprising in the Territories.

Undoubtedly, the failure of the uprising to advance to a phase of a large-scale armed struggle has resulted more from lack of capability than from political considerations. Objective conditions such as, the size of the area, type of terrain, availability of weapons, and the overwhelming superiority of Israeli forces preclude any serious attempt to carry out an extensive guerrilla struggle or even a massive terrorist campaign.

Nevertheless, similarly to the eruption of the *intifada* as a result of frustration and disappointment at other alternatives to end the occupation, the continued failure of the uprising to bring about a change may lead to intensified violence. The combined effect of growing international indifference and fatigue of the population in the Territories must worry PLO strategists as well as the local young leadership of the *intifada*. A possible outcome is increased militancy on the part of the local activists, supported by PLO leaders abroad. This seems to be the underlying reason for a significant increase in the number of petrol bombs and a series of arson incidents in Israel in the summer of 1988. These tactics are still considered, from the point of view of international public opinion, as popular unarmed resistance which does not justify harsh reaction by Israeli forces, despite the infliction of ecological, economic and morale damage and, in a few cases, also the loss of human life.⁴⁴ It is also a tactic which matches the qualifications of youth equipped with nothing but motivation to hurt Israel. It appears that this initiative, like the general initiative of the *intifada*, emerged locally but was rapidly adopted by the PLO.⁴⁵

It should be stressed that the restraint imposed on the armed struggle only referred to the Administered Territories. PLO attempts to carry out terrorist attacks in Israel have increased since the eruption of the *intifada*, accompanied by explicit declarations of this intention by PLO leaders.⁴⁶ Practically all PLO organizations based in Lebanon have repeatedly tried to send terrorist teams into Israel on mass-killing and hostage taking missions. Thirteen attempts of incursion aimed at spectacular attacks of this kind were intercepted in the first five months of 1988 as compared with eight attempts during all of 1987 and six attempts in 1986.⁴⁷ Although all but one of the attempts in 1988 have so far failed, this campaign continues as of this writing. The intensified effort to launch spectacular attacks in Israel undoubtedly reflects the PLO's struggle to retain its position of national leadership. Until the eruption of the *intifada* the PLO as an organization and the strategy that it represented were practically unchallenged among the Palestinians. The success of the uprising, the fact that it has neither been conceived nor practically conducted by the PLO leadership, and the concomitant emergence of a new, young leadership in the Territories, pose a potential threat to the PLO as the sole recognized leadership of

the Palestinian struggle. Behind the unquestionably joint goal of national liberation there are also organizational and personal interests that have not yet received full expression.

Popular Uprisings in the History of the Palestinian Struggle

In the course of the last 70 years the Arab struggle in Palestine has gone through a whole array of forms of violence. This has included classical guerrilla warfare, pure terrorism,⁴⁸ several conventional wars and popular uprisings. Often throughout the years, more than one of these forms has been displayed concurrently.

Although acts of Arab violence against Jews in Palestine preceded the British occupation of 1917, most of these earlier cases were not politically motivated and can be attributed, by and large, to the tradition of banditry in this part of the Ottoman Empire, as well as to local disputes between Jewish and Arab neighbors.⁴⁹

Politically motivated violence on a large scale by the Arab population of Palestine (often with the assistance of Arabs from neighboring countries) began mainly after the British occupation of the country. The earlier outbursts took the form of spontaneous, sporadic violence, before there was any central organization that attempted to formulate a national strategy. The first outburst took place in April 1920. Later, riots and disturbances occurred in May 1921, August 1929, August 1931, March 1933, and from October 1933 through January 1934.⁵⁰ These, however, were localized outbursts of short duration. A considerably longer, more intensive and widespread uprising was the Arab rebellion of 1936–39, which engulfed the whole country.

Similarly to the *intifada*, the 1936–39 rebellion started spontaneously and, like the *intifada*, it had some identifiable precipitating processes and events. A common factor was the build-up of frustration of national aspirations over a considerable period of time. In 1936, Palestinian nationalism was part of the surging Arab anti-colonial sentiment throughout the Middle East. Violent anti-British demonstrations in Egypt, and anti-French riots and a general strike in Syria in early 1936 set an example to follow for Arab nationalists in Palestine, especially since these events in the neighboring countries immediately led to visible concessions by the colonial powers involved. British hesitation *vis-à-vis* the rising power of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy was interpreted as a clear sign of weakness of an ailing empire. In Palestine itself, the Arab population became increasingly worried about growing Jewish immigration, which reached a peak in 1935, when many Jews fled from Germany and from Poland. At the same time, a long-expected constitutional change, which would have insured an Arab-dominated home rule in Palestine, was blocked by the

British Parliament, adding to the frustration of nationalist sentiments of the Arab population. The restless mood was augmented by deepening unemployment, which was mainly felt by daily laborers, who competed for jobs with the Jewish immigrants.

