



# FACES OF HOPE

*A Campaign Supporting Nonviolent Resistance  
and Refusal in Israel and Palestine*



AFSC Middle East Resource series

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## Palestinian Nonviolent Resistance to Occupation Since 1967

Palestinian nonviolent resistance to policies of occupation and injustice dates back to the Ottoman (1600s-1917) and British Mandate (1917-1948) periods. While the story of armed Palestinian resistance is known, the equally important history of nonviolent resistance is largely untold. Perhaps the best-known example of nonviolent resistance during the mandate period, when the British exercised colonial control over historic Palestine, is the General Strike of 1936. Called to protest against British colonial policies and the exclusion of local peoples from the governing process, the strike lasted six months, making it the longest general strike in modern history. Maintaining the strike for so many months required great cooperation and planning at the local level. It also involved the setting up of alternative institutions by Palestinians to provide for economic and municipal needs. The strike, and the actions surrounding it, ultimately encountered the dilemma that has subsequently been faced by many Palestinian nonviolent resistance movements: it was brutally suppressed by the British authorities, and many of the leaders of the strike were ultimately killed, imprisoned, or exiled. But this repression did not prevent the experience and inspiration of the General Strike and other acts of civil disobedience from providing models for future generations of Palestinian activists.<sup>1</sup> Here we can find a recurring pattern in the history of Palestinian nonviolent resistance. One generation sees its attempts to establish new forms of resistance violently suppressed, and the next generation must use the historical memory provided by these earlier struggles to begin



Residents of Abu Ghosh, a village west of Jerusalem, taking the oath of allegiance to the Arab Higher Committee, April 1936. Photo: Before Their Diaspora, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984. Available at <http://www.passia.org/>.

again and to invent new strategies of resistance.

### The 1967 War

During the 1967 War, Israel occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, along with the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula. Debates within Israeli society about how to control this newly conquered territory—which some Israelis viewed as permanent gains, part of a desire to control all of historic Palestine and to create a “Greater Israel”—led to a period of occupation in which Palestinians experienced shifting forms of Israeli military and civilian rule. More than 1,400 military orders and regulations,

1967	1968–1970	1973	1974
June (Six Day) War; Israel occupies West Bank, Gaza Strip, Egyptian Sinai, and Syrian Golan Heights, expands Jerusalem boundaries and extends Israeli law over East Jerusalem; U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 calls for withdrawal of Israeli troops from territories newly occupied.	Israel begins to establish Jewish settlements in newly occupied territories.	October (Yom Kippur/ Ramadan) War begins when Egypt seeks to regain by force Egyptian land that Israel captured in 1967; U.N. Security Council Resolution 338 calls for cease-fire and comprehensive peace conference.	Arab League declares PLO the sole legitimate representative of Palestinian people; Arafat addresses United Nations which grants PLO observer status in 1975.

together with British Emergency Regulations left over from the Mandate Period and Ottoman Law, provided the basis for the military rule over Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. Violence and repression were a consistent part of this experience. As the legal scholar Lisa Hajjar has documented, from 1967 to 1987, the Israeli military government arrested and detained more than half a million Palestinians in the Occupied Territories (at a time when the total population of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza was about 1.5 million); over 2,000 Palestinians were deported from the Occupied Territories; more than 1,560 Palestinian houses were demolished; and all forms of educational and cultural freedom were tightly circumscribed: schools were routinely closed, and more than 1,600 books were banned by the Israeli authorities in the Occupied Territories.<sup>2</sup>

This was also the period when an aggressive settlement policy was carried out by successive Israeli governments: from 1967 through 1987, 135 settlements, with a total of 175,000 settlers, were built in the West Bank, together with 12 settlements with a population of more than 2,000 settlers in the Gaza Strip. In addition to the massive military presence required to make these illegal settlements viable, the settlers themselves represented a major paramilitary force in the Occupied Territories. At the time when the first intifada (Arabic for “shaking off”) began in December 1987, settlers possessed 10,000 firearms of all kinds, according to Hajjar.

In the face of this general state of repression, simple acts of daily life—working, going to school, caring for one’s family—became acts of nonviolent resistance. The Arabic word *sumoud* (steadfastness) began to be applied to the daily struggle to survive in the face of the occupation. Meanwhile, the Israeli authorities showed no signs of responding to nonviolent protests in a way that was any different from the British response to the General Strike of 1936. Hundreds of Palestinians, including municipal leaders, university professors, and leaders of women’s organization and trade unions, were deported from the Occupied Territories for engaging in nonviolent activities during the period leading up to the first intifada.<sup>3</sup> Rallies, strikes, the distribution of petitions,

the displaying of the Palestinian flag, and similar acts were systematically repressed.

