Contents

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 2 SPRING 2007
RABI AL-AWWAL 1428

Editorial 3

40 Years of Occupation: the West Bank and Gaza Strip
RAJNAARA AKHTAR 5

The Trap of Recognising Israel
JONATHAN COOK 13

Why We Must Not Dismiss the Intifada Lesson
RAMZY BAROUD 17

The Muslim Fascination with Jerusalem
The Case of the Sufis [Part II]
SHAMSUDDIN AL-KILANI 23

Gazan Odyssey
JENNIFER LOEWENSTEIN 31

BOOK REVIEWS 37

The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of a People’s Struggle
by Ramzy Baroud and Jennifer Loewenstein
REVIEWED BY REMI KANAZI

For Zion’s Sake: The Judeo-Christian Tradition in American Culture
by Fuad Shaban
REVIEWED BY SAMUEL J. KURUVILLA

The Persistence of the Palestinian Question.
Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians
by Joseph A. Massad
REVIEWED BY MICHEL AUSTIN

Hamas Unwritten Chapters
by Azzam Tamimi
REVIEWED BY YUSUF SHABBIR

A Threat From Within: A Century of Jewish Opposition to Zionism
by Yakov M. Rabkin
REVIEWED BY BUENA FARIDI

WELCOME Papers, articles and comments on any issue relating to Palestine and the Middle East conflict. We especially encourage writings relating to the History, Politics, Architecture, Religion, International Law and Human Rights violations. The word count should not exceed 2,000 words. Reviews of Books relating to the issue of Palestine are also welcome and should not exceed 1,000 words. Letters on any related topics can also be sent and the Editor reserves the right to edit letters for the purpose of clarity. All contributions should be in Word format, Times New Roman font size 12 and sent to the Editor either via email or on a disc at the above address. It must include the author’s full name, address and a brief curriculum vitae.

ISSN 1463-3930

EDITOR
Ismail Adam Patel

SUB-EDITOR
Rajnaara Akhtar

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
Azizul Hoque

PRINTERS
Impress Printers, Batley.

© 2007 Friend of Al-Aqsa

Published By
Friends of Al-Aqsa
PO Box 5127
Leicester LE2 0WU, UK
Tel: ++ 44 (0)116 2125441
Mobile: 07711823524
e-mail: info@aqsa.org.uk
Website: www.aqsa.org.uk

WE WELCOME Papers, articles and comments on any issue relating to Palestine and the Middle East conflict. We especially encourage writings relating to the History, Politics, Architecture, Religion, International Law and Human Rights violations. The word count should not exceed 2,000 words. Reviews of Books relating to the issue of Palestine are also welcome and should not exceed 1,000 words. Letters on any related topics can also be sent and the Editor reserves the right to edit letters for the purpose of clarity. All contributions should be in Word format, Times New Roman font size 12 and sent to the Editor either via email or on a disc at the above address. It must include the author’s full name, address and a brief curriculum vitae.

Printed in the UK by Impress Printers, Batley

© 2007 Friend of Al-Aqsa

Published By
Friends of Al-Aqsa
PO Box 5127
Leicester LE2 0WU, UK
Tel: ++ 44 (0)116 2125441
Mobile: 07711823524
e-mail: info@aqsa.org.uk
Website: www.aqsa.org.uk

ISSN 1463-3930

EDITOR
Ismail Adam Patel

SUB-EDITOR
Rajnaara Akhtar

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
Azizul Hoque

PRINTERS
Impress Printers, Batley.

© 2007 Friend of Al-Aqsa

WE WELCOME Papers, articles and comments on any issue relating to Palestine and the Middle East conflict. We especially encourage writings relating to the History, Politics, Architecture, Religion, International Law and Human Rights violations. The word count should not exceed 2,000 words. Reviews of Books relating to the issue of Palestine are also welcome and should not exceed 1,000 words. Letters on any related topics can also be sent and the Editor reserves the right to edit letters for the purpose of clarity. All contributions should be in Word format, Times New Roman font size 12 and sent to the Editor either via email or on a disc at the above address. It must include the author’s full name, address and a brief curriculum vitae.
How would you comfort her?

Interpal’s one to one child sponsorship programme gives hope to young needy Palestinian children by providing essential care and support.

For just £25 a month you can restore hope.

Contact us today for your sponsor pack
Tel: +44(0)20 8961 9993
Email: sponsorship@interpal.org
www.interpal.org
Interpal, PO Box 53389, London NW10 6WT
Registered charity 1040094
Oh you who believe! Do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach unto Him, and strive (with might and main) in His cause: that you may prosper.

May Allahs blessings be upon all His Prophets from Adam to His final Messenger Muhammad (saw).

The breaking news in Mid-April was the Arab Initiative Committee’s call for holding direct diplomatic negotiations with Israel. They plan to form a taskforce which will make contact with Israel and consider strategies for reviving and promoting the Arab peace initiative ratified in the 2002 Beirut summit, and reactivated in Saudi Arabia in March 2007.

While the negotiations have for the time being been entrusted to Egypt and Jordan, the two Arab states that already recognise Israel, the far reaching consequences of this move are easy to decipher. The opening of such dialogue will inevitably lead to a de facto recognition of Israel by the Arab states who partake, regardless of their official position in not recognising Israel. This will give Israel what it craves – legitimacy and recognition, and in all likelihood, the Arabs will walk away having secured none of the 3 integral Palestinian rights: the Return of Refugees, Jerusalem and its borders.

Many have been quick to accuse the new initiatives as a more neatly packaged version of Oslo. Far from their dreams of a homeland called Palestine being fulfilled, through Oslo the Palestinians witnessed Israel’s excessive and seemingly endless thirst for land taking the form of expanded settlement building and the increased persecution of Palestinians whose lands were confiscated without compensation to make way for these illegal Jewish only colonies. The beginning of checkpoints coincided with the Oslo period and since 1991, over 500 have been erected across the occupied territories and since 2000, not one single one has been removed.

The Saudi’s participation in the agreement for a Palestinian Unity government was automatically respected by the Palestinians and the Arabs as the Saudi’s are one of their own. However, it is clear to the disinterested observer that Washington and Tel-Aviv have their own interests at heart in allowing, yes, allowing Makkah to get involved. This unlikely peace-broker is an old time ally of the Western powers, and while their external anti-Israeli stance means there is no suspicions about their motives, self-interest should not be ruled out.

The Middle East has spiralled into chaos, with Iraq, not Palestine, representing the black hole. The demise of Iraq and the rise of Iran, has led to a power struggle. The Saudi’s have capitalised on this as Washington is using it in a pitch against Iranian domination in the region. For the sake of the Palestinian people, we must hope that Iran holds out for long enough so that the Saudis can at least try to gain some concessions for them. If the new proposals do transpire to be nothing more than Oslo re-invented, Palestinians at least have the luxury of past experience to spot the wolf in sheep’s clothing.

The main thrust of the Arab initiative is withdrawal to the 1967 borders. It is abundantly clear that this is an impossibility for Israel, simply because it has spent the last 40 years ensuring that it would never have to return to these borders. The path of the wall has created facts on the ground and a new de facto border which incorporated some 15-20% of the West Bank land into Israel. Given the fanatical response of Israel’s extreme right wingers to the Gaza withdrawal, Olmert does not stand a chance in evacuating 450,000 Settlers from the West Bank. Thus, the Arab Initiative is highly unlikely to achieve this.

Where refugees are concerned, this is still on the negotiating tables and Jerusalem may be conceded to an ‘international’ body, whatever that means in light of the UN’s increasing impotence. So overall, it appears that Israel will be the one to win, once again.
Prior to the formation of Israel in 1948, there was a steady stream of Jewish migrants to the Palestinian lands. Between 1930 and 1935 in particular, with the growing persecution in Europe, approximately 150,000 Jews arrived on the Palestinian shores. Following the British promise of creating a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine, when the British withdrew from their mandate over the Palestinians in 1947, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 was passed in favour of dividing Palestinian land in the Middle East between the overwhelming majority of indigenous Arabs and the small minority of migrant Jews; 37% and 63% respectively. This was of course rejected by the Palestinians and the resultant armed conflict created a catastrophe (Nakba) for 80% of the Palestinians who were forced to flee their homes or face certain death at the hands of terrorist Zionist gangs. The question of the legality of this UN Resolution was never scrutinized as the General Assembly voted against conceding the point to the International Court of Justice for an Advisory Opinion.

In 1948, following a bitter war between the immigrant Jews and the native Palestinians, Israel was declared on 78% of historic Palestinian land and was recognised as a legitimate state by the United Nations. It is estimated that 750,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes’ during this war, and some 60 years later, these people remain the world’s most prevalent refugee problem.

Due to the identification of Israel as a state by its admittance to the United Nations in May 1949 conditional on its compliance with UN Resolution 194, it is internationally recognised as a state despite questions of legality over its birth. Its borders are documented as the Green Line that separated it from the 22% of the Palestinian territories that remained after the 1948 war. However, Israel is a state with an expansionist ideology and for this reason; it called this Green Line border a temporary one.

In 1967, following the 6 Day War between Israel and its neighbours Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, Israel completed its occupation of all land belonging to the Palestinians, as well as Egypt’s Sinai desert, and Syria’s Golan Heights. Contrary to the popular beliefs, former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin once stated that despite the build up of troops, the Arabs did not in fact initiate the hostilities: “The Egyptian Army concentrations in the Sinai approaches do not prove that Nasser was really about to attack us. We must be honest with ourselves. We decided to attack him.”

For 40 years, the majority of this occupation has persisted in defiance of the Fourth Geneva Convention regulating belligerent occupation and numerous United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions on the issue. Through the occupation, Israel has expanded its borders by creating facts on the ground which preclude any move to establish contiguous territories for a Palestinian state.

Following the 6 Day War, UNSC Resolution 242 was passed in November 1967 requiring Israel to withdraw from territories occupied in the war. Many Israeli commentators have interpreted the text of the Resolution in such a way that it does not fulfil its intended objective, as they suggest that it does not in fact require a withdrawal to the internationally recognised Green Line border. Commentary from the Jewish Virtual Library suggests that even as the Resolution was being negotiated, the wording was deliberately made obscure to allow Israel to continue its occupation. The absence of the word ‘all’ from the requirement for

1. Rajaanara Akhtar is a researcher at Friends of Al-Aqsa. She is a law graduate with a Masters in Human Rights Law from the University of Nottingham. She is also a freelance writer and commentator, and the Chair of the campaign group Protect-Hijab.
Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict', is argued to be sufficient to mean that some withdrawal is enough, regardless of how small, to satisfy this Resolution. Thus, Israel has already, purportedly, fulfilled its obligations. This is a clear travesty against the real intention of the Resolution.

The result of this has been a 40 year long occupation which has threatened to annihilate the very fabric of Palestinian life, impacting on their culture, livelihoods, family structures and very basic human rights. Nothing has been sacred, including religious sites honoured for decades by both Muslim and Christian Palestinians.

More recently, UNSC Resolution 1322\textsuperscript{11} (2000) was passed with a 14-0 majority, requiring Israel to abide by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention in its treatment of the occupied Palestinian people. Israel’s obligations under international law and its failings were discussed by leading international law professor Francis Boyle,\textsuperscript{12} who concluded that: “there are 149 substantive articles of the Fourth Geneva Convention that protect the rights of every one of these Palestinians living in occupied Palestine. The Israeli Government is currently violating, and has since 1967 been violating, almost each and every one of these sacred rights of the Palestinian People recognized by the Fourth Geneva Convention. Indeed, violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention are war crimes”.

Israel argues that it is not bound by the provisions of the Geneva Conventions as they require the occupied state to have been the territory of a high contracting party prior to the occupation taking place.\textsuperscript{13} This has been refuted by the vast majority of international law academics and most recently, by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its Advisory Opinion on the Wall; where it was stated unequivocally that The Fourth Geneva Convention applies to the territories occupied by Israel:\textsuperscript{14}

The Court notes that, according to the first paragraph of Article 2 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, when two conditions are fulfilled, namely that there exists an armed conflict (whether or not a state of war has been recognized), and that the conflict has arisen between two contracting parties, then the Convention applies, in particular, in any territory occupied in the course of the conflict by one of the contracting parties. The object of the second paragraph of Article 2, which refers to “occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party”, is not to restrict the scope of application of the Convention, as defined by the first paragraph, by excluding therefrom territories not falling under the sovereignty of one of the contracting parties, but simply to making it clear that, even if occupation effected during the conflict met no armed resistance, the Convention is still applicable.\textsuperscript{15}

The failure of Israel to recognise its duties and obligations to the occupied Palestinian people under International law has had a seismic impact on their lives. Some specifics of the reality of Israel’s occupation are described below.

1. Killing and Injuries

Israel’s military strategy across the Palestinian territories has resulted in the deaths of thousands of Palestinians. Weekly reports on human rights violations against Palestinians are available from the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights\textsuperscript{16}. The army has shown no restraint, whether faced with children or the elderly. Medical evidence has also shown that a large number of the deaths resulted from upper-body gun shot wounds, reflecting intent to kill rather than injure/incapacitate. 42 Palestinians were killed by extremist Israeli settlers during the period of the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

During the 2000-2006 Al-Aqsa Intifada:\textsuperscript{17}

- 3,216 Palestinians Civilians were killed by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) in the occupied territories;
- A further 843 Palestinians were killed by IOF troops in armed clashes;
- 11000 Palestinians were wounded in the Gaza Strip; and
- 13000 Palestinians were wounded in the West Bank.

Of those killed: 759 were children, 141 were female, 25 were medical personnel and 10 were journalists.\textsuperscript{18}

Over 500 of the deaths resulted from Israel’s ‘targeted assassinations’ policy, a substantial number of whom were innocent bystanders. Assassinations are a form of extra-judicial executions and are illegal under article 3 in the Fourth Geneva Convention. Furthermore, assassinations are wilful killings and thus constitute a war crime under article 147 in the Convention.

In December 2006, the Israeli High Court failed to find that such assassinations were unlawful but held that they might only be carried out as a last resort and within the
bounds of proportionality. Thus, the Israeli army, with utter impunity, has killed more unarmed Palestinian civilians since September 2000 than the number of people who died on September 11, 2001. Of all those killed, 23% were children under the age of 17.

Derek Summerfield, in the British Medical Journal stated that two thirds of the 621 children killed at checkpoints, in the street, on the way to school, or in their homes, died from small arms fire, directed in over half of cases to the head, neck and chest, which is considered the sniper's wound; intended to kill.

2. Settlements

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention unequivocally makes it illegal for settlements to be built on occupied territories.

In his recent report, the UN’s special Rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, John Dugard, concluded: “The construction of settlements continues. Today there are some 460,000 settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. A study by an Israeli non-governmental organization (NGO) has shown that nearly 40 per cent of the land occupied by settlements in the West Bank is privately owned by Palestinians. It has become abundantly clear that the Wall and checkpoints are principally aimed at advancing the safety, convenience and comfort of settlers.”

The illegal Settlement policy started to take shape at the beginning of the 1970’s. The Israeli left wing began settlement building under the ‘Allon Plan’ which saw the first 24 Israeli settlements being formed in the West Bank. The idea was to create a buffer zone between Israel and the Palestinian territories, 5-10km into the West Bank along the green line, and also within the Jordan Valley.

The security argument was the prevailing reason given to the Israeli public, but leaders such as Menachem Begin made no secret of the settlements being an ideological affair and a stepping stone to re-establishing the ‘Greater Israel’ of Biblical times. This ambition was for the entire Palestinian territories to be a part of Israel, right up to the River Jordan.

The reality of settlement building for Palestinian families is the confiscation of their lands, which have usually been in their families for generations, without any compensation. Their homes are then demolished and homes for the settlers are then built in their place. These Palestinians are not only left homeless, but when their agricultural land is also confiscated, their livelihoods disappear. They are no longer allowed access event to the areas where they used to live as the settlements are closed off from non-Israelis.

Currently 460,000 settlers are living illegally in West Bank. In Gaza, following the unilateral disengagement, 8,000 settlers were removed from the strip. However, far from marking an end to the occupation, Israel’s de facto control of the borders and sea have resulted in Gaza being turned into an open air prison camp, with a huge percentage of the population unable to put food on the table without relying on UN food programmes. Most importantly, those settlers who were taken out of Gaza were re-settled in the West Bank.

Where there are settlements, there are bypass roads. Israel has constructed over 340km of bypass roads linking settlements to each other and to Israel. These roads disrupt Palestinian territorial contiguity and divide the West Bank and Gaza strip into dozens of isolated enclaves. The roads include 50-75 metre buffer zones which further take up more than 50 km² of Palestinian land. For each 100km of road, some 10,000 dunums/2,500 acres of land is confiscated.

3. Collective Punishments

Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that: “No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited.”

Israel has been accused of employing numerous actions which amount to collective punishment of the Palestinian people. These include its checkpoint policies, house demolitions, curfews, closures and incursions within Palestinian population centres. In his recent report, John Dugard states that Israeli law and practice makes it impossible for thousands of Palestinian families to live together. A new practice of refusing visas to foreign residents in the OPT has aggravated this situation.

“The system of closures is nothing new to the Palestinian people and has characterised the belligerent Israeli occupation, now in its 40th year. It is directly responsible for the humanitarian crisis in the OPT which, according to reports published by the World Bank in 2004, has resulted in 47% of Palestinians living below the poverty line and 16% of Palestinians in deep or “absolute” poverty and not being able to afford to meet their basic survival needs, by Palestinians

Israel's de facto control of the borders and sea have resulted in Gaza being turned into an open air prison camp

nearly 40 per cent of the land occupied by settlements in the West Bank is privately owned by Palestinians
Despite humanitarian assistance. The situation is even more critical in the Gaza Strip where the poverty rate is at 68% and, according to UNOCHA, expected to rise.\textsuperscript{29}

The siege of Gaza since mid-2006 is considered to be a form of collective punishment in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949.\textsuperscript{30} Such closure policies and the resultant mass unemployment and poverty, and denial of political, civil, social, economical and cultural rights have a profound and drastic impact on Palestinians.