Like the *intifada*, there were some specific inflammatory events which preceded the outburst of the rebellion. One of these was the heroic death of a legendary terrorist, Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Kassem, who was killed in a clash with a British unit in late 1935. His funeral became a stormy nationalist demonstration. The last chain of incidents that actually sparked the rebellion was the murder of two Jews by a Palestinian terrorist group, which was followed by the murder of two Arabs in retaliation. Two days later, against the backdrop of heightening tension, rumors spread in Arab-populated Jaffa that Arabs had been killed that day by Jews in the neighboring Jewish Tel Aviv. As in the case of the *intifada*, the rumors were false, but they were enough to immediately trigger extensive riots that resulted in the death of nine Jews by the mob and spread rapidly all over the country.

Thus, despite obvious differences between the background and precipitatory events that led to the 1936 and 1987 uprisings, there seem to be several common factors. The most important ingredient is a long-frustrated national aspiration (culminating in a recent disappointment), coupled with a perceived weakness of the adversary. The latter component of volatility is of special interest. It implies that frustration per se is not a sufficient condition for rebellion. Another necessary constituent is the hope to win. Hypothetically, without such hope, an extended frustration would only result in despair. Hope may be gained from signs of the adversary's weakness and declining determination, or from examples of successful uprisings elsewhere. In reality, both perceptions often take place concurrently. Inciting speeches, newspaper articles, and leaflets played an important role in all uprisings, as did rumors, which in 1936 and 1987 served as the spark that started the riots. These, however, should be regarded as symptoms rather than as causes of the explosion. In a less volatile atmosphere, they would have been totally ineffective.

In comparison with the present *intifada*, the 1936–39 rebellion was much more violent. There were, of course, many characteristics in common such as demonstrations, a long commerce strike, ban on work for the government or for Jews, ban on using government services, boycott on products made by Jews, extortion of 'revolutionary taxes,' setting fire to Jew's property, and the murder of suspected collaborators with the authorities. The more salient and troublesome characteristics of the rebellion, however, were those that would more readily fall under the categories of terrorism, guerrilla and civil war. These included bloody riots in the cities, armed attacks on Jewish settlements and government offices, numerous minings

and armed assaults on civilian transportation, assassination of government officials, bank robberies, and widespread looting of police arsenals. During long periods of the rebellion, large areas in the countryside and many of the cities and towns were actually controlled by the insurgents. Rebel groups, ranging in size from a few men to hundreds, were organized mostly on a geographical basis and were the practical rulers of their regions. The rebels maintained a loose hierarchical structure, by which leaders of sub-groups were subordinate to group leaders who, in turn, were commonly subordinate to the regional commander.⁵¹ The rebellion was formally led by a national leadership in exile, which was headed by the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini. In practice, however, the local commanders acted quite independently, often ignoring or flatly defying the powerless national leadership. An attempt to establish a central command of the rebellion within Palestine also failed to achieve any significant reduction in the autonomy of regional commanders.⁵²

It would be a mistake to attribute the considerable difference in the level of violence between the 1936–39 rebellion and the *intifada* simply to a strategic decision made by the leaders of the latter. From the start, the 1936 rebellion included non-violent components in addition to the profuse violent phenomena, and as an attempted copy of Gandhi's struggle in India,⁵³ this was a short-lived, episodic event. The adherence of the 1987–88 uprising to relatively non-violent tactics is, undoubtedly, more the result of necessity than a real choice. It is practically impossible to stage a struggle based on guerrilla warfare under the present conditions in the Territories, or even to intensify significantly the level of terrorist activity. In this sense, the *intifada* is a necessarily curtailed rebellion.