### Alternative Institutions and New Forms of Resistance, 1967-1987

However, Palestinians continued to find creative outlets for resistance to the violence of the occupation. A major form of resistance was the development of alternative institutions and leadership. Sometimes this took official forms. For example, in the municipal elections held in 1976, Palestinians overwhelmingly elected members of nationalist parties to positions of local leadership, although many of these figures were subsequently jailed or exiled by Israeli forces. In 1981, local political bodies created a new institution, *Lajnat al-Tawjih* (the Committee of Guidance), to provide national leadership to the resistance to the occupation. Once again, Israel arrested many of the members of this group.

Throughout this period, a number of different Palestinian grassroots organizations also emerged to provide alternative institutions and leadership. Increasingly, these alternative institutions came to supplement existing official Palestinian institutions that were struggling to provide education, health care, and other basic needs to Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories. The project of nonviolent resistance increasingly moved from a strategy of protests, non-cooperation, and steadfastness towards a strategy designed to establish viable, long-term alternatives to the occupation regime. The existence of these alternative institutions goes a long way towards explaining the relative success and longevity of the intifada that began in December 1987.<sup>4</sup>

**Women’s Committees:** The women’s movement had been active in Palestinian politics since the beginning of the twentieth century (the first Arab Women’s Congress was held in Jerusalem in 1929), taking an important role in protests against British rule and in the General Strike of 1936. The General Union of Palestinian Women was formed in 1965, but it was in the 1970s that popular Women’s Committees began to take a more active role. These popular committees

1977	1979	1980	1982
Likud wins Israeli elections, Menachem Begin becomes prime minister; Egyptian President Anwar Sadat visits Jerusalem and addresses the Israeli Knesset; negotiations begin between Israel and Egypt.	Begin and Sadat sign Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty in Washington, D.C.	Israel’s Basic Law on Jerusalem is extended to East Jerusalem; U.N. Security Council condemns action.	Israeli invasion of Lebanon; PLO evacuated from Beirut to Tunisia; massacre at Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps near Beirut.

worked with the understanding that strengthening the role of women in the struggle against the occupation would change both the nature of women’s roles and of the anti-occupation struggle itself. Goals and activities of local Women’s Committees varied, but all stressed the need for productive work, education, and vocational training for women, as well as involving houseworking women in wage-earning activities.

**Trade Unions and Voluntary Work Committees:** The role of trade unions began to grow after the 1970s, especially in view of the hardships faced by Palestinian workers. Trade unions struggled to gain the rights to health insurance, better wages, improved work conditions, and the right to arbitration for workers in the Occupied Territories. Attempts were made to extend trade union activity to Palestinians working inside Israel, but these attempts were resisted by the main Israeli trade union, the Histadrut. Meanwhile, Voluntary Work Committees were set up as collective movements throughout the Occupied Territories to provide Palestinian youth with the chance to take part in community projects, such as cleaning streets, building schools, paving roads, and harvesting olives.<sup>5</sup>

**Relief Committees:** Reliance on voluntary work in order to establish alternative Palestinian institutions also included the professional sector in the Occupied Territories. For example, health care professionals set up Medical Relief Committees, which began to operate under the mantle of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees during the late 1970s (the UPMRC continues to be active in the West Bank and Gaza). In spite of Israeli reprisals, the Medical Relief Committees were able to establish a system of health care somewhat independent of the Israeli authorities during the period of the intifada. Meanwhile, Agricultural Relief

Committees began forming in 1983, and concentrated on working with Palestinian farmers to improve the quality of their soil and produce. The absence of a Palestinian national authority during this period, bans that prevented Palestinian farmers from exporting their produce to Israeli markets, and the flooding of the market in the Occupied Territories with Israeli state-subsidized produce made these Agricultural Relief Committees particularly crucial institutions for the continuance of everyday life under occupation.