Palestinians face discrimination on a number of fronts, and the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid is considered to be violated by many Israeli practices, particularly those denying freedom of movement to Palestinians.\textsuperscript{31} The West Bank and Gaza have been completely closed off from each other since 6 October 2000 when the so called “safe passage” road between Gaza and the West Bank was sealed.

\textbf{a. Checkpoints}

Checkpoints are a living nightmare for Palestinians. Since 1991, checkpoints have been steadily built all across the territories. Since 2000, not one single checkpoint has been removed from the West Bank but rather, they have multiplied incessantly.\textsuperscript{32} There is a popular myth that checkpoints are established on an \textit{ad hoc} basis and usually in response to a specific threat from Palestinians. However, the reality suggests a more entrenched method of destroying territorial continuity across the occupied territories, and disrupting daily life at every turn, thus creating an unbearable living atmosphere. The eventual aim of all of this is of course to drive the Palestinians from their homeland.

Checkpoints take the form of staffed blockades where Palestinians can only pass following permission from the Israeli soldiers/mobile border police that are present. Over 600 exist and many are permanent while other move. In addition to these checkpoints, there are also hundreds of other blockades across the Palestinian territories which make freedom of movement impossible. These include dirt mounds and concrete road blocks which are intended to stop Palestinians using vehicles on main roads and they are scattered all across the West Bank and Gaza.

At least 83 Palestinians seeking medical care have died during delays at checkpoints, according to the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group.\textsuperscript{33} Such deaths include babies of women who were forced to give birth at checkpoints as they were deliberately denied passage to hospitals by Israeli soldiers. During the al-Aqsa Intifada between September 2000 and 2006, 68 pregnant Palestinian women gave birth at Israeli checkpoints, leading to 34 miscarriages and the deaths of four women, according to a Palestinian Health Ministry report in September 2006.\textsuperscript{34}

There are numerous accounts of ambulances and patients being denied passage leading to deaths which could have been prevented.\textsuperscript{35} Soldiers are rarely prosecuted for such crimes.

At the end of 2005, the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem reported the following number of checkpoints/road blocks across the West Bank and Gaza Strip.\textsuperscript{36}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEST BANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Checkpoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Checkpoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadblocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road gates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Mounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Walls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trenches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GAZA STRIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Checkpoint</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{b. House Demolitions}

Israel has been responsible for the demolition of thousands of civilian properties in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967. In particular, such activities escalated during the first and second Intifadas. The demolition of houses, levelling of agricultural land and expropriation of land are violations of Articles 33 and 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and are also defined as a grave breach under article 147 and therefore also constitute war crimes. In addition, the UN Committee Against Torture has found, that the Israeli government’s house demolition policy “may, in certain instances, amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” in violation of Article 16 of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.\textsuperscript{37}

Between September 2000 and 2005, the Palestinians Central Bureau of Statistics revealed the following figures for buildings damaged either partially or completely by the Israeli occupation forces.\textsuperscript{38}
The wall’s path is far from the green line border, and in some parts it is as deep as 10km in the West Bank so that it incorporates many of Israel’s vast illegal settlements within the Israeli side of the wall. In order to facilitate its path, many Palestinians have lost their lands which Israel has confiscated without compensation, or has separated from the owners by placing the wall between them and the farm lands. While the wall was being built, gates were incorporated and farmers were told they would still have access to their lands. However, gates stopped being opened and are now deemed to be part of ‘Israel’. Such examples starkly amplify why many Palestinians claim the wall is a land grabbing exercise.

It is estimated that once the wall is completed on its projected path, 50% of the West Bank land will have been expropriated by Israel. Palestinians whose land is lost will not be compensated as Israeli practice in the past exemplifies.

Many Palestinians believe that the wall is being used to create facts on the ground so that its path can be used when negotiating future settlements between Israel and Palestinians. The route of the wall is expected to represent the future borders between the two, and therefore, Palestinians will be denied Jerusalem, free movement from town to town within their own territories and denial of access to the outside world as Israel will retain ultimate border control. The consequences of this will be another Gaza scenario replayed in the West Bank – starvation, poverty, economic collapse, increased lawlessness, no prospects of future viability and indiscriminate Israeli incursions.

### c. The Wall

In 2002, Israel began building what it termed a ‘security fence’ in order to safeguard its own security. While most people envisage a barrier that separates Israel from the Palestinian territories along the internationally recognised green line border, in actual fact, the barrier runs deep within Palestinian lands and has caused immense suffering to the beleaguered population.

The ‘fence’ is in fact projected to run to 700km inside the West Bank. It is a reinforced concrete wall up to 8 metres in height, with an average of 60 metres of exclusion zones on either side of it. In parts there are also watch towers manned by armed guards, electric fences, barbed wire and trenches. About 60% of the projected wall has already been built with a further 10% in progress.

### 4. Political Prisoners and the use of Torture

According to Mandela Institute for Human Rights, there are 9,184 Palestinian political prisoners being held in Israeli jails. Many prisoners and their representatives have made serious complaints about their treatment, trial and general imprisonment.

Since the Israeli occupation in 1967, it is estimated that Israeli forces have arrested about 700,000 Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health’s Statistics Department. Since the start of the al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000, it is thought that fifty thousand Palestinians have been arrested. Five thousand of these were children of whom approximately 390 remain in order to facilitate its path, many Palestinians have lost their lands which Israel has confiscated without compensation.
in prison. Eight of these children are being held without charge or trial.\textsuperscript{42}

Figures released by the Prisoner and Ex-Prisoner Ministry showed that 177 Palestinian detainees were killed inside Israeli jails since 1967.\textsuperscript{43} “The Planning and Statistics Department of the Ministry said, in a statistical report, 69 Palestinian prisoners (39\%) were killed due to being subjected to severe torture whilst 37 prisoners (20.9\%) died due to the lack of medical health care. The report also revealed that 71 prisoners (40.1\%) were willfully killed after the arrest – in cold blooded murder.”\textsuperscript{44}

5. Effects on Children

Palestinian children have not been spared the effects of this occupation. Many studies conducted to ascertain the psychological impact of the violence that is witnessed daily across the territories show shocking findings. During the fist intifada which took place between 1987 and 1993, 161 Palestinian children under the age of 16 were killed by the Israeli occupation forces\textsuperscript{45}. During the Intifada, the involvement of children in the conflict escalated and there was a directly correlative psychological impact\textsuperscript{46}.

Following the re-deployment of Israeli troops in Gaza in June 2006, it is estimated that the vicious bombardment and the almost daily killings has left 99.2\% of the children suffering some form of post-traumatic shock. The consequences of this on the psychosis of the entire population suggests appalling future prospects.

A study conducted in 1998\textsuperscript{47} found that out of a sample of 239 children aged 6 to 11, 72.8\% suffered at least mild post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with 41\% suffering moderate or severe PTSD reactions.

6. Violations on Freedom of Press

In a report by the International Press Institute\textsuperscript{48} (IPI), it was concluded that “gross violations of press freedom” in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were occurring yet going almost unnoticed by the international community.

The IPI report focuses on the al-Aqsa Intifada period and concluded that Israel was responsible for 82.9\% of the 310 press freedom violations recorded by it. The majority of the victims of these violations were Palestinian journalists, 10 of whom were killed. Two foreign journalists have also been killed. In the majority of these cases, the perpetrators went unpunished.

The IPI concluded that this has encouraged a “climate of impunity in which Israeli soldiers, police officers and settlers, as well as Palestinian police and militants, are given implicit, or even explicit, authority to commit press freedom violations.”\textsuperscript{49}

IPI also reported that Israel severely limits the media coverage of events that occur within the occupied territories, such as the Gaza pull-out where the limited number of journalists allowed to enter were forced to go with military escorts, thus were prevented from free coverage. No Palestinian journalists were allowed access to cover the pull out.

It is clear that such restrictions on press freedoms ensure that the Palestinian struggle is often unheard. However, with the advent of youtube.com, many Palestinians have now found a different avenue to ensure their fight is not forgotten and atrocities against them are recorded.

7. The Crisis in Bethlehem and Jerusalem

Both Bethlehem and Jerusalem represent historic and religiously sanctified cities. Jerusalem houses some of the holiest sites in Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Bethlehem is the historic town of Jesus. Both of these have suffered the impact of Israeli occupation to their detriment.

In 1980, Israel declared Jerusalem as its eternal and undivided capital and illegally annexed it. Most of the international community rejected this and still considers Tel Aviv to be the capital of Israel and this is where they have their embassies. Since the building of the separation wall and the circle of illegal settlements built around East Jerusalem, the city has effectively been cut off from the West Bank. Palestinians who have for generations lived close to the holy sites of Jerusalem are now completely isolated from them. Access to Jerusalem is regularly denied to Palestinians who hold West Bank identity cards and families have been torn apart by the wall which now separates the West Bank from East Jerusalem.

The status of Jerusalem has been one of the greatest obstacles to peace negotiations between both sides.\textsuperscript{50} Israel has been accused of working to drive out all non-Jews from the city in a bid to Judaise it. The February 2007 excavations under the al-Aqsa mosque were deemed to be a move towards taking over the al-Aqsa sanctuary with many Palestinians concluding that this was yet another move towards Judaising the city.\textsuperscript{51}

Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza are regularly denied access to their Holy sites especially within Jerusalem. Muslim Palestinians living in Jerusalem are
regularly denied access to the al-Aqṣa mosques, especially men.

Bethlehem has suffered tremendously since the building of the separation wall. The route of the wall has deliberately separated the town from its surrounding agricultural land, and access is via 2 main checkpoints. Tourism was the bread and butter of Bethlehemites and that has dwindled to near insignificant figures since Israel imposed checkpoints and closed the town off from the outside world.32

8. Medical Personnel

Attacks and restrictions on medical and relief personnel and hospitals are prohibited under Articles 17, 18, 20, 21, and 23 in the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as under Articles 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17 of Protocol I, additional to the Geneva Conventions.

During the al-Aqṣa Intifada, 17 on-duty medical personnel were killed by the Israeli army. At least 206 have been reportedly injured. Palestinian paramedics have also been arrested, beaten, and used as human shields on numerous occasions.33 10 Palestinian Red Crescent Society ambulances were destroyed and 80% of its ambulance fleet was damaged. During Israeli attacks on Palestinian cities, Israeli forces have shelled and raided hospitals and clinics, including Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, and al-Bireh resulting in destruction of medical equipment and disruption of health care for patients.

9. Conclusions

The impact of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands has been unprecedented. There is not a single Palestinian who does not feel the brunt of the oppression, with every family having witnessed either a murder, an imprisonment or the humiliation of a family member or friend.

To this day, 1/3 of all refugees are still living in 59 refugee camps in the neighboring countries and within the occupied territories. The Gaza strip has 8 refugee camps housing approximately 400,000 people which is about half the refugee population in the strip. The camps in Gaza are amongst the most densely populated areas in the world (in average there are 356.5 sq. miles per inhabitant in Gaza. In comparison every inhabitant in Ramallah has 3,978.1 sq. miles, Jerusalem: 1,029.4 sq. miles, Nablus: 3,244.3 sq. miles, Jenin: 2,846.8 sq. miles). The biggest and most densely populated Palestinian refugee camp in the world is Jabaliya in the outskirts of Gaza City. 90,000 people live in an area of 3 sq. km.34

“According to the World Bank, the combination of checkpoints, the separation barrier through the West Bank, and other closures – all of which greatly limit the movement of workers and goods – has caused the Palestinian people to suffer “one of the worst recessions in modern history,” with approximately 50% of the Palestinian population now living in poverty. Illness and malnutrition have risen with this economic devastation.”35

This state of affairs has been the result of steady and deliberate oppressive measures being employed against the Palestinians over the past 40 years, and is more than likely to continue unless there is a real and unhindered international effort to make Israel abide by international law and afford the Palestinians their basic human rights as an occupied people.

Notes

4. The text for this resolution can be found at: http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/un/res181.htm (Last visited 10 January 2007)
7. For detailed figures, visit www.nakba-archive.org
10. www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org
16. Available online at www.pchrgaza.org

There is not a single Palestinian who does not feel the brunt of the oppression, with every family having witnessed either a murder, an imprisonment or the humiliation of a family member or friend.

Al-Aqṣa 11
22. Ibid.
24. For details of the Allon Plan, see maps at: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/allonplan.html (Last visited 21 March 2007)
31. Ibid.
41. Dugard (2007), Supra note 22.
42. Statistics from the International Middle East Media Centre at: http://www.imemc.org/article/21544 (last visited 27 March 2007)
44. Documented by If Americans knew, http://www.ifamericansknew.org/cvSit/prisoners-killed.html (last visited 27 March 2007)
45. Reported by the Israeli Human Rights group B’Tselem.
46. See for example, a study by Shafiq Masalha, *The Effects of Prewar Conditions of the Psychological Reaction of Palestinian Children to the Gulf War*, in Leavitt, L., and Fox, N (Eds) *The Psychological Effects of War and Violence* (1993), at 131.
49. Whitaker, Brian, ‘Rivals for Holy city may have to turn to God’, in *the Guardian*, 22 August 2000
53. Reported by the Palestinian Red Crescent society and the Palestine Monitor.
54. Statistics from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and UNRWA.
The Trap of Recognising Israel

Jonathan Cook

The problem facing the Palestinian leadership, as they strive to bring the millions living in the occupied territories some small relief from their collective suffering, reduces to a matter of a few words. Like a naughty child who has only to say “sorry” to be released from his room, the Hamas government need only say “We recognize Israel” and supposedly aid and international goodwill will wash over the West Bank and Gaza.

That, at least, was the gist of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s recent speech during a visit to the Negev, when he suggested that his country’s hand was stretched out across the sands towards the starving masses of Gaza – if only Hamas would repent. “recognize us and we are ready to talk about peace” was the implication.

Certainly the Palestinian people have been viciously punished for making their democratic choice in January 2006 and electing a Hamas government that Israel and the Western powers disapprove of:

- an economic blockade has been imposed, starving the Palestinian Authority of income to pay for services and remunerate its large workforce;
- millions of dollars in tax monies owed to the Palestinians have been illegally withheld by Israel, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis;
- a physical blockade of Gaza enforced by Israel has prevented the Palestinians from exporting their produce, mostly perishable crops, and from importing essentials like food and medicine;
- Israeli military strikes have damaged Gaza’s vital infrastructure, including the supply of electricity and water, as well as randomly killing its inhabitants;
- and thousands of families are being torn apart as Israel uses the pretext of its row with Hamas to stop renewing the visas of Palestinian foreign passport holders.

The magic words “We recognize you” could end all this suffering. So why did their prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, vow never to utter them. Is Hamas so filled with hatred and loathing for Israel as a Jewish state that it cannot make such a simple statement of good intent?

It is easy to forget that, though conditions have dramatically deteriorated of late, the Palestinians’ problems did not start with the election of Hamas. Israel’s occupation is four decades old, and no Palestinian leader has ever been able to extract from Israel a promise of real statehood in all of the occupied territories: not the mukhtars, the largely compliant local leaders, who for decades were the only representatives allowed to speak on behalf of the Palestinians after the national leadership was expelled; not the Palestinian Authority under the secular leadership of Yasser Arafat, who returned to the occupied territories in the mid-1990s after the PLO had recognized Israel; not the leadership of his successor, Mahmoud Abbas, the “moderate” who first called for an end to the armed intifada; and now not the leaders of Hamas, even though they have repeatedly called for a long-term truce (hudna) as the first step in building confidence.

Similarly, few Palestinians doubt that Israel will continue to entrench the occupation – just as it did during the supposed peacemaking years of Oslo, when the number of Jewish settlers doubled in the occupied territories – even if Hamas is ousted.

There is far more at stake for Israel in winning this little concession from Hamas than most observers appreciate. A statement saying that Hamas recognized Israel would do much more than meet Israel’s precondition for talks; it would mean that

Certainly the Palestinian people have been viciously punished for making their democratic choice in January 2006

1. JONATHAN COOK is a freelance journalist based in the Palestinian city of Nazareth in northern Israel. He is a regular contributor to the English-language Arab media, including Al-Ahram Weekly in Cairo, the Daily Star in Beirut and the website al-Jazeera.net. His book Blood and Religion: The Unmasking of the Jewish and Democratic State (Pluto Press, London, 2006) examines Israel’s treatment of its Arab citizens during the second intifada.
Hamas had walked into the same trap that was set earlier for Arafat and Fatah. That trap is designed to ensure that any peaceful solution to the conflict is impossible. It achieves this end in two ways.

First, as has already been understood, at least by those paying attention, Hamas’ recognition of Israel’s “right to exist” would effectively signify that the Palestinian government was publicly abandoning its own goal of struggling to create a viable Palestinian state.

That is because Israel refuses to demarcate its own future borders, leaving it an open question what it considers to be the extent of “its existence” it is demanding Hamas recognize. We do know that no one in the Israeli leadership is talking about a return to Israel’s borders that existed before the 1967 war, or probably anything close to it.

Without a return to those pre-1967 borders (plus a substantial injection of goodwill from Israel in ensuring unhindered passage between Gaza and the West Bank) no possibility exists of a viable Palestinian state ever emerging.

And no goodwill, of course, will be forthcoming. Every Israeli leader has refused to recognize the Palestinians, first as a people and now as a nation. And in the West’s typically hypocritical fashion when dealing with the Palestinians, no one has ever suggested that Israel commit to such recognition.