Combined with the excessive violence, the absence of central leadership was fatal for the Palestinian rebellion of the 1930s. The local chieftains behaved like warlords, whose main interest was their own power and wealth. Gang wars, massive assassinations of political opponents, and murders for profit levied a very heavy toll on the Arab population. Arab sources estimated the number of Palestinians killed by their brethren during the 1936–39 period at the range of 3,000–4,500,⁵⁴ considerably more than the number of casualties caused by British security forces' actions. The rebellion turned into a self-consuming chaotic rampage. Beyond these internal reasons that, in themselves, could suffice to doom the rebellion, the course of the struggle and its end were, by and large, dictated by the doings and undoings of the British forces. Thus, the peak of the rebellion took place in the summer of 1938, when the British army reduced its forces in Palestine due to the crisis of Czechoslovakia.⁵⁵ Undoubtedly, the intensity of the *intifada* and its form have also been greatly influenced by the intensity of the effort invested by the Israeli forces to contain it.

Popular Uprisings and Other Forms of Insurgent Violence

Several commentators have made the ironic observation that two key actors were caught by surprise by the *intifada*: the government of Israel and the PLO. Clearly, this observation is factually correct, as pointed out above. The uprising was a spontaneous outburst, that had not been conceived, planned, or even envisaged by the Palestinian political-strategic leadership, nor had it been foreseen by Israeli intelligence services and civilian experts, not to mention the political leaders. The more important lesson, however, transcends the present events and does not concern the intelligence failure as such. It has to do with the changing forms of violent insurgencies in general and the factors which determine what form of violence is actually assumed at a particular time. It is proposed here that in revolutionary struggles, whether social-ideological or nationalistic in nature, the role of preconceived strategy has been greatly overemphasized in both revolutionary literature and scholarly writings. The actual form of struggle – terrorism, guerrilla, conventional warfare, or a specific mixture of them – is mainly determined by objective conditions rather than by a strategic scheme designed by more or less talented strategists. Furthermore, although in many insurgent struggles a strategic revolutionary plan preceded actual fighting, the real course of events was considerably different than the original scheme. Whenever the leaders of an uprising failed to recognize the disparity between their preconceived strategy and reality and to take corrective steps, they failed miserably. Such failures sometimes doomed the revolution for a very long time, as demonstrated by Che Guevara's experience in Bolivia in 1967. A salient Palestinian example was the attempt to transplant artificially the Algerian and the Vietnamese doctrines of struggle to the areas occupied in 1967. Soon after the Israeli conquest, the Fatah leadership, which was greatly impressed by those successful revolutionary experiences, tried to launch a guerrilla campaign in the territories. In a matter of a few weeks they learned at great cost that the meager woods on the Judean hills were a far cry from the jungles of Vietnam. Fatah and the other Palestinian organizations consequently changed their strategy and resorted to terrorist activity within Israel and the Territories and raids across the border.

In the history of the Palestinian nationalist struggle, a real attempt to formulate a comprehensive strategy was only made after the foundation of Fatah in 1959. Even then, as the example mentioned above demonstrates, reality always dictated the form of struggle, with strategic doctrine having very little influence on the flow of events. Thus, guerrilla-type raids across the border were the thrust of PLO activity, as long as King Hussein permitted them. Following the PLO's expulsion from Jordan in 1970,

Fatah resorted to international terrorism, which it had strongly opposed for doctrinal reasons before. When the PLO established itself in Lebanon, it resorted to incursions across the border and shelling of Israeli settlements. The Lebanese arena following the 1982 war enabled the PLO to stage a low-level guerrilla warfare against Israeli forces there. When the *intifada* erupted, it became the focus of PLO effort. Terrorist activity, which is the least demanding form of violent insurgency, has always accompanied other forms of struggle and persisted in the intervening periods.

Postscript

On 15 November 1988 the 19th session of the Palestine National Council (PNC), convening in Algiers, proclaimed the establishment of a Palestinian state and declared its 'determination to reach a comprehensive political settlement'. A month later in a speech before the UN General Assembly in Geneva and in a press conference, as a result of American pressure, Arafat went a step further and declared:

. . . We mean our people's rights to freedom and national independence in accordance with [U.N.] Resolution No. 181 as well as the right of all parties concerned with the Middle East conflict to exist in peace and security, including . . . the state of Palestine, Israel and other neighbours in accordance with Resolutions 242 and 338.