**Youth and Student Movements and Prisoner Organizations:** The basis of an organized Palestinian student movement can be traced to the 1950s, with the formation of the General Federation of Palestinian Students in Cairo and of student organizing in Gaza. By the mid-1980s, students were at the forefront of political organizing. Students expanded the youth movement to include social and community activities, clubs, sports, and games with explicit political messages. They also began to organize spontaneous protests and demonstrations against the occupation. The frequent jailing of student activists, often for minor “security offenses” during



Over 100 students and faculty members from Birzeit Universeity held a makeshift class at the checkpoint on the Ramallah-Birzeit Road in 2003, after not being able to reach the university due to Israeli closure policies. Photo: Dan Richards, Friends of Birzeit University

1985	1987-1993	1988	1989
Israel withdraws from most of Lebanon, leaving an Israeli-allied Lebanese force in control of the southern areas.	Predominantly nonviolent (demonstrations, strikes) Palestinian <i>intifada</i> occurs in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.	Jordanian disengagement from West Bank; emergence of Hamas; Arafat condemns terrorism, accepts U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and recognizes the State of Israel.	U.S. State Department publishes highly critical report on Israeli human rights practices; massive international peace demonstration in Jerusalem.

## Palestinian Refugees and the Right of Return

In addition to the nonviolent struggles against Israeli policy waged by Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and those living inside the Green Line, the struggles by and on behalf of Palestinian refugees has been a central, if sometimes unappreciated, part of the history of Palestinian resistance to violence and occupation. According to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the number of registered Palestinian refugees has grown from 914,000 in 1950 to more than four million in 2002, and continues to rise due to natural population growth. (The UNRWA only includes those displaced in 1948 and currently living in UNRWA areas of operation and their descendents; the BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights estimates the number of Palestinian refugees worldwide to be closer to 7 million.) The right of return of these refugees was officially recognized by UN General Assembly Resolution 194, adopted in December 1948 (one day after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), and subsequently affirmed in Security Council Resolution 237 in 1967.

Despite these acknowledgements of the right of return in international law, the international community has done little or nothing to apply these UN resolutions. Indeed, there has been increasing pressure upon Palestinian negotiators to bargain away the right of return, so that the very refusal to do so, especially in the face of pressure from Israel and from the U.S., must be seen as a form of Palestinian resistance in itself. In light of increasing attempts to undo the refugees' right of return, some advocates of nonviolence have promoted dramatic actions; as Mubarak Awad suggested to an interviewer in 2003:

“Bush and Sharon are saying, ‘Those refugees have no rights.’ The second [Palestinian refugees] heard it, they should have burned the camps and began walking to Palestine: this is a disaster that the UN created, the U.S. created and the international community created, and we are not willing to continue accepting the guilt of Europe on our backs .... [The response] has to be dramatic.”<sup>17</sup>

Since 1967, but increasingly since the time of the intifada and the Oslo Accords, grassroots campaigns in support of the right of return have emanated from Palestinian and Palestinian refugee communities. The BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, based in Bethlehem in the West Bank, publishes numerous reports and other resources and has organized a number of activities, including missions that brought Palestinian refugees to Bosnia-Herzegovina to meet with recently repatriated refugees and UN officials there in 2002 and 2003. BADIL and other organizations are involved in the Campaign for the Defense of Palestinian Refugee Rights, which aims to pressure not just Israel, the U.S., and the international community, but also the PLO and the Palestinian Authority, on behalf of refugee rights. The Global Palestinian Right of Return Coalition was established in 2001 to enable partners in the Middle East, Europe, and North America to organize joint initiatives and develop united strategies for Palestinian refugee rights. In the U.S., Al-Awda, The Palestinian Right of Return Coalition, has organized chapters in a number of American cities and works closely with Palestinian refugee communities.

demonstrations, fed the youth movement. Young Palestinians who formed a major part of the population of political prisoners (at any one time from 1967 to 1987, Israeli prisons held an average of 4,500 Palestinian political prisoners<sup>6</sup>) also contributed to resistance movements among prisoners. Among the major action by prisoners were hunger strikes,

sit-down strikes, and other nonviolent means of protesting the conditions of their imprisonment, which included the systematic use of torture (as documented by a 1987 report by the Landau Commission, set up by the Israeli government to study Israeli interrogation methods).

### Palestinians Inside the Green Line, 1967-1987

1990	1991	1992	1993
Israeli coalition government collapses over proposed negotiations with Palestinians; influx of Jews from former Soviet Union to Israel begins; Yitzhak Shamir forms a narrow, right-wing government headed by Likud.	International Arab-Israeli peace conference in Madrid includes Palestinians in joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.	Ongoing bilateral and multilateral peace talks; Labor Party wins Israeli elections, Yitzhak Rabin becomes prime minister.	Israel drastically restricts Palestinian movement between Occupied Palestinian Territories (except East Jerusalem) and Israel; Israel and the PLO sign Declaration of Principles (the “Oslo Accords”) on interim self-government arrangements.