In fact, Israeli governments have glorified in their refusal to extend the same recognition to the Palestinians that they demand from them. Famously Golda Meir, a Labor prime minister, said that the Palestinians did not exist, adding in 1971 that Israel’s “borders are determined by where Jews live, not where there is a line on a map.” At the same time she ordered that the Green Line, Israel’s border until the 1967 war, be erased from all official maps. That legacy hit the headlines again when the dovish education minister, Yuli Tamir, caused a storm by issuing a directive that the Green Line should be reintroduced in Israeli schoolbooks. There were widespread protests against her “extreme leftist ideology” from politicians and rabbis.

According to Israeli educators, the chances of textbooks showing the Green Line again— or dropping references to “Judea and Samaria,” the Biblical names for the West Bank, or including Arab towns on maps of Israel— are close to nil. The private publishers who print the textbooks would refuse to incur the extra costs of reprinting the maps, said Prof Yoram Bar-Gal, head of geography at Haifa University.

Sensitive to the damage that the row might do to Israel’s international image, and aware that Tamir’s directive is never likely to be implemented, Olmert agreed in principle to the change. “There is nothing wrong with marking the Green Line,” he said. But, in a statement that made his agreement entirely hollow, he added: “But there is an obligation to emphasize that the government’s position and public consensus rule out returning to the 1967 lines.”

The second element to the trap is far less well understood. It explains the strange formulation of words Israel uses in making its demand of Hamas. Israel does not ask it simply to “recognize Israel,” but to “recognize Israel’s right to exist.” The difference is not a just matter of semantics.

The concept of a state having any rights is not only strange but alien to international law. People have rights, not states. And that is precisely the point: when Israel demands that its “right to exist” be recognized, the subtext is that we are not speaking of recognition of Israel as a normal nation state but as the state of a specific people, the Jews.

In demanding recognition of its right to exist, Israel is ensuring that the Palestinians agree to Israel’s character being set in stone as an exclusivist Jewish state, one that privileges the rights of Jews over all other ethnic, religious and national groups inside the same territory. The question of what such a state entails is largely glossed over both by Israel and the West.

For most observers, it means simply that Israel must refuse to allow the return of the millions of Palestinians languishing in refugee camps throughout the region, whose former homes in Israel have now been appropriated for the benefit of Jews. Were they allowed to come back, Israel’s Jewish majority would be eroded overnight and it could no longer claim to be a Jewish state, except in the same sense that apartheid South Africa was a white state.

This conclusion is apparently accepted by Romano Prodi, Italy’s prime minister, after a round of lobbying in European capitals from Israel’s telegenic foreign minister, Tzipi Livni. According to the Jerusalem Post, Prodi is saying in private that Israel should receive guarantees from the Palestinians that its Jewish character will never be in doubt.

Israeli officials are cheering what they believe is the first crack in Europe’s support for international law and the rights of the refugees. “It’s important to get everyone on the same page on this one,” an official told the Jerusalem Post.

But in truth the consequences of the Palestinian leadership recognizing Israel as a Jewish state run far deeper than the question of the future of the Palestinian refugees. In my book Blood and
Given Israel's view that its most pressing interest is not peace or regional accommodation with its neighbors but the need to ensure a Jewish majority at all costs
calculatedly mischievous mistranslation of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s speech.

Most observers have assumed that Israel is genuinely concerned for its safety from nuclear attack, however implausible the idea that even the most fanatical Muslim regime would, unprovoked, launch nuclear missiles against a small area of land that contains some of Islam’s holiest sites, in Jerusalem. But in truth there is another reason why Israel is concerned about a nuclear-armed Iran that has nothing to do with conventional ideas about safety. Last month, Ephraim Sneh, one of Israel’s most distinguished generals and now Olmert’s deputy defense minister, revealed that the government’s primary concern was not the threat posed by Ahmadinejad firing nuclear missiles at Israel but the effect of Iran’s possession of such weapons on Jews who expect Israel to have a monopoly on the nuclear threat.

If Iran got such weapons, “Most Israelis would prefer not to live here; most Jews would prefer not to come here with families, and Israelis who can live abroad will ... I am afraid Ahmadinejad will be able to kill the Zionist dream without pushing a button. That’s why we must prevent this regime from obtaining nuclear capability at all costs.” In other words, the Israeli government is considering either its own preemptive strike on Iran or encouraging the United States to undertake such an attack – despite the terrible consequences for global security – simply because a nuclear-armed Iran might make Israel a less attractive place for Jews to live, lead to increased emigration and tip the demographic balance in the Palestinians’ favor.

Regional and possibly global war may be triggered simply to ensure that Israel’s “existence” as a state that offers exclusive privileges to Jews continues. For all our sakes, we must hope that the Palestinians and their Hamas government continue refusing to “recognize Israel’s right to exist.”
Why We Must Not Dismiss the Intifada Lesson

Ramzy Baroud

I began the preface of my latest book: *The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of a People's Struggle*, by claiming that the uprising would be "etched in history as an era where a major shift in the rules of the game occurred." But have they? If so, then to what extent and for what purpose?

Answering these seemingly straightforward questions is imperative if one is to seriously address the advent of the September 2000 uprising, which began to fade out following the death of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat in November 2004 and the rise of Mahmoud Abbas in January 2005. Its momentum slowed down significantly following that date; a fact that was cemented by Hamas’ perennial decision to halt its suicide bombings inside Israel. However, various activities, mostly collective non-violent action against the Israeli Imprisonment Wall in the northern West Bank and sporadic militant activities elsewhere helped sustain the Intifada, even if timidly, for a while longer.

Then there was that interlude of uncertainty, similar to that which followed the December 1987 Intifada, which continues to irk historians - when did the Intifada conclude? And my question is: does it really matter? What is the purpose of historic preciseness here aside from the fact that it helps historians neatly package their accounts of the world and it’s ever-tumultuous conflicts?

Nonetheless, one must contend that it is of great import because the direction, nature, and intensity of the Intifada was highly effected by its adjacent milieus - the intensity of Israeli violence, the internal and external politics of the Palestinian leadership, the level and nature of regional and international support; all of which to a large degree helped to determine the Palestinian people’s ability to withstand such a taxing commitment. Equally significant is the need to study the uprising as it actually was, not as many imagined it to suit their own political, ideological, or religious frame of reference; or any other.

Only a well-defined and careful comprehension of the Intifada can explain the many dichotomies it presented and its seeming contradictions at times. How could a popular rebellion of an historically oppressed group of people foster so much corruption, disunity and infighting? How could the same uprising that aspired to grasp the most basic manifestations of peace, justice and life, inspire death, martyrdom and suicide?

Expectedly, the many folds of political, societal and ideological makeup – the backbone of the Intifada – has opened the stage before wordsmiths the world over to decode this momentous event. Doubtless, it also opened up the stage before those who saw every Palestinian collective action as essentially manipulative, directed from behind the scenes by Palestinian politicians vying for concessions from a vulnerable, beleaguered state, that is Israel.

In late November 2006, Hamas’ exiled political leader Khaled Mish’al made a speech to the media wherein he gave Israel six months to negotiate an end to the conflict and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Failing this, a ‘third Intifada’ would be unleashed. It was not Mish’al, of course, who introduced the terminology of the third Intifada to the struggle’s swelling lexicon, but considering his position as the leader of a movement that has reshaped Palestinian politics in the Occupied Territories, one must wonder if a popular uprising can be decreed by a political decision, delineated by a confining time frame, i.e. within the foreseeable future. Mish’al claimed “Hamas will become stronger all resistance forces will become stronger ... and will go on with a third uprising”.

---

1. Ramzy Baroud is a journalist and Editor-in-Chief of the Palestine Chronicle. His writing has been published in newspapers worldwide from the Washington Post to the Japan Times. He teaches Mass Communication at Australia’s Curtin University of Technology in Malaysia. Ramzy Baroud’s latest book is ‘The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of a People’s Struggle’ (Pluto Press). His website is ramzybaroud.net
Although political leaders have attempted in the past to mold and re-organize spontaneous Palestinian collective efforts, once ensued, they have hardly succeeded. Not because organization is the antithesis to popular movements, but because the disorganization, lack of centrality and the absence of strategy; inherent signs of the Palestinian leadership - any Palestinian leadership - have always managed to dispirit, marginalize and eventually defeat the popular action. This was always from within.

The political reality, prior to the 1987 Palestinian uprising was that of Israel's complete denial of the existence of Palestinians as a separate nation with exclusive rights and demands. This was a continuation of Golda Maier's denial of Palestinians altogether in her June 15, 1969 interview with the Sunday Times, when she ominously stated: “There was no such thing as Palestinians; they never existed.”

The 1987 Intifada pushed for an exclusively Palestinian agenda that was popularly mobilized and sustained. Living in a refugee camp in Gaza during those years, I recall how the youth in our neighborhood in a Gaza refugee camp improvised their fighting tactics. The day it was discovered that an old blanket was sufficient to disable an entire Israeli tank, or that one little marble mounted to a sling shot and in the hands of an expert it could smash the front window of a helicopter loaded with snipers. For the youth of the camp, these were days to remember.

Naturally, efforts mounted to safeguard and direct the uprising in a way that would allow it to articulate a political message since its very early days. Hamas itself was formulated soon after to eventually evolve into a formidable political force. Socialist movements were still sizable and effective. Fatah was, as it remained in subsequent years, not the dominant political movement at home, but abroad, through its ascendency within the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Although there was little doubt regarding Israel's military brutality against civilians, seeing such spitefulness in action and to such horrid degrees helped unify Palestinians around the United Front of the Intifada, which served as an umbrella group for the various factions of the PLO. Nonetheless, Fatah had a watchful eye on the growing popularity of Hamas with its Islamic message, which appealed to the browbeaten and oppressed, who were finally presented with a message to which they could very much relate.

Resentment and internal strife, though remaining largely non-violent, quickly overshadowed the popular revolt. As the PLO leadership abroad, in search for relevance to the ongoing struggle at home, toiled to position itself at the helm and take credit for what came to define the Palestinian struggle, thus turning it into an international symbol of popular resistance.

The 1987 Intifada had indeed succeeded in conceiving, despite Israel's adamant refusal, a Palestinian alternative in the form of a delegation of local Palestinian leaders and intellectuals that were willing to negotiate with Israel. In Madrid in 1991 a comprehensive peace settlement brought an end to the conflict on the basis of international law, most relevantly UN resolution 224 and 338, which were the first to bring the concept of land for peace to the fore. The Palestinian delegation, led by Dr. Haidar Abdul Shafi had a clear mandate from Palestinians at home who carried on with their uprising, but with much more hope that a dignified peace was within reach.

Weary of the Palestinians’ determination to push for the implementation of international law, without further interpretations and delays, Israel sought a partner elsewhere. In a distant orchard in Oslo; through middlemen posing as advocates of dialogue, Israel signed a secret agreement with Arafat, joined by a few of his men: The September 1993 Declaration of Principals, which led to the Oslo Interim Agreement, then the Cairo Agreement (Gaza and Jericho agreement in 1994), then the Tabu Agreement (Or Oslo II in 1995), and so forth.

There was very little in the outcome of Oslo worth celebrating. But the event was crucial as it allowed Israel to defeat the Intifada from within, after its utter failure to defeat it from without. (That lesson was re-summoned once again in the Second Intifada.) Arafat, understandably so, having returned empty-handed from Oslo, was forced to sell a distorted version of Oslo to hapless Palestinians, who wanted to be convinced that Oslo was a remarkable outcome of their many sacrifices and painful struggle. Following his triumphant return to Gaza in 1994, Palestinians were repeatedly fed the idea that the mere return of the Palestinian leadership (those who agreed to Oslo) was a triumph in itself, for it provided the leadership with the physical platform to carry on with its fight for freedom and independence.

1993 witnessed the official end of the Intifada which linked its cessation to the political ‘triumph’ at Oslo. In reality, the Intifada began to fade during the exhausting Madrid negotiations which convinced most Palestinians that Israel was not serious about
resolving the conflict through peaceful means.

The politics of dates and the relationship between the leadership and the popular resistance was once more at play during the Second Intifada. Ironically, the Second Intifada was a spontaneous response to the failure of the so-called ‘peace process’ which ultimately suffocated the first uprising. Seven years of draining negotiations - during which Israel's colonial activities doubled as well as the number of illegal settlers in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, (in violation of international law), and during which no serious aspects of sovereignty were bestowed upon weary Palestinians – had made an uprising an obvious conclusion. The failure at Camp David II (in July 2000) to push the stalled peace process forward prepared the stage for such a clash. This is an issue that I wrote about at the time, warning that the Israeli army, according to the Israeli press, was moving heavy weapons into the illegal settlements throughout the Occupied Territories and that such actions were a clear indication that Israel was also expecting a popular uprising but wished to suppress it much more brutally and decisively than the first Intifada.6

Americans and Israelis were all pointing to Arafat as the one to scapegoat for the failure of Camp David. However, these accusations were proven false by President Clinton’s own advisor to the talks, Robert Mally in an article published in the New York Review of Books, well after the falsified Israeli narrative prevailed of a fabricated generous offer made by Barak and snubbed by Arafat.7 Israeli generals, led by Shaul Mofaz, as I documented in my book, cautioned that Palestinians might interpret Israel’s hasty withdrawal (read defeat) from Lebanon as weakness. That too compelled a decisive response to any Palestinian violence.

Of course, the widening chasm between Israel’s Prime Minister at the time Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon was evolving into a major political dispute. Barak was accused of being politically indecisive and feeble, and unlike Sharon, didn’t know how to handle greedy Palestinians who were in fact merely negotiating the remaining 22 percent of historic Palestine. Barak too agreed that Palestinians were overly greedy: “The Palestinians are like crocodiles, the more you give them meat, they want more...” as it was reported in the Jerusalem Post (August 30, 2000).8

But Sharon had his own way of dealing with ‘ungrateful’ Palestinians. Addressing a meeting of militants from the extreme right-wing Tsomet Party less than two years earlier, Sharon highlighted his peace strategy: “Everybody has to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the settlements because everything we can grab now will stay ours... everything we don’t grab will go to them.” (Nov. 15, 1998)9

Fed up with Barak’s policies, which actually aspired to Sharon’s exact objectives, only by using a less affront strategy, Sharon, the head of Israel’s Likud Party opposition at the time, accompanied by a Likud Party delegation and over one thousand soldiers and police officers marched into Haram al-Sharif (Holy al-Aqsa Sanctuary) compound in Jerusalem. Sharon’s religious far right constituency advocated the destruction of the Muslim shrine, alleging that it was built atop the Second Temple, and its destruction was prerequisite for the final temple to be erected upon the return of the Messiah, according to prophecy. Expectedly, Palestinians, already geared up for a popular action, rose in Jerusalem in protest of Sharon’s raid. The anticipated response was met with decided Israeli violence and several Palestinians were killed and scores were wounded in and around the masjid.

The picture of Palestinian blood spattered around the holy Muslim site stirred an emotional response amongst Palestinians and served as the rallying cry for the anticipated Intifada. The Palestinians in the Occupied Territories joined by Palestinians living in today’s Israel took to the streets in mass demonstration, clashing with heavily armed soldiers. Thus another bloody episode began where the Palestinian people took on one of the strongest armies in the world. Expectedly, the Israeli army responded much more brutally this time. There was a dual message - one to Arafat that his refusal to sign off Palestinian rights in accordance to Israeli and American dictates would not be tolerated. It was clear that Israel would quickly snuff out any attempt to politically coerce it even if it meant the active use of missiles, guns hips and tanks to suppress rioting Palestinians. The second message was to the Palestinians that the Lebanon scenario would not be repeated in the territories.

Barak also understood the seriousness of the challenge facing him at the Knesset. Sharon dashed into the political arena and mobilized the Israelis using similar tactics as that of Benjamin Netanyahu which brought him to office in 1996 - that the peace process has failed and that Palestinians only understand the language of violence, etc. The Israeli public thus brought Sharon to power in February 2006 on the premise that he would break the will of the Palestinians as manifested in the 100 days of Intifada.

---

6 Americans and Israelis were all pointing to Arafat as the one to scapegoat for the failure of Camp David. However, these accusations were proven false by President Clinton’s own advisor to the talks, Robert Mally in an article published in the New York Review of Books, well after the falsified Israeli narrative prevailed of a fabricated generous offer made by Barak and snubbed by Arafat.7 Israeli generals, led by Shaul Mofaz, as I documented in my book, cautioned that Palestinians might interpret Israel’s hasty withdrawal (read defeat) from Lebanon as weakness. That too compelled a decisive response to any Palestinian violence.

7 Of course, the widening chasm between Israel’s Prime Minister at the time Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon was evolving into a major political dispute. Barak was accused of being politically indecisive and feeble, and unlike Sharon, didn’t know how to handle greedy Palestinians who were in fact merely negotiating the remaining 22 percent of historic Palestine. Barak too agreed that Palestinians were overly greedy: “The Palestinians are like crocodiles, the more you give them meat, they want more...” as it was reported in the Jerusalem Post (August 30, 2000).

8 But Sharon had his own way of dealing with ‘ungrateful’ Palestinians. Addressing a meeting of militants from the extreme right-wing Tsomet Party less than two years earlier, Sharon highlighted his peace strategy: “Everybody has to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the settlements because everything we can grab now will stay ours... everything we don’t grab will go to them.” (Nov. 15, 1998)

9 Fed up with Barak’s policies, which actually aspired to Sharon’s exact objectives, only by using a less affront strategy, Sharon, the head of Israel’s Likud Party opposition at the time, accompanied by a Likud Party delegation and over one thousand soldiers and police officers marched into Haram al-Sharif (Holy al-Aqsa Sanctuary) compound in Jerusalem. Sharon’s religious far right constituency advocated the destruction of the Muslim shrine, alleging that it was built atop the Second Temple, and its destruction was prerequisite for the final temple to be erected upon the return of the Messiah, according to prophecy. Expectedly, Palestinians, already geared up for a popular action, rose in Jerusalem in protest of Sharon’s raid. The anticipated response was met with decided Israeli violence and several Palestinians were killed and scores were wounded in and around the masjid.