He also 'renounced terrorism'.⁵⁶

The PNC resolutions as well as Arafat's UN speech and press statement, have been the subject of conflicting interpretations. Nevertheless, they are undeniably the farthest political step that the PLO has taken yet.

The *intifada* has undoubtedly been the cause of the recent developments in PLO policy. In itself an expression of impatience with the continued Israeli rule, the uprising has also signified disillusionment with the PLO's ability to bring about a basic change and, as a spontaneous, self-help phenomenon constituted a challenge to the PLO's hitherto unchallenged leadership of the Palestinian struggle. Moreover, the continued hardships of the strife have created, alongside a wish to return to normalcy, also an undercurrent of criticism of the PLO's leaders who have been perceived by some as having maintained a stubborn, unfruitful policy under luxurious conditions, whereas the population of the Territories has been paying the price. The newly acquired pride of the Territories' population notwithstanding, after long months of travail they wanted to see the fruit of their suffering.

Although the majority of the Palestinian population of the Territories undoubtedly considers the PLO as their political leadership, the *intifada* has given rise to a new stratum of local leaders, who are a generation younger than the PLO's Old Guard and have the advantage of leading

from within the largest, presently most active Palestinian populace, which is geographically located at the site of the envisioned Palestinian state. Inasmuch as there has been no indication yet to an open claim of leadership of the Palestinian struggle by the local leaders in the Territories, nor to an unveiled defiance of PLO's authority, one may reasonably assume that the veteran PLO leaders have been worried about their status.

Another factor that precipitated the PLO's political move was King Hussein's formal withdrawal from the arena. Undoubtedly, the *intifada* convinced the King that the so-called 'Jordanian option' was obsolete and his decision was prompted by the fear that the uprising might spread to the Palestinian inhabitants of Jordan, comprising more than 50 per cent of the population of the Kingdom. On 31 July 1988 the King declared the disconnection of the West Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and, soon thereafter, implemented his declaration with a series of political and administrative steps. Although the PLO has always regarded the King as a temporary custodian of their property at best, the King's exit left the organization facing a direct challenge. The principal dare was not in the realm of economic and administrative caretaking of the population, but in the political and psychological domain. After almost a quarter of a century of claim for leadership and the right of representation of the Palestinian people, the PLO could not possibly ignore the glove. Accepting the challenge not only meant stepping into the formal political vacuum created by Jordan's disclamation of authority (which the PLO did by the formal proclamation of independence in the PNC). It meant, more than ever before, exercising leadership in a way that would show the population a light at the end of the tunnel.

But is there light at the end of the tunnel? Despite the seeming political progress, the gap between the PLO's and the Israeli positions is still too vast to justify hopes for a peaceful settlement in the foreseeable future. The formal positions of the feuding parties cover conflicting basic aspirations and deeply rooted psychological distrust of two peoples, tangled in a century-old existential struggle. Bridging this abyss will probably require generations. By all likelihood, the *intifada* is not the last chapter in the history of the conflict.

NOTES

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1. Based on reports published in the *Los Angeles Times*, 1 and 2 June 1987, and in *Yediot Aharonot* (Hebrew daily), 3 June 1987.