From 1948 until 1966 Palestinians living in Israel, although referred to as “citizens,” lived under a military administration that severely limited their civil and human rights. After 1967, Palestinians living inside the Green Line joined and supported the efforts against the occupation carried on in the West Bank and Gaza. This was combined with their preexisting struggle for equal rights and justice within Israeli society. Palestinians pursued various means, including those few openings provided by electoral politics: for example, the Palestinian poet and political leader Tawfiq Zayyad was elected mayor of Nazareth in December 1975.

Meanwhile, the Israeli government continued to pursue a policy of expropriating land owned by Palestinians in Israel. Palestinian resistance to these policies culminated in a major protest on March 30, 1976. Thousands of Palestinian Israelis took part in a nonviolent demonstration against an Israeli government plan to expropriate 60,000 dunams of Palestinian-owned land in the Galilee (a predominately Palestinian area in northern Israel). Although the protest was planned as an act of nonviolent civil disobedience, it was met by violence by the Israeli police. Six Palestinians were killed and 96 others were injured. This inaugurated a major movement within Israel by Palestinians, and the events of that day, which has come to be known as “Land Day,” continue to be commemorated each year with protests against state and state-sanctioned discrimination against Palestinians living in Israel.

Another important struggle of Palestinians inside the Green Line has been for the official recognition of so-called “Arab Unrecognized Villages.” Because these villages are not officially recognized by the state of Israel, they are denied basic services such as running water, electricity, adequate educational and health services, and access roads. Approximately 100,000 Palestinians live in these unrecognized villages. Many of them fall under the Israeli legal category of “Present Absentees” (a category assigned to Palestinians whose property was confiscated under the Absentee Property Law of 1950 but who were found to be present within the borders of the state of Israel in the subsequent population census and thus

nominally registered as Israeli citizens in 1952). Organizations such as the Association of Forty work for the recognition of these Palestinian villages.<sup>7</sup>

### The First Intifada, (1987-1993)

The intifada that began in December 1987 consisted overwhelmingly of civilian acts of civil disobedience that were nonviolent. While actions such as tax strikes, home schooling of children, and boycotts of Israeli cigarettes and soft drinks were perhaps not as eagerly captured by TV cameras as confrontations with Israeli soldiers, they represented the greater part of the resistance to Israeli occupation during this period. Refusal to pay taxes, shortened workdays by shopkeepers in East Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, self-sustaining projects such as household economies and “victory gardens,” economic boycotts, attempts to keep schools and universities open and functioning, work stoppages, slowdowns, and strikes— all these nonviolent tactics were the underpinnings of the attempt to shake off the institutions and repression of the Israeli occupation.<sup>8</sup>

The popular and mass committees that had been formed in the preceding years, together with new committees that formed at the time of the intifada, became vital institutions during these years. Specialized committees spread throughout villages, cities, and refugee camps in the Occupied Territories. Youth groups organized neighborhood watches (particularly around refugee camps and isolated villages). Welfare and relief services were organized for the families of those who were out of work or who had been killed, imprisoned, or deported. Specialized committees were organized, often by women and children, to replace locks on shops that had been broken by Israeli troops. Members of the Medical Relief Committees violated curfews to enter camps and other areas where Palestinian residents were in desperate need of medical care. Local committees provided education during the many months when Palestinian schools and universities were systematically closed down by Israeli authorities. Meanwhile, organizations such as the Palestinian Center for the Study of Non-Violence documented the systematic attempts to develop nonviolent forms of resistance to the

1994	1995	1996	1997
Massacre of Palestinians praying in Hebron mosque by Israeli settler; Cairo Agreement on implementation of the Oslo Accords; Arafat establishes Palestinian Authority headquarters in Gaza; Israel and Jordan sign peace treaty.	Oslo II Accords establish three types of control in the West Bank (Area A: direct Palestinian control, Area B: Palestinian civilian control and Israeli security control, Area C: Israeli control); Rabin assassinated in Tel Aviv by a Jewish Israeli.	First Palestinian elections for president and parliament result in Arafat victory; Palestinian suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv; Israeli “Grapes of Wrath” operation against Lebanon; Binyamin Netanyahu elected Israeli prime minister.	Hebron Protocol divides West Bank city of Hebron into Israeli and Palestinian areas; Israel begins building Har Homa settlement between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

occupation, providing new theories regarding nonviolence as a strategy of resistance.