10 The picture of Palestinian blood spattered around the holy Muslim site stirred an emotional response amongst Palestinians and served as the rallying cry for the anticipated Intifada. The Palestinians in the Occupied Territories joined by Palestinians living in today’s Israel took to the streets in mass demonstration, clashing with heavily armed soldiers. Thus another bloody episode began where the Palestinian people took on one of the strongest armies in the world. Expectedly, the Israeli army responded much more brutally this time. There was a dual message - one to Arafat that his refusal to sign off Palestinian rights in accordance to Israeli and American dictates would not be tolerated. It was clear that Israel would quickly snuff out any attempt to politically coerce it even if it meant the active use of missiles, guns hips and tanks to suppress rioting Palestinians. The second message was to the Palestinians that the Lebanon scenario would not be repeated in the territories.

11 Barak also understood the seriousness of the challenge facing him at the Knesset. Sharon dashed into the political arena and mobilized the Israelis using similar tactics as that of Benjamin Netanyahu which brought him to office in 1996 - that the peace process has failed and that Palestinians only understand the language of violence, etc. The Israeli public thus brought Sharon to power in February 2006 on the premise that he would break the will of the Palestinians as manifested in the 100 days of Intifada.
Although the 100 days logic might appear haphazardly composed, Sharon’s point was that a focused campaign of murder and collective punishment would break the Palestinians fast, and if there was a living Israeli leader who was capable of delivering such a strategy, it was Sharon (whose responsibility over the Sabra and Shatillah massacre in Lebanon in the summer of 1982 was anything but disputed.) This is how he articulated his logic:

“It won’t be possible to reach an agreement with them before the Palestinians are hit hard. If they aren’t badly beaten, there won’t be any negotiations. Only after they are beaten will we be able to conduct talks. I want an agreement, but first they have to be beaten so they get the thought out of their minds that they can impose an agreement on Israel that Israel does not want.” (July 3, 2002 Haaretz)\(^10\)

It is no secret that Israel’s own brutality, which claimed the lives of 4,166 Palestinians in the first five years of the Intifada, including 886 children, and which left tens of thousands wounded and maimed and many more psychologically scarred and impaired\(^11\), has failed to bend Palestinian resolve. Sheer brute force in itself has never resulted in Palestinian submission, but has in fact augmented their determination to carry on fighting; a fact that most Israeli leaders continue to ignore at their own peril.

This time, however, Israel had no obstacles in its way whatsoever. There is nothing to make it rethink its policies, or reconsider the severity of its actions. This was strongly demonstrated after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks which cemented the rapport between Israel and the US government like never before. There was on one hand, a born-again Christian president who claimed that God spoke to him directly, while being surrounded by neoconservative ideologues with a belief that Israel comes first, even before America itself. On the other hand there were war generals concerned about the relevance of the military in the post-cold war era, and also a fuming public who were largely deceived by the media into believing that violence is capable of addressing the problem of terrorism, which is itself a product of an appalling foreign policy. As the twin towers of New York collapsed, there were many out there willing to take advantage of the sorrow, rage and confusion.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was asked on the day of the attacks how they could affect Israeli-U.S. relations. His replied: “It’s very good... Well, it’s not good, but it will generate immediate sympathy (for Israel)”.\(^12\) And it certainly served Israel’s propaganda machine well, with Israel now selling its decade-old war on the Palestinians as a subdivision of America’s ‘war on terror’. Giddy Israeli intelligence couldn’t even help themselves and tried to engineer al-Qaeda cells in the Gaza Strip, a plan that was fortunately thwarted. But the Shin Beit or Mossad did not need to fabricate such links, since neither the Bush administration, nor the Congress or the media needed any persuasion: their pro-Israeli line has never been clearer, even former President Bill Clinton seemed like an honest broker in comparison.

Similar to the way the Bush administration rendered the UN ‘irrelevant’ before it decided to lead its own coalition of the willing in a war against Iraq, it was also an irrelevant international body as far as Palestinian rights were concerned. Former US Ambassador to the UN, John Negroponte advised Arab delegates not to even bother presenting drafts of UN resolutions regarding Israeli actions to the Security Council, for they would always be vetoed if they failed to condemn Palestinian terrorism. Now US vetoes in defense at the Security Council stand at 85, allowing the latter to pursue whatever destructive policy it wishes with utter impunity.\(^13\)

In this volume, I attempted to highlight all the issues that affected the nature and direction of the Intifada, locally, regionally and internationally. While doing so, I pushed the envelope like never before in my writing, to confront head-on the failures of the Palestinian leadership, its incompetence and inability to unify the ranks of the Palestinians around one articulated strategy; audacious enough to learn from the mistakes of the past; courageous enough to withstand the challenges of the present; and clever enough to respond to the trials of the future.

I also tackled the overt militancy of the Intifada: what exactly determines the nature of the Palestinian response to the Israeli war? Were there alternatives to firearms? Why did Palestinians blow themselves up? Was such an action a strategy in itself? What was the role of the international volunteers who flocked to Palestine in a unique addition to the indigenous resistance there? Why did Israel treat internationals with brutality despite the fact that they espoused methods of non-violent resistance? Why did the democratic elections of January 2006 that brought Hamas to power lead to internal strife, international sanctions and fear of a civil war? What does the future hold for Palestine and the Palestinians?
I doubt that I have answered all the important questions pertinent to the Second Intifada. I certainly tried and to the best of my abilities. But unlike a stock market analyst, I didn’t wait until the end of the crash to offer my analysis. I chronicled the Intifada as it happened, before it happened, followed its every twist and turn, bomb and bullet, and tried, again, to the best of my ability, to provide a segment of history, untainted by political or ideological affiliation.

Finally, it must be stated that Palestinian resistance, which for the most part has been a non-violent and popular movement, shall continue as long as the circumstances that contributed to its commencement remain in place. In fact, Israeli oppression has crossed the traditional boundaries of daily murders and small-scale land confiscation. Under the deceptive “disengagement” from Gaza smoke-screen, West Bank lands are being vigorously expropriated while Israel’s Imprisonment Wall, illegal according to the International Court of Justice’s decision of July 2004, is swallowing up whole towns and villages.

This reality, as history has taught us, is only a prelude to another popular Palestinian response, which is already echoing in the angry chants of destitute farmers whose lands are being affectively annexed by the encroaching Israeli wall. Regardless of how historians choose to chronicle the Second Palestinian Uprising, it will always be remembered by most Palestinians, as well as by people of conscience everywhere, as a fight for freedom, human rights and justice. It will remain a loud reminder that popular resistance is still an option - and one to be reckoned with at that.

Notes

8. M. Junaid Alam, ‘Anti-Semitism or Ultra-Semitism? The Politics of Smears and Self-Absorption, Left Hook (3 May 2005), also found at: www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=7777
10. Aluf Benn, ‘Powell Says Sharon Must Take Hard Look at Policies’, Haaretz (3 July 2002), www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtm?itemNo=137662&ContrasID=1&subContrasID=0&subSubContrasID=0
13. ‘Use of the Veto on United Nations Resolutions by the USA’, www.kryssstal.com/democracy_whyusa03.html
Striving to Serve the Ummah in Need

UWT is currently focusing on a wide range of projects across Africa, Asia, Europe & the Middle East

UWT is dedicated and committed to assist, protect & educate the orphans of the Ummah. With this vision, the construction of the Ummah Children Academy (UCA) was commenced in Nowshera, Pakistan. The Junior Block has been completed and the student hostel is near completion. Once complete, the academy shall accommodate 1,000 orphans.

WE ENSURE THAT 100% OF YOUR DONATION WILL REACH THE PEOPLE IN NEED.

UWT does not deduct a single penny from your donations for administration or fund raising purposes.

UWT Head Office: 351 Derby Street, Bolton, BL3 6LR Tel: 01204 383732
Reg. Charity No. 1000851

UWT DONATIONS:
81-83 White Abbey Rd,
Bradford BD8 8DR
Tel: 01274 390396

DONATION HOTLINE:
0845 6522 786

SECURE ONLINE DONATIONS:
www.uwt.org

EMAIL:
info@uwt.org
The Muslim Fascination with Jerusalem
The Case of the Sufis [Part II]*

Shamsuddin Al-Kilani

The Sufis of the Third/Ninth Century

During the third century/ninth century, Islamic mysticism was combined with philosophy by Ma'rūf al-Karkhi, al-Sarī al-Saqaṭī, al-Junayd, Dhū l-Nūn, Sa‘īd al-Īfīqī, Sālih ibn Yūsuf (d. 282/895) and Muhammad ibn Karrām (d. 255/869). What is significant about the Sufi’s attachment to Jerusalem was their constant eagerness to visit that city.

Dhū l-Nūn al-Misrī (d. 245/859)

Famous for his pietistic austerity, he is said to have been a Nubian from Ikhmim in Egypt. A poet and an eloquent speaker, he was the first to combine science with religion, and Sufism: he was distinguished in chemistry, which he considered in terms of the miraculous. He played a significant role in carrying mysticism from one state to another and introduced scholastic theology (kalām) into stations (maqāmāt) and states (ahwāl) in Sufism. He defined the Sufi as a person “who, if he speaks, will reveal realities, and if he remains silent, his limbs speak for him through severance [from worldly affairs]”. He also said: “Thought is the key to worship, while the sign of waywardness is pursuit of passions and the sign of utter dependence [on God] is putting an end to worldly means”. He is also quoted as saying: “There are three ways to knowing God: a knowledge based on monotheism, which is a characteristic of common believers; a knowledge of argument and elucidation, which is a quality for great, wise and eloquent people; and a knowledge of the attributes of [God’s] Oneness and Singleness, which belongs to God’s saints and favored ones”.

He traveled from Egypt to Makkah, and from there to Syria on his way to Jerusalem. Al-Ghazālī quotes him as saying: “Somewhere on the Syrian coast I met a woman, and I asked her: ‘Where do you come from?’, She answered: ‘From a people whose loins forsake their beds’. ‘Whereto are you going now?’ I asked. ‘To men who are distracted from glorifying God neither by business nor by sale’ she replied. He himself, when he came to Jerusalem, is quoted as saying: “On the Rock of Jerusalem I have found the sinner estranged; the one obedient to God exhilarated; the frightened fleeing; the hopeful entreating [God]; the contented rich and the lover submissive”.

The prominent Sufi Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Bākuwayh (d. 428/1037) relates, on the authority of al-Nisābūrī, how the latter heard Dhū l-Nūn say: “While I was once traveling in the mountains of Jerusalem I heard a voice saying: ‘All pain has left the bodies of worshippers distracted from drink and food in their preoccupation with obedience [to God], and their hearts are accustomed now to staying long in the presence of the sovereign, the All-Knowing’. I followed the sound and saw a pale-faced beardless lad swaying like a twig moved by the wind. He was dressed in a piece of cloth around his waist and had another piece covering the upper part of his body. When he saw me, he hid himself behind the trees, whereupon I said: ‘Estrangement is no quality of true believers. Speak to me and advise me’. He knelt down and prostrated himself, praying: ‘This is the position of him who sought refuge with You, asked for protection through knowing You, and became familiar with Your Love. 0 Lord of hearts, I invoke the Majesty of Your Grandeur! Protect me from those who distract me from You!’ Then he disappeared from my sight and I saw him no more”.

Al-Sarī al-Saqaṭī (d. 257/870)

A major Sufi, he was the leader of the Sufis in Baghdad and the maternal uncle and teacher of the famous Sufi, al-Junayd. He would advise al-Junayd to draw on the erudition and high culture of al-Muhāsibī, but to leave aside the latter’s prolixity. He would say to him: “God has made you a

* Part I in Vol. 9, No. 1

1. Shamsuddin Al-Kilani is the co-author of al-Tariq ila’l-Quds.
triestionist Sufi scholar rather than a Sufi proficient in Hadith. If a person starts out from devotional practices and Sufi states, he will be distracted from true learning, and the result will be either straying or error”. Although al-Saqat held al-Muhāsibī in high esteem, he was worried lest al-Junayd should fall into the trap of dispute and controversy. It should be said that al-Muhāsibī was the one who then laid the foundations of the philosophy of Sunni mysticism, which then reached al-Junayd and rose to great heights in al-Ghzālī.

Al-Sarī al-Saqatī was the first to in Baghdad expound the doctrines of Sufis on ‘awābid and the realities of states, and from him spring most of the second category of Sufis. The following are some of his sayings: “The shortest way to Paradise is not to ask anyone for anything, not to take [anything] from others, and not to have anything to give to anyone else”. He also says: “He who wishes to safeguard his faith and to relieve his heart from worries must live in seclusion from people”.

Al-Sarī came from Baghdad to Jerusalem by way of Ramlah and happened to pass by a creek where there was grass. He sat down, ate the grass and drank water from the creek, saying to himself: “If I ever ate or drank anything permissible from this world, it is this”. Then he heard a mysterious invisible caller saying to him: “O Sarī, what of the sustenance you found here - where did it come from?” He is also quoted as saying: “One night I performed my supererogatory prayer and stretched my leg into the niche [mihrāb], and I heard a voice calling: ‘O Sarī! This is the way kings sit’. So I bent my leg, saying: ‘I swear by Your Might that I will never again stretch my leg’.” After his visit to Jerusalem he returned to Baghdad and died there.

Sa‘īd al-Iṣrā‘īlī

One of the ascetics of the 2nd/8th century, he was attracted by the merits of Jerusalem and visited that city. Some recount, on his own authority, that he said: “I saw a maiden in Jerusalem who had a hair gown and a woolen veil for her head and face. I heard her say: ‘How narrow the road is for those for whom You are not the Guide, and how fearful the solitude of those to whom You are not the Companion!’ Thereupon I said: ‘Maiden! What estranges people from God?’. She replied: ‘Love of worldly affairs... But God has servants to whom He has given the drink of His Love, and their hearts have become intoxicated with Him, so that with God they have loved no one else.”

Muhammad ibn Karrām (d. 255/869)

From him springs the Karrāmīyyah Sufi order. He came to Jerusalem in search of the city’s blessings and performed his devotions at its Mosque. It is said that while in Jerusalem, he would sit by the column near the place of Jesus’ nativity. He remained in Jerusalem, performing acts of worship, until he died and was buried there.

Abū ‘Ī-Qāsim al-Junayd ibn Muhammad (d. 297/909)

Originally from Nahāwand, he was brought up in Iraq and accompanied al-Sarī al-Saqatī and al-Hārīth al-Muhāsibī. He was a leading Sufī. He opposed the course followed by al-Hallāj and the alleged notion of exemption from religious duties, and worked out his own philosophy concerning freedom, linking it to exclusiveness of service, saying that the Sufi is free if his service is dedicated to God alone: “If you are a servant of God and of no one else, then you are free with regard to anything beyond Him”. In so doing he ran counter to the general Sufi trend which claimed that Sufi liberty was freedom from all constraints in worship. He was said to have been the first to formulate the basic Sufi doctrines and to have explicated and elucidated them. After him (i.e., in the 4th/10th century) Sufism became more systematic in both theory and practice.

Al-Junayd was fascinated by the connotations and implications of Jerusalem, particularly of the Night Journey and Ascension. He writes on these, and on prophetic gnosis, in his manuscript Danā‘ al-Arwāh (“The Cure of Souls”). In this work he analyses the evidence made available by God to Gnostics, and how, by this means, “He taught and guided them, making them worthy of adhering to monotheism. He was also shown the status of the Prophet (peace be on him) on the Night Journey and Ascension, when God sited inspiration to him, His apostle”. Al-Junayd compares this station with that of Moses (peace be on him) on the right side of Mount Sinai, when he was called by God. Moses (peace be on him) asked to see God, whereupon the Mount was transformed to dust and Moses (peace be on him) collapsed in a swoon. Had Moses (peace be on him) not been under God’s protection, he would have been destroyed just as the mountain had been.

Abū Shu‘ayb Sāliḥ ibn Yūsuf (d. 282/895)

He performed seventy major pilgrimages on foot. In each of them he entered the state of ḳirām from the Rock of Jerusalem and set off from there to carry out the
be noted here that the rituals of a minor pilgrimage to Jerusalem occupied a prominent place in the Prophet's *Sunnah*, which was written down in a perfected way during the 3rd/9th century. Thus the minor pilgrimage became a secondary repetition of the Prophet's Night journey, while residence in Jerusalem, and death and burial in its soil, have become a spiritual quest for Muslims, this being the place where all people will be gathered together and resurrected.\(^{20}\)

### The Fātimid and Sāljuqīd Periods

According to Nāṣir Khosrow (d. 453/1061), a famous traveler who visited Jerusalem in 439/1047 during the Fātimid period - Next to the Mosque there was a large leveled plain, called “al-Sāhirah”, believed to be the area for the Resurrection and gathering of all the people together. For this reason people flocked to the place from all different parts of the world, staying there till death to await resurrection.\(^{21}\) He also records that, in the midst of the Mosque of the Rock, there was a porch next to a wall outside which were two Sufi hermitages. There were also two prayer places and beautiful *mihāشب* where some Sufis lived and prayed, going to the Mosque, however, on Friday, because they could not hear the *takbīr* from where they were.\(^{22}\)

The Sunni reaction to the Byzantine threats to Jerusalem and to Fātimid sway over the city, which adversely affected their cultural activities, was not a direct and straightforward one. The Sufis retained their hermitages, prayer places and niches, around the Dome of the Rock, and it became customary for the people of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas of Palestine to come to Jerusalem to offer their prayers after performing their pilgrimage to Makkah, thereby sanctifying that pilgrimage. Pilgrims coming from the Arab Muslim West were particularly accustomed to paying a short visit to Jerusalem on their way home from Makkah.\(^{23}\)

However, after the Saljūqs took Jerusalem in 466/1073, the religious situation changed radically as far as the Sunni majority was concerned. Numerous Sunni scholars started to come to Jerusalem both from the Arab Muslim West and the Arab Muslim East to partake of the blessings of Jerusalem. Thus the old Sunni institutes became active once more along with new schools and Sufi *zāwiyyahs*. Teaching and study circles reached 28 in number. Adjacent to these were Sufi *dhikr* circles, and the number of Sufis, ascetics, and consecrated people around the Aqṣā Sanctuary rose considerably.\(^{24}\)

Jerusalem was frequented by prominent scholarly jurists of different legal schools, such as ‘Abd al-Wāhid Muhammad al-Shirāzī al-Hanbālī (d. 486/1093). The pieties scholar Abū ‘l-Fath Nasr ʿĪbrāhīm al-Maqdīsī (d. 490/1097) lived at the small mosque near Bāb al-Rahmah known as al-Zāwiyyah al-Nāṣirīyyah after Shaykh Nasr al-Tūsī (d. 384/994) and subsequently called al-Ghazālīyyah after Abū ʿHāmid al-Ghazālī.\(^{25}\) Visitors also included a large number of Maghrebi scholars and Sufis, for whom a special section has been devoted below.

### Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111)

He ranks among the most distinguished Sufi figures who visited Jerusalem shortly before the city was captured by the Crusaders. He combined *fiqh* with Sufism, being among the first men of note who encouraged the establishment of a nexus between the two. As a result of al-Ghazālī’s endeavors many *fuqahā‘* came to accept Sufism, and many Sufis came to take a more lenient attitude towards the *fuqahā‘*.

Al-Ghazālī was born in Tus and studied jurisprudence first in Jurjān and then in Nisāpūr. His *shaykh* included Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) who belonged to the Ash‘arī school of theology. Al-Ghazālī became a lecturer at the Nizāmiyyah in Baghdaḏ and gained considerable reputation. Seized by a deep spiritual crisis, he decided to leave for Hījaz in the hope of attaining liberation from his skepticism and self-conceit. He left Baghdaḏ for Syria, and then went on to Makkah. On his return he stopped in Syria, then in Jerusalem for a period of nearly ten years which he spent in devotion to God.\(^{26}\)

He revivified the outward rituals- to which the *fuqahā‘* were bound, injecting them with spirit and restoring them to their original state in early Islam. He drew people towards Sufism, He reinforced belief in revelation, and the idea that through Sufism one could attain a degree of cognition inaccessible to those who solely relied on reason. Al-Ghazālī emphasized that faith through intuitive cognition rather than philosophy leads to God, and that the way of revelation is the way of earnest spiritual striving and exercise.\(^{27}\)

According to Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), while in Jerusalem, al-Ghazālī stayed at the small mosque of Bāb al-Rahmah, which came to be called “al-Zāwiyyah al-Ghazālīyyah” after him. He became an ascetic, dressed himself in coarse clothes, and ate sparingly. During this period, he produced his *Iḥyā‘ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (“Revivification of the Sciences of Religion”), and many people attended his
lectures based on this masterpiece. Then he returned to Baghdad. In Jerusalem he also wrote al-Qistār, Mabākk al-Nazār, and a few other works.

**Muhammad ibn Hātim al-Tūsī**

Al-Tūsī was another Sufi faqīh who came to Jerusalem. He had studied under Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī. Fascinated by the grandeur of the city of Jerusalem, he made his residence there, spending his time in devotional practices and pursuit of knowledge.

**Abū Bakr al-Khūjānī (d. 544/1149)**

He too visited Jerusalem. The traveler and historian 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sam'ānī (d. 562/1167), who accompanied him on his visit to the Holy City, said: “Al-Khūjānī was a pious sheikh who was well-versed in the Qur‘ān and given to continual weeping and mourning out of God-fearing. He rendered much fruitful service to the senior scholarly sheikhs.”

**Maghrebis and Andalusians**

Maghrebis traditionally visited the Aqṣa Sanctuary on their way home from Makkah, being attracted to Jerusalem by the Qur‘ānic verses and the Prophet’s ahādīth celebrating the city’s glory. Some of these people made for Jerusalem to earn the reward for prayer and also entered the state of iḥrām in that city. Ibrāhīm ibn Hārith ibn 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (d. 392/1001), the well-known Cordorban reciter of the Qur‘ān, was one of them. He began his journey thirteen years before his death, performed the pilgrimage, then moved on to Jerusalem, as did his fellow-countryman and contemporary, Ḥasan ibn Nasīb al-Tamīmī, who visited Jerusalem and studied there. Andalusians and Maghrebis put into practice the abādīth calling for the hajj to be linked to a visit to Jerusalem.

A hajj of the highest merit entailed starting from Jerusalem in compliance with the ḥadīth which says that anyone who begins a hajj or 'umrah from the Holy Aqṣa Sanctuary, and travels to the Sacred Mosque of Makkah, will have his previous sins forgiven by God. The best example was that of Muhammad ibn 'Umar ibn Yūsuf al-Mālikī (known as Ibn al-Fuhkhār) (d. 419/1028), who performed his hajj and stayed on in Madīnah. In his dream he saw an angel who told him: “Stay in the neighborhood [of the Prophet] for one more season [of hajj], for no hajj will be acceptable [to God] this year.” Alarmed by this, he stayed on for some time in Makkah and applied himself assiduously to his work before going on to Madīnah and visiting the Grave of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). Thereafter, he visited Jerusalem and spent some time there in devotional practices. Finally he returned to Makkah and attended the next hajj season. In his sleep he saw the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) who greeted him and shook him by the hand, saying: “0 Muhammad! Your pilgrimage is accepted first and last! May God be merciful to you”.

Abū Muhammad 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Walīd al-Ansārī (d. 386/996) also came to Jerusalem from the far west of the Maghreb. He was the chief scholar of the Mālikī school of law in his time, and combined asceticism with jurisprudence. He spent the rest of his life in Jerusalem, waiting to be buried there. He would say: “The gist of virtuous culture may be derived from four abādīth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), namely: (1) ‘He who believes in God and the Day of judgment should either say good things or remain silent’; (2) ‘It is the mark of a good Muslim to keep away from affairs that do not concern him’; (3) ‘Do not become angry’. (4) ‘The true believer is he who wishes for his brethren what he wishes for himself”.

**The Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Periods**

Jerusalem had no Muslims during its occupation by the Crusaders for the latter had slaughtered the city’s Muslim and Jewish population and prevented them even from visiting it throughout the period of their rule, the first of which lasted for about 88 years (492-583/1099-1187). Yet the expulsion of Muslims from Jerusalem, and the ban on their visiting it, served only to kindle their attachment to the holy city, causing them to prize its merits to the utmost and value its symbols all the more. The recapture of Jerusalem by Salāh ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī (d. 589/1193), was accordingly followed by a rush of Muslims to the city, either to live there or simply to visit it. Sufī zāwiyyahs were founded with greater fervor than in the pre-Crusades period, and were populated in larger numbers than ever before.

The fascination of Jerusalem grew even more following the end of the Crusades and the recovery of the city by the Muslims. Another factor contributing to it was the wide circulation of literature about fadā‘ il Bayt al-Madīs (“Merits of Jerusalem”), whole volumes of which were produced on the sanctity of the city along with collections of all that had been said about it in the Qur‘ān and in the traditions, about the Companions [Sahābah] who had died there, and about
the numerous tombs of prophets, Tābi‘ūn and saints, over and above the multiplying accounts of miracles about the city which spread all around.

‘Aziz ibn al-Abbār, in his book al-Mu‘jam, quotes Abū Zāhir as saying: “I came to Jerusalem to pray. I entered the Mosque and evaded the custodians of the Mosque until the lamps were put out, people left and the gates were closed. While I was in this state, I heard a rustling sound from two wings coming towards me and saying: “Glory be to the Eternal, the Ever Present! Glory be to the Living, the Self-Subsisting! Glory be to the Sovereign, the Most Holy”. Further rustling followed, and the same words were proclaimed. Then rustling sounds followed one another, until the mosque was filled with them. Suddenly some of these approached me, asking: “Are you a human being”? I said: “Yes”. They said: “Don’t be alarmed!” This story clearly alludes to the descent of angels to the Aqsa Sanctuary and their prayers there. Such stories provided a fresh reminder of its sanctity that was already so deeply ingrained in the Muslim consciousness.

From the very first day of Saladin’s entry into Jerusalem, Muslims from all regions rushed to the holy city, with scholars and Sufis at their head. The historian Abū Shāmah describes Saladin’s conquest as a great event which was witnessed by huge crowds of learned people and shaykhs of Sufi orders. When people heard, Abū Shāmah continues, of the favour bestowed by God on Saladin through this conquest, the news spread like wildfire. Scholars from Egypt and Syria hastened to visit the city, and almost no notable scholar stayed behind. Voices were raised high in supplication to God, along with acclamation and cheering and cries of “Allāhu Akbar! Lā Hātha illā ‘Lāh!” According to al-Muzarkishī, the spread of the joyful news of Jerusalem’s liberation was one of the main things prompting the great Ibn Jubayr to make his second journey. The historian Abū Shāmah says that al-Shātibī [al-Qārī] (d. 590/1194) came to Jerusalem three years before his death. A man bidding farewell to al-Shātibī before he set out for Jerusalem said: “God has spoken good things of that place”, then added: “I know of no place closer to heaven than Jerusalem, except for Makkah and Medina”. This was before the death of Saladin in 589/1193 who had established many foundations which underline the Islamic character of Jerusalem so that leading Sufis and religious scholars would make these institutions vibrant with circles for Qur’ānic, Ḥadīth, jurisprudential, grammar, linguistic, and other studies. Saladin dedicated all the khāngāhs, previously known as the “Home of Blessings” as a religious endowment to the Sufi sheikhs. He also allocated many further endowments to fund this and to pay these people’s expenses; and when he designated the Salāhiyyah Madrasah as an endowment; he earmarked several further endowments to finance it from their proceeds. Sufis continued to flock to the Salāhiyyah Madrasah in great numbers.

According to Ibn Jubayr, Sufis in the days of Saladin were “kings of that country”; their social status grew, and so did their religious and cultural roles during the spiritual crisis that accompanied the Crusader and Mongol invasions. Thus Sufis came to have many zāwiyyahs, hospices and communities. Donations and endowments were heaped on them too and Sufism attained a high position during this period, which witnessed the rise of Ibn Sab’ūn (d. 669/1270) in the farthest west and ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Kīlānī (d. 561/1166) and Ahmad al-Rīfāʾī (d. 578/1182), the founders of two very famous Sufi orders, the Kilānīyyah (or Qādirīyyah) and the Rīfāʾīyyah, which are in existence to this day. As such, the Ayyūbid period, which had Jerusalem as its religious focus, was a transitional epoch vis-a-vis the organization of Sufism into orders (tariqa), pivotal leaders (aqtāb) and novices (murtūdūn). This hierarchy became very similar to that of the state during the later Mamlūk period.

During this era in the annals of Jerusalem, a particular family rose to prominence. This was the family of the Sufi Badr al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Yūsuf al-Murtaḍā (d. 650/1252), who had a zāwiyyah near Jerusalem. He was succeeded in the order by his son, Muhammad (d. 663/1264).

**The Magrebis**

During the Ayyūbid period and later, Jerusalem attracted many Magrebis, with Sufis foremost among them. These Sufis were of two distinct kinds: one practicing Sufism at an individual level and the other following any one of the several well-known Sufi orders. One such ascetic was Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Aṭīrīn ʿAbd Allāh al-Qurashi al-Hāshimi, who was born in al-Andalus in 545/1150 and died in 599/1203. He went to Egypt and then moved on to Jerusalem, where he spent the rest of his life and was buried there.

Jerusalem also knew other Sufi orders, like that of Shaykh Abū Mīdyan Shu’ayb ibn al-Husayn (d. 594/1197), the teacher of the famous Sufī Muḥyī l-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī. Abū Mīdyan’s order was spread by one of his descendants, who established a zāwiyyah for the order near the Bāb al-Silsilah within the
al-Aqṣa Sanctuary. Another ṣaḥwiyah was founded for another Sufi order in Jerusalem by another Andalusian Sufi, Abū ʿl-ʿAbbās Ahmad al-Mursī, who initially propagated his order in the city of Alexandria.42 The Maghrebis would reside close to the Holy Mosque of Jerusalem, near the southern corner, which is the closest to the Aqṣa Sanctuary. In 589/1193, al-Malik al-Afdal designated this place for them as a religious endowment, along with a special quarter, which came to be called the Maghrebi Quarter, near the western wall of the Aqṣa Sanctuary, with a view to helping them and offering the assistance needed by the Maghrebi pilgrims. He further established for them the Afdalīyyah Madrasah near the Maghrebi Quarter to provide teaching services for its residents.43

During the Mamlūk period, in 704/1304 the aspiring sheikh ‘Umar al-Mujarrad, son of the chief sheikh, Ibn ʿAbd al-Nabī al-Masmūdī al-Maghrībi al-Mālikī designated the Zāwiyat al-Maghāribah as an endowment for the Sufis and devotes. This ṣaḥwiyah, which he founded at his own expense, and which lies in the Maghrebi Quarter itself, had dozens of rooms.44 Another eminent Andalāsī Sufi shaykh was the Khalīfah ibn Masʿūd al-Maghrībi al-Mālikī (d. 784/1382). His order was known as the Shaybāniyyah, its master in Syria, being Ibn ʿAbd al-Nabi Taqī al-Dīn al-Shaybānī, who left Jerusalem for Damascus after securing successors for his order, foremost among whom was Masʿūd al-Maghāribī, who won a degree of veneration in Jerusalem and became a focus for visitors.45

Other Schools and Orders

Considerable attention continued to be paid to Sufism at the time of the Mamlūk sultans, who vied with each other in fostering it. Senior state officials contributed to the establishment of mosques, retreats (takāyā) and schools. They extended help to scholars and Sufis, whose numbers multiplied after Baghdad had fallen to the Mongols and following the arrival of other Sufis from the Maghreb and al-Andalus. The number of schools they built reached forty.46 Prince Tankiz al-Nāṣirī (d. 741/1340) built the most important school (the Tankizīyyah Madrasah) of the Mamlūk period. It was erected at Bāb al-Sisilah, and became the most prominent school in Jerusalem, and Syria, an academic institute which included a monastic community [khānaqāh] and a centre for the study of the Qurʾān [Dār al-Qurʾān] and Hadīth [Dār al-Hadīth]. Its faculty members included venerable sheikhs.47 Teaching at this school was not confined to jurisprudence and there was also a khānaqāh for twelve Sufis, and an orphanage. Thus study, prayers, and deeds of charity were carried out simultaneously, under the same roof. A Sufi khānaqāh was erected at the new colonnade of the Haram al-Sharīf on its western edge to enable Sufis to gaze in meditation at the Dome of the Rock from a short distance, because this Dome symbolized the epitome of their endeavor in exercising their spiritual vision.48

In 877/1472 Sūltān Qaytbay built the Ashrafīyyah Madrasah in Jerusalem, adjacent to the Haram al-Sharīf, with a hall extending into the Haram itself, reflecting the profound longing to the Holy Rock. Through its variety of teaching functions, the madrasah reflected its multi-purpose aims.49 It catered, within its campus, for the four Muslim legal schools as well as for the Sufis themselves. The Sultan allocated fifteen Syrian dirhams to the Sufis, who numbered sixty, and set aside maintenance stipends for other teachers and students.50 Shihāb al-Dīn Abū ʿl-ʿAbbās ibn Ḥāmid (d. 854/1450) was charged with the supervision of the large Fakhriyyah Khānqāh. He had many followers. The Wafāʿiyyah Zāwiyah was inaugurated in 782/1380 by Shaykh Abūʾl-Wafāʾ Muhammad, whose offspring established a Sufi order named after him.51

Jerusalem also knew two ṣaḥwiyahs bearing the name “Bistāmiyyah”. The first was at the lower courtyard of the Rock in which its people met to perform dhikr ceremonies where the name of Almighty God was repeatedly invoked. The second was designated as an endowment by Shaykh Abū Allāh al-Bistāmī. It was built before 789/1387 and its first Shaykh was the ascetic imām and spiritual guide, Shaykh ʿAlī al-Safī al-Bistāmī (d. 761/1359).52 There was also the Zāwiyat al-Qirmī, which derived its name from Shaykh Muhammad al-Qirmī (d. 720/1320), who came from Damascus to Jerusalem and led the Qirmīyyah order, spending the rest of his life in Jerusalem.53

Jerusalem also attracted the great Sufi Taqī al-Dīn Abū ʿl-Sidq al-Halabī al-Tūlūnī (d. 843/1439), who established the Tūlūniyyah order in Jerusalem, where he stayed until his death.54 Another arrival in Jerusalem was the Sufi shaykh, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ramlī al-Maqdīṣī al-Shāfīʾī (d. 844/1440). Endowed with miracles, he left his office of muftī and dedicated himself to devotional work at the Zāwiyat al-Khatnīyyah near the Aqṣa Sanctuary. Shaykh Muhammad Fūlādh ibn Abū Allāh (d. 844/1440) also came to the holy city and devoted himself to worship at the Aqṣa Sanctuary. He performed sixty major pilgrimages to Makkah and is said to have been endowed with miracles and...
revelations. He enjoyed extraordinary prestige with the Sufis at the Sālahiyyah community, where he worked as a gatekeeper, and was buried in Jerusalem. The Sufi Shaykh Shāms al-Dīn Muhammad ibn ‘Isa al-Bistāmī al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 875/1470) spent the rest of his life in Jerusalem. He was a Bistāmī mendicant who was buried in the city.