2. For data on demography, economy, land use and ownership, administration, etc., in the Territories, see Meron Benvenisti (ed.), *The West Bank Data Project* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1985, 1986, 1987).
3. Based on reports published in the *Los Angeles Times*, 23 Oct. 1985; *Near East Report*, 7 July 1986; *New York Times*, 1 Dec. 1987; *New York Times*, 29 Dec. 1987; *Davar* (Hebrew daily) 22 Jan. 1988; *Al Hamishmar* (Hebrew daily) 2 Feb. 1988; *Yediot Aharonot*, 1 April 1988.
4. Based on report in *Haaretz* (Hebrew Daily), 16 June 1987.
5. For instances, see *The Threat of PLO Terrorism* (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, 1985) and the *Jerusalem Post*, 17 Oct. 1985.
6. According to the data base of the Project on Low Intensity Warfare in the Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies (JCSS), in 1985 there were 252 terrorist attacks in Israel (including the Territories) as compared with 125 attacks in 1984. In 1986 the total number of attacks dropped to 132.
7. According to the JCSS data base, terrorist attacks in which improvised arms – mostly daggers and molotov cocktails – were used accounted in 1985 for 55 per cent of all terrorist activity in the Territories and for 40 per cent of the terrorist activity in the whole of Israel; in 1986 the rates were 57 per cent and 38 per cent respectively.
8. See interviews with: Rafik a-Natshe to *Al-Anbaa* (Kuwait). Nov. 1985; Abu Ayad to *Al-Watan* (Kuwait), 22 Sept. 1985; Abu Tayeb to *Al-Raai-Al-Aam* (Kuwait), 15 Feb. 1986.
9. In 1985, 'spontaneous', unorganized attacks accounted for about 50 per cent of all terrorist activity, according to Israel's Minister of Police, cited by the *Jerusalem Post*, 10 Oct. 1985. In 1986, they accounted for 45 per cent and in 1987, for 56 per cent according to IDF statistics cited by the *Jerusalem Post*, 16 Oct. 1987.
10. The effect of the PLO's effort to focus all forms of struggle in the Territories on the eruption of the *intifada* was mentioned by Palestinian sources. See, for example, an interview with George Habash in *A-Saphir* (Lebanon), 22 Jan. 1988 and unnamed sources cited in *Yediot Aharonot*, 1 April 1988.
11. See reports in *Maariv* (Hebrew daily), 10 May 1985; *Haaretz*, 28 April 1985 and an interview with George Habash in *A-Saphir*, 22 Jan. 1988.
12. *Maariv*, 25 Dec. 1987.
13. For a conclusive report on Islamic resurgence see Elie Rekhess, 'The Rise of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad', published in the *Jerusalem Post*, 21 Oct. 1987.
14. *Haaretz*, 30 Dec. 1987. Fatah leader Abu Ayad commented in December 1987 on this subject: 'There was no need at all to plan the uprising. This is a manifestation of the Palestinian people's rage against the state of occupation and repression . . . our [PLO's] role is to support it'. *Novu Magazine* (Lebanon), 12 Dec. 1987.
15. *Pravda* (USSR), 27 Jan. 1988.
16. See, for example, *Maariv*, 8 Jan. 1988.
17. *The New York Times*, 6 Feb. 1988. Arab sources claimed that a meeting was held in December 1987 in an unnamed Arab country, with the participation of representatives of the various Palestinian groups operating in the territories and Abu Jihad, then in charge of Fatah's operations in the Territories. In that meeting it was decided to establish a united command for the uprising. *Al-Sayasa* (Kuwait), 20 Dec. 1987; *Al-Shark Al-Ausat* (Saudiya), 28 Dec. 1987.
18. *Sunday Times* (UK), 1 Feb. 1988 and 5 Feb. 1988; *New York Times*, 6 Feb. 1988.
19. *Maariv* (Israel), 20 Jan. 1988; *New York Times*, 6 Feb. 1988.
20. *Yediot Aharonot* (Israel), 5 Feb. 1988.
21. Relating to the emergence of a new local leadership in the Territories, Khalil Al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) said: 'we are proud to let this young generation to be the vanguard'. *Washington Post*, 26 Feb. 1988. See also ABC, 28 Jan. 1988.
22. *Yediot Aharonot*, 18 April 1988.
23. ABC (USA), 28 Jan. 1988; *Sunday Times*, 1 Feb. 1988.
24. *Maariv*, 11 March 1988.
25. *New York Times*, 6 Feb. 1988.
26. *Ibid.*
27. ABC, 28 Jan. 1988.