### Tax Revolts: The Example of Beit Sahour

One of the major nonviolent tactics of the first intifada was the refusal to pay taxes to the military occupation authorities. This was a particularly important strategy, since tax revenues collected from the Occupied Territories helped support the military and other expenditures needed to maintain the Israeli occupation. In effect, the tax system was a way to force Palestinians to pay for their own occupation. By July 1988, tax collections in the Occupied Territories were down by more than 50 percent.

Tax resistance continued to be an important tactic during this entire period. One particularly well-known instance is the tax revolt of Beit Sahour, a West Bank village of about 12,000 people located near Bethlehem. For six weeks during September and October 1989, Beit Sahour residents launched a total tax revolt against the Israeli occupation regime, under the slogan “No Taxation without Representation.” Israeli reprisals were swift and harsh. The village was placed under total siege, food and medical supplies were stopped, telephone lines were cut, and prolonged curfews were imposed. “Tax raids ” by army and tax officials, which had been used systematically against other instances of tax refusal, resulted in the residents being stripped of over \$1.5 million worth of goods. Many residents were beaten and arrested during these raids. By the end of October, media exposure and international outcry finally forced the Israeli authorities to lift the siege on Beit Sahour.

But this was not the case with other forms of reprisal against nonviolent tax revolts elsewhere in the Occupied Territories. Sweeping repressive measures taken by the Israeli authorities included a system whereby permits to travel, operate cars and businesses, and receive identity cards hinged upon proof of payment of taxes. In other instances, Palestinians were forbidden admission into government hospitals or the permission to register the births of their children without first receiving tax clearances. In Gaza, “Operation ID ” was instituted in July 1988, whereby residents were forced to hand

in their ID cards and obtain new ones—conditional upon the payment of taxes. Without these cards, workers could not go to their jobs in Israel. It was clear that the desire was to break attempts at Palestinian self-sufficiency and to impose an even greater dependency upon the institutions of the Occupation. “If the aim of the uprising was to shake off this dependence,” Army Chief of Staff Dan Shomron declared, “our aim is to increase it.”<sup>9</sup>

In highlighting the central role of Palestinian nonviolent resistance during the first intifada, it is important to emphasize the overall violence with which Israeli forces met this nonviolent resistance during this period. According to the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem, from the beginning of the intifada in 1987 until the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993, Israeli military forces and settlers killed more than 1,160 Palestinian civilians.<sup>10</sup>

### The Oslo Era

As the many forms of resistance to the occupation continued, it became clear that in spite of a massive military response, Israel would have great difficulty in achieving a single, decisive military victory over the organized civilian resistance. Meanwhile, there were a number of different Palestinian and Israeli groups that searched for ways to open formal and informal dialogues with each other, despite official Israeli attempts to stifle such dialogues. On the informal level, there had been, since the 1980s, a number of groups that facilitated meetings between Israeli and Palestinian activists, academics, and students; women’s groups were often at the forefront of these efforts.

On the governmental level, the Madrid talks of 1991-1993 marked the first time that an official Israeli delegation sat down with a Palestinian negotiating team, albeit as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. A different set of secret negotiations led to the Palestinian-Israeli Accord of September 1993, known as the Oslo Accords. While there are multiple and contradictory interpretations of the steps that led to the Oslo Accords and of its pros and cons, there is general agreement that it was the grassroots popular actions of the intifada that helped to convince the Israeli government

1998	1999	2000	2001
Wye River Memorandum; PLO renounces anti-Israel clauses in PLO charter.	Ehud Barak elected Israeli prime minister; Sharm al Sheik memorandum.	Clinton-led Camp David II summit and negotiations end in failure; new Palestinian uprising ( <i>al-Aqsa intifada</i> ) begins, sparked by Ariel Sharon’s visit to <i>el-Haram el-Sharif/Temple Mount</i> .	Taba negotiations fail; Palestinian hard-liners continue suicide bombings against Israeli military and civilians; Israeli forces increase “targeted killings” (assassinations) of Palestinians and armed incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas; Sharon elected Israeli prime minister.

that a military solution was not viable and that negotiations were necessary.

Although local committees and grassroots organizations might not have played the same kinds of roles during this period that they did during the first intifada, they continued to function in various forms. Medical and agricultural relief committees, women’s committees, trade unions, and youth groups continued to work on individual local issues. As the Oslo era continued and the temporary accords failed to deliver the permanent changes that were needed, the work of these committees, joined in many cases by non-governmental organizations, became more and more crucial.