There was also the Sufi Sheikh Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Husayn al-Maqqarī (d. 876/1471), who lived in Jerusalem till the end of his life. From the city of Mosul there also came to Jerusalem Sheikh Abū Bakr ibn ‘Alī al-Shaybānī al-Mūsālī (d. 797/1394), a prominent Sufi and a major saint. He lived in Jerusalem until his death.

The Qādirīyyah order, named after the famous Sufi, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Kilānī or Gīlānī, had its headquarters at the old hospital. Its doctrines combined spiritual strife and esoteric prayers on the one hand, and practical humanitarian deeds on the other. On the other hand, the Bistāmīyyah order trained its followers a strict spiritual discipline so as to concentrate on deeper, more insightful spiritual sensibilities. It laid special emphasis on the call for the “reconciliation of all”, with the aim of bringing together the adherents of various religions, fostering understanding between them and enabling them to move on from an attitude of hatred to that of fraternization.

Sufism in Ottoman Jerusalem

Throughout the Turkish Ottoman period, the Sufi presence in Jerusalem remained as intense as ever, with a proliferation of zāwiyahs. In 996/1588, Muhammad Aghâ Pāshâ founded a zāwiyah for the Sufis which carried his name. It consisted of a lecture hall, a dining room and three dormitories. In 1004/1596 the members of the Mawlāwiyyah order also established the Mawlāwiyyah Masjid in Izmīt for prayer and for the performance of Sufi rituals.

During the reign of Sultan Muhammad IV (d. 1058/1648) the population of Jerusalem totaled forty thousand, and the city had two hundred and forty miḥrābs, seven Ḥadīth schools, ten Qur‘ānic schools, forty boys’ schools, six public baths and eighteen drinking fountains. The Sufi zāwiyahs were concentrated in the city centre and around the Holy Haram, and here most of the Sufi orders were located together, including the Badawiyyah, Kilānīyyah, Sa‘dīyyah, Rif‘īyyah and Mawlāwiyyah orders. The Ottoman Turks embarked on the renovation of numerous Sufi zāwiyahs and takāfiyyahs, while repairing others. This led to a proliferation of the hospices and cloisters prepared for dervishes of the various Sufi orders, and for the reception of visiting strangers belonging to these orders. The Mājdīyyah Zāwiyah, founded in 1266/1849, was one of the largest and most populous. The Ottoman Turks accorded certain privileges to religious scholars, Sufis and learned men who wished to go to Jerusalem to teach at its zāwiyahs and schools, allocating monthly stipends to the scholars charged with running the sūlahān zāwiyahs. In addition, masters and advocates of the Sufi orders were permitted to collect and send donations to Jerusalem, Makkah and Madinah.

The Turkish traveler Avliyā’ Chelebi (d. 1090/1679) tells us that on his visit to Jerusalem, he encountered a large number of dignitaries, scholars and ordinary people of virtuous character who belonged to the Mawlāwiyyah Sufi order. Each received a salary of 500 akjehs. In 1081/1670, Jāwishzādah Muhammad Pāshâ, Governor of Jerusalem, carried out a census, and found that Jerusalem had 240 mihrābs seven Ḥadīth schools, ten Qur‘ānic schools and forty boys’ schools. In the Sufi hospices and prayer rooms he counted seventy Sufi orders, including the Kilānīyyah, Sa‘dīyyah, Rif‘īyyah and Mawlāwiyyah orders.

The Maghrebis, the Sufi Maghrebis in particular, paid constant visits to Jerusalem to partake of its blessings. In this context, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, who came to Jerusalem from Damascus in 1102/1690, wrote a book of special significance on his visit entitled al-Ḥadrah al-Unṣīyyah fi ‘l-Rīḥāb al-Qudsiyyah. In this book he says that he met a number of shaykhbs and dignitaries at the zāwiyah of Shaykh Jarrāh. The Sufi, Mustafā As‘ad al-Luqaymī made a journey to Jerusalem in 1179/1765 and entitled the work he produced on this occasion as Mawāniḥ al-Uns bi Rīḥāt li Wādī ʿl-Quds. When he settled there, he joined the Khalwātiyyah order.

Najīm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1062/1651), who compiled al-Kawākiḫ al-Sā‘īrah bi A’yān al-Mī’ab al-Asbāb, says that the number of scholars in Palestine in the 10th/16th century was 61, half of whom were in Jerusalem. Muhammad Amin al-Muhībī, in his Kubdāsūt al-Āthār fi A’yān al-Qarn al-Hādīd ʿAshar (11th/17th century), tells us that Palestine had 67 scholars, more than half of whom were in Jerusalem, many of whom were affiliated with the various Sufi orders. It will be noted that, in the 18th century, large numbers of Sufis were living in Jerusalem and that most of them were followers of the Shādhīli and Khalwātī orders, the majority of whom were exclusively dedicated to devotional practices.
Notes

3. Ibid.
10. Al-Sulami, Tabaqat al-Sufiyyah, 49-50.
15. Al-Sulami, Tabaqat al-Sufiyyah, 155-158.
20. Shurrab, Bayt al Maqdis, 103.
22. Ibid., 63-75.
27. Ibid., 167.
29. Ibrahim, Fadail al Bayt al Maqdis, 403.
30. ibid., 407.
33. 'Ali Ahmad, al-Andalusiyyan wa al-Maghribiyah fi Bilad al-Sham, 98-99.
35. Ahmad, al-Andalusiyyan wa al-Maghribiyah, 99.
38. Al-Hanbali, al-Ums al Jalil, 144.
41. Ahmad, al-Andalusiyyan wa al-Maghribiyah, 167.
42. Ibid., 169.
45. Ahmad, al-Andalusiyyan wa al-Maghribiyah, 169.
47. Al-Maqdisi, Muthur, introduction, 33-34.
50. Ibid., 628.
55. Ibid., 2: 510-15.
56. Ibid., 519, 534, 537.
57. Ibid., 506.
58. Armstrong, Jerusalem, 509.
60. 'Arif Pasha al-Arif, al-Quds, 106.
62. Shurrab, Bayt al Maqdis, 196-98.
64. Ibid., 776-78.
65. Ibid., 797-804.
Ghazi Hamad sits quietly behind his desk, his new office almost completely bare except for a couple of cheap wooden chairs and a small side table where an aide sets a cup of hot sage tea for me. He looks bemusedly at me in my black headscarf, sweating and out of breath. A taxi driver had mistakenly taken me to the wrong place so I arrived 25 minutes late for my scheduled appointment. I apologize profusely to Hamad whose ‘never minds’ come across reassuringly. He smiles at me in the headscarf –I’d thought it would show respect for a foreign woman to wear it in the office of a Hamas official. Instead I look ridiculous trying to adjust it correctly and he tells me gently that I can take it off. There is no need for you to wear it, he remarks and offers me chocolates from a box on his desk. Take two, or three, he smiles. I just take one and he laughs pleasantly. I know, I know, you are afraid you will get fat.

In his State of the Union address this past January, 2007, US President George Bush lauded the Lebanese, the Iraqis and the Afghans for having held democratic elections – even though ‘rogue’ elements had tried to undo their successes. Bush didn’t even mention the Palestinians. They were the elephant in the living room; the boy who shouted that the emperor is naked: ignored, shunned, and crudely pretended away. The Palestinians, whose elections were perhaps the most remarkable of all given their lack of a state—even contiguous territory—altogether, got not even a cursory nod from the ‘freedom and democracy’ President of the US. They elected the wrong government so their elections have been voided by the ‘international community,’ undermined by the western press and re-written by the propaganda priests keen to demonstrate the Manichean universe in which the struggle between good and evil persists. The irony is that Palestinian election results were a gift to the Zionist, neo-con and Christian rightwing Zealots who support the unending rule of a privileged Jewish minority and its US imperial overlords over a Palestinian majority in historic Palestine. With a “terrorist organization” dominating the Palestinian Authority, they can justify almost anything.

For that is what they have done: As poverty and unemployment levels skyrocket across the Gaza Strip, the siege persists and even the lonely voices of protest outside have grown weaker and weaker as time goes on. At nearly 80%, poverty in Gaza resembles its Sub-Saharan African cousin. Children and adults alike suffer from malnutrition, food insecurity and the ailments that accompany a brackish and depleted water supply. Kidney diseases are up, tooth decay and intestinal maladies are widespread, cancer rates are astronomical and medical supplies dwindling or non-existent. The hospitals are short-staffed with doctors and nurses who have gone an entire year without paychecks, living on credit or on the good-will of extended family members. Bed-linens and pillows are in short supply with patients sleeping days or weeks on the same set, if indeed they get beds at all rather than mats on the floor. Patients eat food brought in by family members and forego anything but the most necessary treatments—those that might save their lives thanks to back-up generators on-the-ready when the power cuts. Severely ill patients must seek treatment in Egypt and waiting for days or months at a time for the Rafah Crossing to open for a few short hours so they can leave—that is, if they have the proper Israeli-issued ID cards. At least 40,000 Gazans do not, making them illegal in their own homes and subject to deportation at will if apprehended by Israeli authorities. These are the people for whom serious illness is an almost guaranteed death.

1. Jennifer Loewenstein is the Associate Director of the Middle East Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She recently completed a year as Visiting Research Fellow at Oxford University’s Refugee Studies Program. Jennifer is a freelance journalist, human rights activist and founder of the Madison-Rafah Sister City Project. She has lived in Beirut, Jerusalem and Gaza City and has traveled extensively throughout the region.
sentence and for whom Gaza is a life-sentence in prison unless they decide to leave for good.

Those with connections can often send their sick to Israeli hospitals for treatment — like Ghada’s son, 6-year-old Ahmad, who was diagnosed with Leukemia just weeks after I left Gaza. He was permitted to get treatment in a Tel Aviv hospital but traveled accompanied by an older aunt (50) because his mother and father did not meet the age requirement to travel outside the Strip. Soon, the aunt’s permit expired and Ahmad was left alone in the hospital to undergo treatment while the family begged the proper Israeli authorities for a way to allow his mother to visit.

Inside Gaza, where unemployment has passed the 70% mark, many of the comparably well-to-do have given up meat with their main meals and substitute watery orange and grape juice drinks for fruit juice and milk. The “starvation diet” that former Sharon advisor, Dov Weisglass, promised the people of Gaza for having elected Hamas to power has taken hold. Underemployment accounts for another large percentage of the population, often not considered in the general statistics because they work 10-20 hours a week doing something like selling shawarma or hummus sandwiches at smoke-blackened stands on the streets. Israel has closed off the Erez Crossing, the main crossing for human traffic into Israel, to the tens of thousands of workers who were once employed in construction, on road crews, in restaurants and doing menial labor inside Israel.

The famous ‘Disengagement’ document stipulates that by 2008 no workers from Gaza will enter Israel for their wages. With the opening of the Rafah Crossing into Egypt still in the hands of Israel, no one has yet provided an answer to the question of how the population will survive. Egypt does not want an influx of Palestinian workers desperately trying to sustain their families. Fathers, brothers, sons and grandsons do not want to divide up their families forever working far away in the Gulf States or elsewhere. The trap has been set: whole families will be forced to leave, stateless and at the mercy of other regimes and guest-worker regulations (or lack thereof). Israel will insist sanctimoniously that they left voluntarily — countering all charges of ethnic cleansing or ‘transfer’. ‘We didn’t force them out!’, they will protest in feigned, pious innocence. But they will never be allowed back in; they will never again see the people they left behind, their cries of foul will die with the winds blowing them across the deserts of humiliation.

The Karni (industrial) Crossing, closed most of the time, allows in just enough humanitarian aid and material to keep the population alive. This is systematic torture: the million and a half lab-rats are observed for signs of stress as the temperature in the tanks rise and the space shrinks; as billions of dollars in funds are stolen or withheld, as businesses close and internal fighting escalates. See? Say the scientists. See what beasts they are? Look at them killing each other.

Prices are artificially high as internal competition and availability have been deliberately ground to a halt. Israel maintains full control over all air, land and sea access into and out of the Strip while insisting that Gaza is no longer occupied — and yet Retired Brigadier General Ephraim Lapid of the Israeli Defense Forces (sic), speaking to an amen chorus of pro-AIPAC students at the University of Wisconsin in early February, chides the Gazans for not having built a port on the land the illegal Jewish settlers left instead of firing glorified pipe bombs, called Qassams, into Sderot. A port? I ask myself. For whom? For the Palestinian National Navy and its fleet of aircraft carriers and leisure yachts? For the fishermen prohibited by Israeli gun-boats from fishing more than half a mile into the seas unless they want to risk their lives? A port built by funds from which of the robbed ministry coffers?
Oversewn by which universally boycotted official?

A different reality pokes through this hideous veneer: with the physical presence of the settlers no longer a hindrance to military activity, Israel’s rain over this clod of dusty earth is unimpeded: it imprisons, starves, denies, wrecks, tortures, tormentors, bomks, maims and murders with absolute impunity. Only when it launches a full-scale attack does Israel’s brutality flicker momentarily on the screens of our television overdubbed by the instructive voices of a dozen or so newscasters posing as counterterrorism experts on the nightly news.

Ghaz Hamad like the other officials I met in Gaza — those from Hamas, from Fatah, the PFLP and elsewhere — all expressed the need and the desire for the formation of a government of national unity. It is a last stand, a last dying hope. The factional fighting reflects, among other nothing, the pent-up anger of a government choked to a standstill, the flailing tantrums of a strong-man’s gang refusing to let go of power, the family feuds that have resurfaced as what little there was of civil society has been stripped away and replaced by the relics of tradition and, finally, the logical result of the proliferation of small arms across the strip. But Hamad puzzles me. We thought we could be a bridge between East and West, he says; Hamas is a moderate Islamic organization, one that could have mediated between Western powers and the more extreme organizations in Iraq and the fringe elements hiding in the mountains of Pakistan. We could have served as a vehicle for communication, for building trust. I am taken aback by these comments. He must be delusional. Does he not understand the visceral hatred of “Islam” in the United States? Does he not see that he is considered part of the satanic monolith threatening to devour all Good in the world? Does he not recognize that in the mirror of this apocalyptic vision Bush and Bin Laden are each other’s vile reflection?

Independent PLC (Palestinian Legislative Council) member, Ziad Abu Amr, understands this all too well and warily warns me of the logical result of the center of the mediation efforts for months, with years of political experience behind him. He knows what a reprieve some kind of unity would offer. As well, he knows he would be the choice for Foreign Minister in such a government and that could help staunch the flow of blood. At least a little. At least for a while. His interests are more than personal.

One night, in the balmy late autumn air, I stand outside on the balcony of my apartment listening to sporadic gunfire from the rooftops of nearby buildings. This was a new experience in Gaza: inter-factional violence on a scale that threatened the well-being of civilians day after day, bringing up the temperatures of people’s emotions — people exhausted by the months of hardship, of an unreliable supply of electricity and water, of the continual shortages of food and supplies and, worst of all, of seeing no end to it all.

My hosts advised me not to stand for long in front of the open windows of my 4th floor apartment or to walk unaccompanied through the familiar streets of Gaza City, Khan Yunis, Rafah and elsewhere — places that had once been so welcoming and friendly. Kidnappings, usually by angry young men seeking to embarrass the government or a particular official, faction or agency had become commonplace, though the victim was usually well-treated, released within days and used to advance a salary or get a family member released from jail.

On the night of November 1st, I once again stood outside in the warm air to catch the breeze blowing in from the sea. Stars filled the blue-black dome encasing us and, for a few short minutes, I was reminded of the Caribbean and its tropical beauty. Silence filled the sky until, from the East, an ominous, light buzzing noise began, traveling in unseen circles overhead growing louder at first and then diminishing as it retreated. This happened again and again: the buzzing of pilot-less drones searching the land below.

I knew at once this was a prelude to something worse; I’d been in Gaza many times before and knew the sights and sounds well: tracer flares, search lights, fighter planes, the loud staccato of helicopter blades, the whoosh of tank fire and the explosions that follow; the monstrous white surveillance blimp that hangs in the sky above Erez. Unlike the children of Gaza, I cannot differentiate with the physical presence of the settlers no longer a hindrance to military activity, Israel’s rain over this clod of dusty earth is unimpeded
There’s nothing you can do. Stupid, defiant pipe-bomb launchers in Beit Hanoun providing an excuse to the beasts in Jerusalem to hammer Gaza again

AK47s from Uzis or Kalashnikovs; I cannot immediately identify the place of impact or tell the weapon used, identify bullet types or missile fragments. I wouldn’t have known a tank shell from a missile casing or whether lights in the distance were from cars, trucks or armored personnel carriers. An F16 was very loud; that much I knew because I remembered the thunderous approach of such a plane flying low above my flat just after midnight in July 2002 when former head of the Israeli Air Force and later Chief of Staff of the IDF, Dan Halutz, ordered a one-ton bomb dropped on the apartment building where Salah Shehadeh- and dozens of other people with their families slept. Shehadeh had been the head of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam brigades, Hamas’ military wing, and his death was more important to Israel than the lives of the 14 others who died with him, including nine children, or the lives of those turned upside down by their injuries, or the homes and businesses in the vicinity that were also ruined thereby destroying the lives of scores of others in ways that never made it to the papers or occur to people huffing and puffing sanctimoniously about eradicating “terror”.

That November night and those that followed still haunt me now: the trips to the hospitals and morgues on the following days; the reports in Gaza juxtaposed with the reports on CNN or the BBC; the reaction locally versus the obliviousness or irritability of those back home. Can’t you talk about something else? I remember someone asking me. “Chill out, Jennifer; not everything is death and destruction.” How does one talk to a child about this, I still wonder, remembering my 3-year-old daughter wide-eyed and inquisitive upon my return. Is Gaza good, mama? Do the children have toys? Can you take me with you next time?