28. *Maariv*, 10 Feb. 1988; *Yediot Aharonot*, 5 Feb. 1988.
29. *Maariv*, 16 Feb. 1988.
30. *Yediot Aharonot*, 5 Feb. 1988; *Haaretz*, 17 Feb. 1988.
31. Reflections of this conception can be seen in the following interviews: Nabil Shaath to *A-Shaab* (Egypt), 2 Dec. 1986; Abu Ayad to *al-Rai al-Aam* (Kuwait), 20 Sept 1986; Khaled al-Khassan to *al-Anbaa* (Kuwait), Oct. 1986; Arafat to *Falastin a-Thawara* (Nicosia), 28 March 1987.
32. See, for example, the following interviews: George Habash to *A-Saphir* (Lebanon) 22 Jan. 1988; Arafat to Hearst, cited by the *Jerusalem Post* 14 Feb. 1988.
33. *Ibid.*
34. For the PLO position on the issue of the international conference see interview with Arafat to *Newsweek* cited by *Maariv*, 21 Dec. 1987; Arafat in a speech before the Islamic Conference Organization (ICO), cited by Rabat Home Service, 5 Jan. 1988.
35. Arafat, *ibid.*, and in a press conference in Baghdad, 15 Jan. 1988.
36. Arafat's interview to the *Washington Post* cited by *Maariv*, 5 Jan. 1988.
37. The text of the document was published in the *Jerusalem Post*, 24 June 1988.
38. Al-Quds radio station (operated by the radical Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine - General Command, broadcasting from Syria) 9 Feb. 1988; Abu Ayad interviewed on the Voice of Palestine (VOP, PLO's central radio station), 28 April 1988.
39. See, for example, an interview with Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), VOP, 12 Feb. 1988.
40. See interview with George Habash in *A-Saphir* (Lebanon), 22 Jan. 1988.
41. See interview with Mahmud Abbas in *Al-Musawar* (Egypt), 29 Jan. 1988.
42. See, for example, the following interviews: Hani al-Hassan in *A-Sayasa* (Kuwait), 1 Jan. 1988; Abu Jihad in *Al-Anbaa* (Kuwait), cited by *Yediot Aharonot*, 18 April 1988.
43. See, for example, radio Al-Quds (Syria), 15 Feb. 1988; Abu Ayad quoted by Reuter, cited by *Maariv* on 21 Feb. 1988.
44. According to the JCSS data base, in 19 instances of petrol bomb throwing during the *intifada* people were hurt, two of them killed.
45. For a declaration by Arafat that arson incidents in Israel were part of the *intifada* see *Maariv*, 14 June 1988.
46. Arafat interviewed by *A-Dustur* (London), 21 Dec. 1987; VOP, 27 April 1988.
47. The JCSS Project on Low Intensity Warfare's data base.
48. There is a multitude of definitions of political terrorism which emphasize different aspects of this form of warfare. For an extensive survey and comparative analysis see A.P. Schmid and A.J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1988). In the context of this article, the main differences between terrorism and guerrilla as forms of warfare are the following: (1) Terrorists, unlike guerrillas, do not try to establish control of a territory (for example, create 'Liberated Zones'); (2) Guerrillas use relatively large size units in operations - platoons, companies, sometimes battalions or brigades - whereas terrorist operations involve very few people; (3) Guerrillas use mainly regular armies' weapons and tactics whereas terrorists employ specialized weapons and techniques (for example, car bombs, improvised explosive charges, hijacking, sophisticated bombs on board aircraft).
49. The Arab nationalist movement, which emerged at the turn of the century was clearly anti-Zionist. The movement was mainly based in Beirut and Damascus and was ideologically pan-Arabic, but its leadership included several Palestinians. Nevertheless, its practical influence on the level of political violence in Palestine was rather limited before the British occupation of Palestine. See, B. Dinur (editor-in-chief). *Sefer Toldot Ha'Hagana (The History of the Hagana)* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1954; Hebrew), Vol.1, Part 1, pp.66, 76, 185.
50. Y. Arnon-Ohana, *Kherev Mi' Bayit (The Internal Struggle Within the Palestinian Movement 1929-1939)* (Tel Aviv: Yariv-Hadar, 1981; Hebrew), pp.73, 241, 242-9. Also, Y. Shimoni, *Lexicon Politi Shel Ha'Olam Ha'Arvi (Political Dictionary of the Arab World)* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1988; Hebrew), p.341.
51. Y. Porat, *Mi'mehumot Li'Mrida (From Riots to Rebellion: The Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1929-1939)* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1978; Hebrew), p.360.
52. Y. Arnon-Ohana, *Falahim Ba'Mered Ha'Arvi Be'Eretz Israel 1936-1939 (Peasants in*

- the Arab Rebellion in Eretz Israel 1936-1939* (Tel Aviv: Papyrus, 1982; Hebrew), pp.92-100.
53. Y. Arnon-Ohana, *Kherev Mibayit*, op. cit., pp.242-5.
 54. *Ibid.*, p.286.
 55. B. Dinur, op. cit., Vol.2, Part 2, pp.770-71.
 56. BBC Monitoring Service, Summary of World Broadcasts, 17 Dec. 1988, quoting Arafat's press statement in Geneva as broadcasted by the PLO central radio in Baghdad on 15 Dec. 1988 (ME/0336 A/1).