### The Second Intifada and Its Aftermath

By 2000, the Palestinian Authority had limited authority (although not military authority) over approximately 42 percent of the West Bank. However, freedom of movement for most Palestinians had been severely curtailed, not expanded, since the days of the first intifada. Israel had stepped up its practice of installing roadblocks and checkpoints manned by Israeli troops around all Palestinian areas, so that while they could move freely within their towns and villages, Palestinians now faced previously unknown forms of searches and violent harassment on a daily basis. Israel also stepped up the practice of building settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Construction, which had remained steady throughout the period of the intifada, increased noticeably in the early 1990s, during which time the settler population rose by 10 percent annually. From the time the Oslo peace process began until the beginning of the second intifada, the settler population nearly doubled. The construction of settlers-only roads to connect these settlements to cities inside the Green Line—roads that cannot be used or even crossed by Palestinians—increased the isolation of Palestinians within their disconnected islands of limited autonomy in the occupied West Bank.<sup>11</sup>

It was within this context that Ariel Sharon, the long-time proponent of an Israeli military takeover of the West Bank and a leader of the conservative Likud party, made a provocative visit to the el-Haram el-Sharif/Temple Mount,

### Palestine and Palestinians

For decades, Palestinian nonviolent resistance has had to face the particular violence of an occupation whose goal has been to call into question the very right of Palestinians to exist. Souad R. Dajani, a Palestinian theorist of nonviolent resistance, has pointed out that throughout the period of Jewish settlement in Palestine, “Zionist legitimacy has necessarily precluded a Palestinian legitimacy.” At different times, this has involved the myth of the founding of Israel on “a land without a people for a people without a land”; Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir’s statement that “There are no Palestinians”; and the attempts to solve the “demographic threat” posed by Palestinians through illegal population transfers and settlements carried out by the Israeli government since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. As Dajani notes, unlike other struggles against occupation, the struggle of Palestinians “is not simply a struggle against foreign domination of their lands, but against a dominant ideology that claims those lands exclusively and by right for Jews and sees no place for Palestinians in the definition of its ‘nation.’”<sup>18</sup>

As a result, one of the struggles that Palestinians have had to carry on since the nakbah (catastrophe) of 1948 has been the struggle to continue to exist as Palestinians, whether this struggle for existence is carried out inside the Green Line (the unofficial borders of the state of Israel established in 1948); or in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza; or in refugee camps; or as part of the Palestinian diaspora throughout the world. This struggle for existence can be found in the works of countless Palestinian poets, visual artists, filmmakers, novelists, and memoirists. It can also be found in the everyday struggles for survival, and for a life with dignity and justice, carried on by Palestinians for many decades.

the third holiest site in Islam, in September 2000, accompanied by 1,000 Israeli police and soldiers. Sharon’s visit triggered huge protests by Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and inside the Green Line. Israeli troops met these demonstrations with violence. In one instance, Israeli forces used regular

2002	2003	2004	2005
Palestinian suicide bombings and Israeli “targeted killings” continue; Israel forcefully reoccupies nearly all Palestinian areas evacuated as part of Oslo process; Israel begins construction of “security fence” (The Wall) within the West Bank, confiscating additional Palestinian lands.	Palestinian suicide bombings and Israeli “targeted killings” continue; Israel completes first stage of the “Separation Wall.”	Hamas founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin killed by Israel as part of “targeted killing” campaign in response to attacks against Israelis within Israel and the OPT; the International Court of Justice finds the Separation Wall “contrary to international law”; Yasser Arafat dies in Paris and is buried in Ramallah.	Mahmoud Abbas is elected President of the Palestinian Authority; Israel increases settlement activity in and around Jerusalem; Israel unilaterally evacuates all Israeli settlements in Gaza and four Israeli settlements in the northern West bank.

*This timeline is adapted from one that appears in When the Rain Returns.*

ammunitions and snipers against a peaceful protest by Palestinian Israeli citizens in the town of Umm al-Fahm, resulting in the deaths of thirteen Palestinian Israeli protestors.

Sharon's visit and the killing of unarmed Palestinian protestors ignited a situation that had long been simmering. The period that has come to be called the second intifada began in September 2000.