People at the Mezan Center for Human Rights, long-time friends, invited me to their home for dinner later that same night. Up on the 11th floor, in their flat, the sounds and smells of food cooking in the kitchen animated the guests and their children, glowing over each other in games on the floor, running about and giggling. The rest of us talked and laughed together about adult things: stupid politicians, work projects, long-term goals; half of everything in English and half in Arabic so we could all understand. Tea, coffee and soft drinks made their rounds, cups and glasses clinking against each other and appetizers spread out on a low coffee table. Samir Z. always putting a sardonic spin on everything discussed and challenging the prevailing wisdom, smiling sarcastically with his arm affectionately around his wife, Soheir, made the whole room radiant and alive. His four year old daughter Leila climbed into his lap for a hug looking over at me bashfully as I beamed over at her and asked, eysh bitfakri an baba-tik al-mudhak? (What do you think of your silly father?)

The evening was pierced by huge explosions off to the east. In the distance, lights still pecked out from Beit Hanoun but we knew it was under attack again. The laughter waned and Samir led me up to the roof of the building where I phoned a US radio-station holding out my mobile so it could pick up the sounds of the explosions. Once again, the Gazan night turned schizophrenic. Life in the flat below me continued, mellower but otherwise used to the blasts piercing the dark sky.

Samir turned on the television to get the news reports, but the reception was poor, interrupted by the aerial bombardments. More soft drinks appeared and a delicious main course of chicken and okra with raisins and pine nuts in saffron rice: a very special occasion for me and the British girl, Lauren, the guests of honor. The buzzing of the pilot-less drones circling overhead began again in a modern symphony with the booms of bombs.

Leila stops smiling and sits down to dinner with her brothers and sisters, looking away from me; away from the room and the quiet that has descended upon it. Focusing a little too intently on her plate, she picks at her food but doesn’t eat. She is suddenly wrapped in an invisible blanket, withdrawn into a private world. The television hums: a young woman from Al-Jazeera reports on the attack – going live to spokespeople in Gaza. All of the adults, about 8 of us, stare at the screen, the dark images, the exhausted faces of Ismail Haniyeh and others. But it’s not on TV. There’s nothing you can do. Stupid, defiant pipe-bomb launchers in Beit Hanoun providing an excuse to the beasts in Jerusalem to hammer Gaza again; to bestow the wrath of Goliath: of Olmert, Halutz, Sharon, Barak, Netanyahu, Peres, Rabin, Dayan, Eitan, Shamir, Begin, Meir, Eshkol, Ben-Gurion… No pipe bombs or rockets allowed, no Molotov cocktails, no guns, no weapons of any kind, no sticks, no stones, no flags, no songs, no claims, no keys, no memories, no land, no voices, no words. You must play by our rules. The television drones on; we eat our dinner.

There is a new, dangerous strain of Intifada, a threatening pandemic, transmitted in the flash of eyes from one set to the next. It is in Ruba’s identity-less wallet and the
stateless satchels of her compatriots; it electrocutes the bombed power grid and speeds over the downed bridges; it is leaving on the buses that exit Rafah and returning with exulted indignation, lacking cash for bread. It sits rotting on trucks at Karni, drawing strength from its own stench; it is toxic like the Gazan water, sulphuric and bitter. It is scrawled across the dismissed papers of Mecca; streaming out of Baghdad in the millions; it is rocking in the darkness of the BOOMs, hiding its head in the pillows of chairs to block out the noise of the killing. It is reaching for daddy’s arms and trembling with fright, wetting the bed and drawing tanks with crayons. It has tubes up its nose and bandages across its belly. It has bullet-hole scars and memories of prison torture: it is tied backwards with a vomit-and urine-stained sack over its head on an overturned chair, kicked in the testicles, dripping with the blood from a broken nose. It is weeping over headstones of lost companions, falling to the ground in grief. It wafts hauntingly from the loudspeakers of the minarets and from the chalices of ancient stone church altars. It is restless and hungry, homeless but imprisoned in its home; it shakes in my face its basket of shell-fragment souvenirs yelling, “Made in America!”

Books Available For Review

1. The West Bank and Gaza Strip, A geography of occupation and disengagement, by Elisha Efrat
2. Remaking Israeli Judaism, The Challenge of Shas, by David Lehmann and Batia Siebzehehner
3. The Al Jazeera Phenomenon, ed, Mohammed Zayani
4. The Record of the Paper, hoe the New York Times Misreport US Foreign Policy, by Howard Friel and Richard Falk

Interested individuals contact Friends of Al-Aqsa
**“If...” International Friends**
*A Charity Helping People to help themselves*

### TSUNAMI APPEAL
- Funds donated to help those worst affected by the tragedy in South East Asia.

### VISION AID PROJECT
- 2,000 spectacles sent to Sri Lanka, which were distributed by an Eye Specialist for free to needy people.

### LEICESTER LORD MAYOR’S APPEAL
- Donated towards the Kidney Care Appeal

### ACADEMIC SPONSORSHIP
- Considering applications for students from Africa to undertake their Masters and PhD studies in the UK.

### MALAWI ORPHAN PROJECT
- Funds donated for orphan’s at the Kawale Muslim Children’s Centre to cover the cost of: Food, Clothing, Accommodation, Education and Health Care. At present there are 30 Orphan’s but the number will grow as funds increase.

---

**I want to make regular donation to help the needy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDING ORDER FORM</th>
<th>ZAKAHAH</th>
<th>SADAKAH</th>
<th>LILLAH</th>
<th>INTEREST</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr/Mrs/Miss/Dr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postcode</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gift Aid Declaration*
- I would like “If...” to reclaim tax on all donations I have made until further notice. I am a UK taxpayer.

**Pay “If...” £**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each month from........day ........Month .........Year until further notice and debit my account.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A/c No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sort code</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signature**

**Date**

**To Manager (Bank Name)**

**Bank Address**

**Postcode**

**To HSBC Bank (40-28-08) A/C 01506080**

---

*“If...” P. O. Box 6897, Leicester, LE5 5ZH*
In Ramzy Baroud’s new book, The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of People’s Struggle, he dispels the image of the entire Palestinian people being “terrorists” or “militants” which is an image popularly conceived in Israel and the West.

Baroud sets out that this generalization allows the Israeli government to act with virtual impunity against the Palestinians. It also equips the Israeli forces with a moral endowment as they view their actions as being in the name of “good” and any challenge to this policy is tantamount to collusion with the “forces of evil”. Baroud offers the reader this grim truth, “Being a Palestinian activist means you could be targeted in a taxi cab, in your office, sipping coffee with your neighbors, or sitting in your home. When you live, you live in poverty, deprived of all freedoms and joys of life. And when you die, it’s a horrible death by a surface-to-surface missile, a car bomb, or a sniper’s bullet.”

The sincerity and passion in Baroud’s approach is remarkable and presents the reader with the heartfelt anger felt by the author, a Palestinian born in a Gazan refugee camp who witnessed first hand the oppression of the occupation. This writer also searched Jenin in hope of finding the truth and preserving the stories of those that had suffered.

Baroud sets out the history of the Intifada years during which successive Israeli governments implemented policies that undermined the possibilities of freedom and democracy in the Occupied Territories. He sets out that there are many false notions propagated by Israel and the United States which are then dutifully peddled by the media in these countries. He suggests that Israel’s objective is to reinforce the notion that it is the Palestinian people who are the aggressors, while Israel is the victim always acting in self defense and under only the most extreme cases. Baroud notes, “It’s the same dreadful scenario repeated incessantly. Israel murders many innocent civilians; the international community hears nothing, sees nothing, and does nothing...in anger and desperation, a Palestinian blows himself up in a crowd of Israeli...the Western world is utterly overcome with a wave of condemnations of “Palestinian terrorism,” “the enemies of peace.”

The issue of suicide bombings is discussed several times and through the Western optic, he suggests that there is a strong notion that the Palestinian people are brought up to hate, kill, foment intolerance and engage in regressive thought and actions. This is thought to be the trigger and reason for Palestinian suicide bombings. Baroud asserts, however, that Palestinians are not driven to end their lives because they are products of intolerance or consumed with hatred. Rather he gives a more practical motivation: “When a policy of starvation, assassination, and systematic killing is imposed, when people are brutalized in the streets, when schools are raided by Apache helicopters...when a whole nation is collectively abused and violated with almost no protection...for those victims...blowing oneself up might actually seem like a rational way out of a despairing situation.”

Baroud makes it clear that the way forward is to take the moral high ground, no matter how hard the struggle, and no matter what dividends one may think it yields, politically or personally. This is what has fundamentally separated the occupier and occupied for so long in this conflict; a clear cut victim existed, it was the Palestinians, suffering 39 years of occupation, with many still affected by the hardships of dispossession 58 years later. Baroud writes, “To maintain its moral edge, the Palestinian revolution should not depart from its all-encompassing, tolerant, and inclusive path, it should not be tainted by the failacies of the occupier...These values must remain untainted, wholesome even, so that the will of the people might some day prevail over tyranny and oppression. And it will, of this I am certain.”

Baroud promotes non-violent resistance which has been witnessed since the birth of the Palestinian struggle for liberation. Most notably, the non-violent protests of the first Intifada, which were met by the iron fist of the Israeli state. The iron fist was an entrenched policy used again by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon during the second Intifada. Baroud writes, “They go to the streets to protest the killing of a child, and they return home carrying another shot while protesting.” Non-violent protests have been plentiful in the second Intifada, but through growing desperation, measures that were traditionally absent from the Palestinian struggle were taken up by individuals consumed with feelings of helplessness and anger, triggered by the wrongs inflicted upon their people by the Israeli state.

Baroud states that the Palestinian response to Israeli aggression “should have been a wake-up call for the Israeli government, making it clear that violence begets nothing but violence...that a solution to the conflict would only come through the implementation of international law, not Apache helicopters and missiles.” If the Israeli government wouldn’t pull back the reigns of Ariel Sharon, then surely the US, the UN, the EU or any country with the slightest backbone could have uttered words of
condemnation against Israel. The status quo, however, continued: America rallied around Israel, the rest of the international community remained silent and the Palestinians suffered the consequences.

Throughout the conflict, the primary US excuses to support Israel has been that “Israel is our friend,” it is the “only democracy in the Middle East,” and “given the times we live in” (i.e. the post 9/11 world), it is more crucial than ever to support Israel’s struggle against “tyranny and Islamic fanaticism.” After that tragic morning, when nearly 2800 American citizens lost their lives, policy makers and government officials in the West used the event to create an “us versus them” type of world, without really defining “them”.

Baroud explains the new model, “Fighting terror is the new trend; whereby aggressive, powerful countries crush their weaker foes, deprive them of freedom, while continuing to blame them for all the woes of the world. And we, the people of this world who mean well but fail to act, are expected to believe everything we are told. Israel is defending itself as though it were the Palestinian who occupy Israeli territories, besiege the Israel people, blow up their homes, steal their land, and gun down their children.”

Baroud leaves no one untouched in The Second Palestinian Intifada. He does much to underscore the shortcomings of the late Yasser Arafat, the weakness and lack of credibility of Mahmood Abbas, and the many failures of US intervention (passed off as honest brokering). Baroud does not pull punches when critiquing the Palestinian Authority (PA), particularly its corruptness and incompetence.

Baroud specifically uncovers the disingenuousness of “negotiations” led by Abbas and highlights the acquiescence and political posturing of Palestinian figures in times when strength and political purity was needed. Under the rule of the “old guard,” the PA lost sight of the Palestinian struggle. The PA’s duties were supposed to include preserving and fighting for the rights of its people, defending its citizens against the unjust policies of Israel, and demanding that the international community intervene. Yet, the leaders within the PA were so intent on keeping power and following defunct policies rooted in corruption and nepotism, that they failed to remember that they weren’t representing themselves, but a population of 3.8 million people who were suffering the daily realities of occupation.

The glimpses of frustration, anger, and jarring sarcasm gives this story a distinct humanness; a tone that is refreshing, and one that the reader can identify with. After all, the American political and military presence are so much in evidence today. The Author is particularly interested in the role of religion and especially religious extremism in American culture. America’s dominant culture and civilisation, while essentially based on Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, has deep roots in the radical European Protestant reformatory movements that caused so many wars and revolutions in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. He traces the rise of the American right and its basic belief in Christian Zionism. The book raises some original issues of research such as the relationship between fundamentalist Christianity, whether of the Catholic or Protestant variant, and the whole world. He talks about the American right and its belief in Christian Zionism, and the whole world. The world-wide European colonial project over the last five hundred years since Christopher Columbus.

The early Americans saw themselves as the ‘New Jerusalem’ and they actively sought to supplant the Jewish visions of them alone being the ‘chosen’ people of God. With the rise of the British Empire in the 19th century, a large group of British Christians also believed that Victorian Britain was indeed the ‘new Israel’ and that the British were the ‘newly chosen’ people of God. The term Judaeo-Christian civilisation was coined in America to refer to the perceived similarities of culture and tradition between biblical Israel (and for present day American fundamentalists, the state of Israel) and the US. The whole concept of the so-called ‘Judaeo-Christian civilisation’ has had a significant impact on the way the Victorian British as well as Americans have perceived the Arab-Muslim worlds. Ignorance about Arabs (as ‘lineal children of Abraham’) being the Semitic cousins of the Jews have always been manifest in the US, and never more so than at the present time. As the Author colourfully portrays,
Americans can draw on a long history of anti-Arab Orientalism and satire.

Fuad Shaban’s account is indeed significant as it puts together a coherent explanation based on a wide variety of textual sources; including literary, political, governmental as well as religious. As an experienced academic rooted in Western traditions of scholarship, his historiography is stimulating. He leads us to the conclusion that American political culture, and particularly its religious sub-culture, has a significant underrun of old (or New) England Puritanism in it that encourages intolerance and hatred towards Arabs and Muslims or non-Christians and non-Westerners, in general. To prove this, the Author leads us on a journey excavating the roots of American political culture and tracing early Anglo-Saxon as well as American ideological engagement with the Arab Islamic worlds. The Author’s vast expertise in the field of Western Orientalism has served him well in researching this book. As a non-Christian and a non-Western individual, the Author is able to direct a truly critical look at how Christianity was and is still fundamental to American claims to Empire and greatness. It was the development of an ideology based on religion that was the ‘raison d’etre’ for carrying out the settlement and subjagation of the American continent by the early settlers. American mythology has always enshrined the biblical concept of the ‘shining city on the hill’. Their philosophic logic has since been the dominant religious dialogue in America. This same Calvinistic dialogue of the ‘chosen-ness’ of a few and the superiority of the ‘European Protestant’ over all the rest have also been responsible for the enslavement of the Africans in America as well as the native south Africans in Southern Africa. It’s interesting that even African-Americans were ultimately forced to use Christian-Zionist interpretations of the Bible to appeal to their own as well as a broader unsympathetic white audience in their struggle for liberation and emancipation. Critical to the way that the Christian Right in America views the Bible is their insistence on a literal interpretation of the scriptures. This directly encourages the growth of intolerant fundamentalism. After September 11, 2001, right wing Christians as well as neo-conservatives have acquired tremendous clout in being able to manipulate US foreign and domestic political policies in a setting conducive to the expression of maximum hatred for all Arab and Muslim people. Indeed, the present administration of George W. Bush has made it quite clear that they stand by a policy of civilising or ‘democratising’ the Arab-Middle Eastern worlds. The Christian Right often tries to justify violence and chaos in the Middle East by pointing to a literal interpretation of verses in the scripture that rationalise violence in the region as essential to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The Christian Right has always sought out Israel and this has particularly increased since the Arab oil embargoes of the early 1970s. American military as well as politico-economic support to Israel has increased manifold over the last thirty years and this has been utilised by the fundamentalist lobby to support Israel more and more in its militaristic activities to the ultimate detriment of Palestinian aspirations for a secure and separate state of their own. Zionism has now become a central part of American foreign policy and internal governmental policy. The growth of Jewish lobbying groups such as the Anti Defamation League (ADL) & America Israel Public Action Committee (AIPAC) have both helped this trend in American politics. Many of these Jewish as well as Christian Zionist organisations faithfully panders to the Judaeo-Christian civilizational aspect as a matter of religious truth. This creates a very supportive atmosphere in which to operate as most Americans are rooted in this culture. These organisations are able to influence the US Congress to a significant extent and there are no counter-lobbies as effective as the AIPAC in America. For many Congressmen, there is always something to be gained from pro-Zionist support and virtually nothing to be gained from the opposition. Hence both Republicans as well as Democrats have to pander to this ‘vision of Zion.’ The actual danger for today’s world lies in the fact that a ‘born-again’ Christian fundamentalist President is in the US white House and so this is the period of the Christian Right ascendancy in the US. The agenda of the Christian Right rhymes well with the agenda of US imperialism. Mainline moderate Protestant churches in the US do not generally subscribe to the visions of Christian fundamentalists, though they are sometimes pressured into passing resolutions in support of the state of Israel. It should not be forgotten in the interests of the Middle Eastern origins of the Christian faith as well as of moderation that present Eastern (Orthodox) Christianity and Roman Catholic Christianity continue to be politically aligned and theologically structured in a different mode from the way Western fundamentalist Protestant Christianity has evolved and is manifest today. That is a sad truth on the state of World Christianity that must be acknowledged by all who hope to see the victory of moderation over fundamentalism within the highly diverse Christian Faith. Only such a victory will ultimately ensure that justice prevails in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Department of Politics
University of Exeter
Exeter, UK

Samuel J. Kuruvilla
The Persistence of the Palestinian Question. Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians


This is a collection of ten essays, all of them previously published and dating from between 1993 and 2005. Also included as chapter 10 is a discussion held in 2002 between the author and the well-known Israeli historian Benny Morris. The author, a Palestinian-American who is Associate Professor at Columbia University where he was a colleague of Edward Said, will be known to many readers of this journal through his incisive, frequently polemical, but always stimulating writings on Zionism, Israel and Palestine. The gathering in book form of an important selection of the articles from academic journals will make them available to a wider audience and is to be welcomed.