<sup>12</sup> As with the first intifada, the reaction to Israeli

occupation occasioned local and spontaneous acts of resistance. Unlike the first, however, Palestinian demonstrations and protests were aimed not only at the Israeli occupation but also at the Palestinian Authority and the Oslo process as a whole. Equally significant was the unprecedented violence with which the second intifada was met, from its very inception, by Israeli forces. According to B'Tselem, between September 28, 2000 and year's end, 325 Palestinians were killed and 10,600 were injured (during the same period, 36 Israelis were killed and 362 injured). By the end of September 2004, the fourth anniversary of the second intifada, 3,342 Palestinians had been killed.<sup>13</sup>

During the second intifada, violent tactics used by a small minority of Palestinian groups, including suicide bombing attacks against Israeli troops and settlers in the Occupied Territories and against Israeli civilians inside the Green Line, have been more prevalent than during the first intifada. Many Palestinian supporters of nonviolent resistance have pointed to the overwhelming violence with which Israeli forces responded to nonviolent actions during the first intifada, and during the early months of the second intifada, as a partial explanation of this "militarization" of the second intifada, even as they continued to espouse nonviolent strategies.<sup>14</sup> Suicide bombings have received nearly all of the media's attention, but most Palestinian resistance to occupation during the second intifada has been overwhelmingly through nonviolent actions and tactics.

Soon after the beginning of the second intifada, Israel refused to allow international monitors to report on the situation in the Occupied Territories. This decision was met by mass nonviolent protests led by Palestinian groups, with the participation of international activists. In mid-April 2001,



**A group of school girls protest in front of the Separation Wall in Abu Dis.**

*Photo: PENGON/Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign*

the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People called for a week of nonviolent direct actions, including marches to Israeli military bases. There were massive protests against the closing by Israeli forces of the Orient House, the PLO's unofficial headquarters in East Jerusalem, in August 2001. Palestinians engaged in numerous other acts of civil disobedience during the first years of

the second intifada. Although Palestinian demonstrations have been generally met by violence by Israeli forces, even reports issued by the Israeli army acknowledge that these demonstrations themselves have been overwhelmingly of a nonviolent nature.

During this period, the sorts of local committees and organizations and alternative institutions that had thrived during the first intifada continued to function, albeit under very different circumstances. Organizations such as the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees and the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees worked on both the local and national level. Organizations specifically dedicated to protecting Palestinian educational institutions, such as the Right to Education Campaign at Bir Zeit University in Ramallah, found ways to offer alternative forms of education during periods of curfew and closure. The Alternative Information Center and other joint Palestinian-Israeli projects tried to present different views of the conflict to the international community. The Palestinian Environmental NGO Network brought together a coalition of over 20 NGOs alongside local committees to deal with environmental issues, especially those related to the effects of environmental degradation connected to the Israeli occupation.

The international aspect of Palestinian nonviolent resistance movements during the second intifada should also be noted. There had always been an attempt to reach out to the international community for support for the struggle against occupation, but often this had happened at the more official level, through the United Nations and other international organizations. During the past decade, many more grassroots efforts that have brought together Palestinians with international activists got underway. This built on the

groundbreaking collaborative work done by groups such as the Resource Center for Nonviolence, working with Palestinian groups, in the 1980s. The best known effort is the International Solidarity Movement, formed in August 2001 as an organization that would allow internationals to witness and report on the effects of the occupation, and to take part in nonviolent direct actions in the Occupied Territories. International efforts in support of Palestinian groups working to end the occupation have also come from the boycott, sanctions, and divestment movements in many countries throughout the world. These efforts have often taken direct inspiration from the international movement against South African apartheid in the 1970s and 1980s.

### **Resisting the Wall**

In June 2002, construction of a “separation wall” that the Israeli government claimed was intended to be built along the green line began near Jenin in the northern West Bank. The Wall had first been approved by Ehud Barak’s Labour government in 2000, and under the current Likud government of Ariel Sharon, building has gone forward at a breakneck pace. If it follows the planned route, the Wall’s total length will be 730 kilometers (approximately 450 miles). Its path will isolate 47% of the West Bank, and it will create a series of isolated Palestinian enclaves connected only by a system of tunnels controlled by the Israeli military. In many places the Wall already separates Palestinian farmers from their lands, isolates Palestinian villages from important natural resources and water sources, and facilitates the expansion of existing Israeli settlements and the building of new settlements in the West Bank.<sup>15</sup>

From its inception, the building of the Wall has been met by organized and widespread nonviolent resistance by Palestinians, who see it as a threat to their very survival. On an organizational level, much of the resistance has been led by the Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, which began as an initiative of the Palestinian Environmental NGO Network in October 2002. In many ways, the Campaign resembles the grassroots institutions that formed during the first intifada: it consists of a network of 54 popular committees in communities throughout the West Bank that

are being, and will be, affected by the Wall.