The articles are not reprinted in their order of publication but organised into two parts, the first of which [chapters 1-3], includes ‘essays on Zionist ideology and Palestinian nationalism, while Part II [chapters 4-11] includes essays on the origins of the “Peace Process” and its transformation of the Palestinian political field’ (p. 9). The announced division is somewhat misleading: in practice only chapters 4-7 deal with the Oslo “Peace Process”, while the remaining chapters return to questions of ideology similar to those discussed in chapters 1-3. The articles have been reprinted largely as published with apparently little updating; there is some duplication between chapters and cross-referencing could have been fuller. There is no consolidated bibliography; as well as assisting the reader this could have saved space through use of the author-date system of references. The index could have been more developed; for example one misses an entry for ‘Europe/European’ which are central to the discussion (pp. 14-18, 23-33, 37-9, 41-2, 44, 55-60, 64, 82-3, 85-6, 91, 109, 130-1, 140, 143, 151-2, 168-78). The book reads like a collection of essays written separately, rather than an integrated whole.

The central theme is Zionism and its impact on the Palestinians, from its origins in 19th C Europe up to the present day (and by implication beyond). Zionism, a colonial and racist ideology of European origin, is made to speak through its exponents and practitioners, from its founder Theodor Herzl, through Israeli leaders past and present, to contemporary historians like Benny Morris. The resulting picture is not attractive. A good starting point is the last and most recent chapter ‘The Persistence of the Palestinian Question’, from which the book derives its title, and which gathers together the threads from earlier chapters. The leading theme is that the persistence of the Palestinian question is linked to the persistence of anti-Semitism; Zionism and anti-Semitism are intimately related and have worked hand in hand from the start (cf. Herzl himself, p. 178). Zionism aimed at ridding European Jews of the pejorative connotations attached to their status by turning them into Europeans. A new Jewish identity would be created in an exclusively Jewish state which had to be located outside Europe. Jews would become European by settling in Asia, where they would act as a bulwark for European civilisation; at the same time Zionism discriminated against Jews of non-European origin (ch. 3). The process of settlement required that the Palestinians be deprived of their own land, identity and history, and become themselves anti-Semites by being turned into the equivalent of European Jews. A predominantly peasant population was made landless, languishing in refugee camps in Palestine or abroad, and fit only for ‘expulsion’ or ‘transfer’ as were the Jews in Europe.

How intractable this repellant ideology is, and how impervious it remains to debate, is shown well in the discussion between Benny Morris and Joseph Massad (ch. 10). The idea, obvious to many, that Israel should cease to be an exclusively Jewish state and become a state for all its citizens, with equal rights for all, whatever their race or creed, is inconceivable to a Zionist and thus not even raised. Morris states disarming that ‘Israelis [and] Zionists … would have much preferred Palestine to be empty of Arabs with therefore no need for Jews to be supreme over anybody … they abhorred the idea of a supremacist apartheid-like state. And that may have been in fact one of the driving reasons for trying to buy out and clear out Arabs along the way’ (p. 163).

In an interview in Ha’aretz (9 January 2004) Morris has since gone further both in admitting and endorsing the planned massacre and expulsion of Palestinians in 1948, with sentiments so crude that the interviewer was taken aback. ‘A Jewish state would not have come into being without the uprooting of 700,000 Palestinians … There was no choice but to expel that population.’ What is more, in Morris’ view, Ben-Gurion did not go far enough: ‘If he was already engaged in expulsion, maybe he should have done a complete job … he would have stabilised the State of Israel for generations.’ Islam is posited as an irreconcilable enemy: ‘There is a deep problem in Islam. It’s a world whose values are different. A world in which human life doesn’t have the same value as it does in the West, in which freedom, democracy, openness and creativity are alien.’ Against this perceived threat an Iron Wall is necessary: ‘What will decide their [the Palestinians’] readiness to accept us will be force alone … I think the West today resembles the Roman Empire of the fourth,
fifth and sixth centuries: The barbarians are attacking it and they may also destroy it. Here, in the words of a contemporary historian who once presented himself as a 'revisionist', are the same ideas that are illustrated and analysed in this book, ideas which go back to the roots of Zionism in the 19th century.

The true face of Zionism may thus be exposed by its own words, yet a subtitle for this book could also be 'Divide and rule: the success of Zionism'. Zionism has demonstrated throughout its history a ruthless and single-minded efficiency in the long-term pursuit of its objectives. On the other side the fragmentation of the Palestinians has continued apace hand in hand with increased repression. Though the justice of the Palestinian cause may receive ever-growing recognition world-wide, western governments (and above all the US) will not confront Israel but instead foster divisions between the Palestinians and deliberately undermine their elected government (on this cf. Joseph Massad, \textit{Al-Ahram Weekly} nos. 799 & 819, June and November 2006). Pressure from below the governmental level has limited effectiveness, as the infamous Wall shows all too clearly. One passage in this book tries to address this issue by suggesting a blue-print for co-operative international action (such as sanctions and boycotts), on the analogy of the struggle against white supremacy in the United States and South Africa (p. 152-3). But as of the time of writing this (January 2007), with growing instability in the Middle East and the threat of a US-Israel attack on Iran, even an optimist can only be filled with foreboding.

Scotland

Michel Austin*

---

* Michel Austin was Lecturer, then Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, from 1968 to 2000. He is now Honorary Lecturer at St Andrews University. His field of study is ancient Greek history on which he has published several books and articles, including \textit{The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest} (Cambridge University Press, 1981; 2nd edition, revised and enlarged, 2006).

---

Hamas Unwritten Chapters

In January 2006, Hamas won an overwhelming electoral victory in the occupied Palestinian territories. Branded as a terrorist organisation by the USA & the European Union, this lead to suspension of direct aid to the Palestinian government and forced the West to reconsider the success of imposing democracy in the Middle East. International attention turned towards the organisation, its aims and objectives. A few English books about Hamas are available, but most of these have drawn sharp criticism as they are essentially from an Israeli perspective, lacking balance, and some argue, containing unauthentic narratives. Azzam Tamimi, a Palestinian by descent, explains in this book the origins and history of Hamas, and presents a deep analysis of its internal structure and political objectives and how these have been achieved since its inception.

Hamas was established in 1987 as a distinct organisation with clear aims. Its roots lay with the global Muslim Brotherhood that was founded in 1928 by the late Hasan Al-Banna. The Muslim Brotherhood itself was a reformist movement which became very popular during the 1930’s and 1940’s. The movement expanded rapidly from Egypt across the Middle East and by 1945 it had half a million active members in Egypt alone. In Palestine, a few offices of the network were opened in Gaza whilst the central office was established in Jerusalem. However, the creation of Israel in 1948 led to the split of the Palestinian Brotherhood into two organisations; one in Gaza and the other in West Bank. This book, as the author mentions in the introduction, “begins from the point in 1967 when the Israeli occupation of the remaining third of Palestine created an opportunity for the Brotherhood to revive and reunite” (page 5).

The book begins by explaining the preceding two decades between 1967 and 1987 prior to Hamas’s formation. In the first decade, the Brotherhood was busy reorganising itself whilst the second decade saw the creation of major institutions to provide the Palestinians with social, medical and educational services. These services were the fabric of what the movement was providing the Palestinians with. During this time, the brotherhood also began to plan a resistance strategy.
The outbreak of the first Intifada on 8th December 1987 followed the deaths of three Palestinian workers and the injury of seven by an Israeli military tractor-trailer which ploughed head on into two vans carrying the workers. The Israelis termed this a ‘traffic accident’ but to the Palestinians it was an act of deliberate murder. On 9th December, the senior leaders of the Brotherhood in Gaza held a meeting and on 14th December, the decision was taken to transform the Brotherhood organisation in Palestine into an Islamic resistance movement that was to be known as HAMAS. This is an acronym for Harakat Al-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah which translates into the Islamic Resistance Movement. This was the point at which they began resistance military activity in the form of retaliatory attacks against Israeli military targets.

Israel’s response was to crack down on Hamas leaders and members. Most were deported and it was during this time that the military wing of Hamas, the martyr Izzaddin Al-Qassam Brigades, came into existence.

In 1990, following the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein, the Hamas leadership moved to Jordan. Chapters four to seven explains the deteriorating relationship between the Hamas political bureau and the Jordanian monarch and Jordanian Brotherhood, until eventually they were forced to move to Damascus in 1999. During this nine year period, many interesting developments took place. The 1993 Oslo Agreements between the PLO and Israel forced the Jordanian authority to reconsider the usage of their soil by Hamas, who openly rejected the peace agreements.

A blessed disguise for Hamas evolved from the botched Israeli assassination attempt on the life of its senior leader, Khalid Mish’al. This gave Hamas international coverage whilst at the same time undermining the Israeli secret service. The Israelis also agreed to release the founder of Hamas, Shaykh Ahmad Yassin, who then toured several countries gaining support for the movement. In 1996, the military wing of Hamas faced a big blow when its Military commander Yahya Ayyash (The Engineer) was killed. Hamas retaliated with a wave of bombings that killed more than sixty Israelis.

Chapters seven and eight are, by far, the most important as they explain the ideology of Hamas, its tactics and how it views the state of Israel and its citizens. Hamas has resisted international pressure to recognise Israel’s right to exist as this contradicts the founding principles of the organisation. Article 11 of the Hamas Charter incorporates the Islamic principle of Wajef whereby no Palestinian (or Muslim) lands can be given away by any organisation or, indeed, any government. This principal is not exclusive to Hamas. Muslim scholars generally uphold this principle, however, the author emphasises the fact that this doctrine does not deny Jewish people the right to reside in Muslim lands as they did for centuries when persecution was rife in Europe; nor does it prevent Hamas from negotiating a truce or Hudna (a temporary cease fire agreement). The author also highlights the importance of distinguishing between Zionism and Judaism, to avoid the stereotypes that exist.

Hamas is generally criticised for employing Martyrdom Operations as a weapon against the Israeli occupation. The author explains the history of Martyrdom Operations in warfare as well as questions related to Jihad. Two issues are normally intermingled and confused by many. Firstly, whether the act is a contemptible suicide or a sacrifice in the path of God and, secondly, the issue of which target is legitimate. The former relates to a theological debate amongst contemporary scholars. Martyrdom Operations are used as a strategy by most Palestinians and not due to mere desperation as many in the West have suggested. Otherwise, the act would only be carried out by the poor and desperate and this is not the case.

Chapter nine sheds light on Hamas’s relationship with its rival Fatah, and how the latter strived to either ignore the former or liquidate it. What is clear from the discussion is that the current Intra-Palestinian conflicts are rooted in a long history of confrontations between the two groups. An interesting historical point to note is the intra-rivalry between President Yasar Arafat and Prime Minister Mahmod Abbas. This is evident from the President’s approach in the final stages of his life to Israeli pressure and his successor’s approach thereafter. On 22 March 2004, Shaykh Ahmad Yassin was assassinated and this was followed by the assassination of his successor Dr Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rantisi on 17 April. The impact this had upon the external image of and support for, Hamas, was positive as it was sympathetically viewed as the martyrdom of the symbol of Palestinian resistance. The death of Yasar Arafat did not have the same impact for Fatah.

In the final chapter, a detailed account is given of the run up to the legislative elections of January 2006. The corruption of Fatah; its policy failures and a sense of its betrayal of the Palestinian cause resulted in Hamas gaining an overwhelming majority and the end of Fatah’s 40 years of domination. An international debate was sparked and the major test for Hamas came in the form of international pressure and the suspension of aid from the USA and the EU.

This book is essential reading for all those who wish to really understand Hamas and its importance and influence in the Palestinian territories. It reflects that fact that the Hamas election victory was not an accident, and explains why it was the only real choice for many Palestinians. Undermining an established transparent democratically elected organisation, that has overwhelming support across the Muslim world, is a regrettable mistake and will only fuel further popularity for Hamas.

The book concludes with six appendices that include the memorandum of Hamas and some articles by senior members of Hamas published in the western media. The book is primarily aimed at explaining Hamas, but it also touches upon related issues and organisations linked to the history of the Middle Eastern conflict. The mention of Hezbollah and the 1982 Lebanon war is one such example.

Overall, the book is highly informative. The author had the advantage of interviewing senior members of Hamas, which has surely made the analysis and synthesis as accurate as possible. Abdel Bari Atwan, chief editor of Al Quds Al-Arabi, rightly commented, “Tamimi’s book is the most authoritative account yet published of the origins, rise and impact of Hamas.”

Blackburn

Yusuf Shabbir
This fascinating book analyses 120 years of Jewish opposition to Zionism. If ever a book proves the maxim that not all 'Jews are Zionists and not all Zionists are Jews' - then it may well be this one.

The main argument Rabkin presents is that Zionism is essentially anti-Jewish. Traditional Jews criticise the state of Israel not as a matter of opposition to certain policies or disapproval of actions taken. Rather, their opposition is theological. They consider Zionism to represent the deliberate rejection of Judaic concepts as it relies on armies and not God; it calls for redemption without repentance and it rejects humility in favour of pride and arrogance. The author suggests that from its very inception the Zionist project was characterized by aggressive secular nationalism. Another recurrent theme of the book is how history and religious texts have been reinterpreted by Zionists to justify their actions and ideology.

Chapter one provides a brief history of Zionism. Rabkin argues that Zionism was a response to the challenges of nationalism and liberalism. In recalling its birth, during the period of the pogroms in Russia in the 19th century, Rabkin observes the influence on Zionism of Russian movements of the day such as Bolshevism.

Chapter two examines the radical changes which emerged in the Jewish identity. How this identity was transformed from a trans-national Jewish identity, rooted in the Torah, into a secular and nationalist one. Another interesting point explored in this chapter is the creation of the Modern Hebrew and the way it helped to forge this new identity.

Chapter three compares how Jewish Tradition and Zionist ideology view messianism and the concept of exile. Orthodox Jews believe that settlement in the Land of Israel will result from the universal effect of good deeds rather than by military force or diplomacy and that salvation can only come from messianic intervention. It is for this reason that no attempt was made by Jews, in pre-Zionist history, to settle en masse in Palestine. Therefore the establishment of a political state is contrary to the concept of redemption and salvation in Judaism. This chapter also contrasts the way in which the Land of Israel is viewed in Jewish tradition and Zionism. For many traditional Jews the possessive love for the Land of Israel as practiced by Zionists is viewed as a form of idolatry.

In chapter four Rabkin compares the legitimacy of the use of force in Judaism with the ideas and the methods of the Zionist project. Jewish Traditionalists have always viewed Judaism’s pacifism as a strength and not a weakness. Indeed religious texts condemn the proponents of armed struggle. One of the numerous examples Rabkin offers to substantiate this, is that of King David who according to Jewish religious texts was never able to rebuild the Temple because of the blood he had shed in the wars he fought. Zionism rejected the traditional abhorrence of violence instead favoring defiant militarism. As with Russian Bolshevik Revolutionaries, for many Zionists militarism, assassination and terrorism was viewed as a means to an end. Rabkin argues that this Russian influence is very much present in Israel today and is evidenced in leading Israeli figures such as Moshe Dayan, Ezer Weizmann, Yitzak Rabin and Ariel Sharon who are all descendants of Russian Jews with a propensity for the use of force to achieve their aims.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 presented moral dilemmas for practicing Jews. Was it legitimate for them to work with Zionist organisations? Should they recognize the state of Israel? Chapter five analyses the different positions taken around the question of co-operation with the state of Israel. The relationship between Zionists and Christian Zionists is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 6 compares the place of the Shoah (the Holocaust) in Zionist ideology with the lessons several eminent rabbis draw from it. For Zionists, the Holocaust is the ultimate justification for their view that Jews will never be safe until they have a land of their own. For pious Jews, the Holocaust forces them to look inward and attribute it to the sins committed by Jews. This chapter also explores the murky role Zionists played in exacerbating the suffering of the Jews during this period by actively preventing their escape unless they chose to immigrate to Palestine.

Chapter 7 presents various critical views of Israel’s place in Jewish continuity, in the project of messianic redemption and in the emergence of a “new anti-Semitism.” It also reviews visions of the future and solutions offered by anti-Zionists to the current struggle in the Holy Land.

Despite the complexity of the issues and its use of theological arguments and texts, this book does not isolate anyone unfamiliar with Jewish traditions or those with little knowledge of the Israel/Palestine Conflict. It is comprehensive and clear, and the language and style of writing is accessible and easy to understand, the book is well paced, ensuring the reader’s attention is maintained.

The conclusions in this book are unequivocal and leaves one in no doubt about the clear differences between the state of Israel and the tenets of Judaism, supported by extensive evidence from religious texts which justify the anti-Zionist positions. The greatest achievement of this text is to break a major taboo of our times. Often if one criticizes Zionism or the state of Israel they are immediately labeled an anti-Semite. If Israel, as anti-Zionists argue, is not a Jewish state now and never has been than to criticise it is neither anti-Semitic nor anti-Jewish.

Beena Faridi

London
Palestinian Olive Oil

Help Palestinian farmers by buying Palestinian Olive oil. This exceptional quality oil was produced in Palestine. Due to Israeli occupation policies, many farmers are unable to get their products to a market. Buy Zaytoun Olive Oil from Friends of Al-Aqsa and support the Palestinians.

£30 for 6 bottles of 750ml Olive Oil
£10 postage
Discount offered for wholesale purchases.

Not for profit – every penny goes to Palestinians and covers shipping costs.

Please contact FoA at info@aqs.org.uk or call 07711823524