In addition to the coordinated work of the Campaign, many local examples of nonviolent resistance to the building of the Wall have also begun to emerge. In communities such as Biddu and Budrus, located near the Green Line and thus particularly threatened by the Wall, Palestinians have engaged in sit-ins and protests, and have literally put their bodies in front of the bulldozers and other heavy machinery used to build the Wall. Although these communities have consistently used only nonviolent tactics, in many cases openly declaring that they will not use force in their protests, they have been met with tear gas, rubber bullets, and sometimes live ammunition by Israeli forces.

### **Conclusion**

The Israeli government has used overwhelming military force in an attempt to crush both violent and nonviolent forms of Palestinian resistance. Despite these attempts, nonviolent resistance and alternative institutions have endured and been reborn in different forms. Today, those who continue to espouse a strategy of nonviolence, even in the face of escalating violence, see it as a strategy to involve all sectors of Palestinian society in the resistance to the occupation. As Palestinian media analyst Ali Abunimah has written, “What is needed is a strong, popular campaign of resistance, based on non-violence and civil disobedience, involving the entire population. Such a strategy would be unable to eliminate all violence, but it would offer an alternative to the hopeless, and a powerful moral challenge to the occupier. It may also help transform the passive global support for the Palestinian cause into concrete actions.”<sup>16</sup>

In the face of the continuing occupation, and most recently, the construction of the Wall, the very fact that Palestinians continue with their daily lives is perhaps the most notable act of nonviolent resistance. Although this steadfastness can provide a kind of hope for the present and the future, Palestinians should not have to engage in this struggle for survival alone. The support of the international community, and of individuals and communities throughout the world, is more crucial today than ever.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For more background on the General Strike, and its continuing influence on Palestinian society, see Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2003).
- <sup>2</sup> "Israel's Military Regime," *Middle East Report* (January-February 1988). Hajjar draws on statistics gathered by the legal organization Al-Haq, together with figures from the DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, conducted by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign.
- <sup>3</sup> Dajani, *Eyes Without Country*; see also Meron Benvenisti, et al, *The West Bank Handbook: A Political Lexicon* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986).
- <sup>4</sup> Much of the specific information on these alternative institutions is drawn from Dajani's historical account in *Eyes Without Country*. Mubarak Awad, and the Palestine Center for the Study of Nonviolence, have also documented many of these efforts; see, for example, Awad, "Non-Violent Resistance: A Strategy for the Occupied Territories," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13 (Summer 1984). For more information, see Naseer H. Aruri, "Resistance and Repression: Political Prisoners in Israeli Occupied Territories," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7 (Summer 1978); Judith Gabriel, "The Economic Side of the Intifadah," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18 (Autumn 1988); Amira Hass, *Drinking the Sea at Gaza* (New York: Owl Books, 2000); *When the Rain Returns: Toward Justice and Reconciliation in Palestine and Israel*. Philadelphia, PA: American Friends Service Committee, 2004.
- <sup>5</sup> See Abdul Jawad Saleh, *Israel's Policy of De-Institutionalization* (London: Jerusalem Center for Development Studies, 1987).
- <sup>6</sup> See Hajjar, "Israel's Military Regime."
- <sup>7</sup> The case of one such unrecognized village, Ayn Hawd al-Jadida, has been documented in Rachel Leah Jones's film *500 Dunam on the Moon*. For more information on Ayn Hawd al-Jadida and other unrecognized villages, see the website of the Association of Forty—For the Recognition of the Arab Unrecognized Villages of Israel. See also Susan Slyomovics, *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).
- <sup>8</sup> For more information, in addition to the sources cited above, see the essays collected in Zachary Lockman and Joel Benin, eds., *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1989); Penny Johnson, "Palestinian Universities Under Occupation, 15 August-15 November," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18 (Winter 1989); and Jonathan Kuttub, "The Children's Revolt," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17 (Summer 1988).
- <sup>9</sup> Quoted in Gabriel, "The Economic Side of the Intifadah."
- <sup>10</sup> This is compared to 160 Israeli civilians and military personnel in the same time period. See B'tselem's report on fatalities and injuries during the first intifada at [http://www.btselem.org/english/statistics/First\\_Intifada\\_Tables.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/statistics/First_Intifada_Tables.asp).
- <sup>11</sup> For more specific information on this historical moment, see Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004). For an extraordinary personal account of the West Bank during the period just before the second intifada, see Mourid Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003).
- <sup>12</sup> For more information, in addition to the historical accounts provided by Pappé and Smith, see Rema Hammami and Salim Tamari, "Anatomy of Another Rebellion," *Middle East Report* (Winter 2000); Roane Carey, ed., *The New Intifada* (New York: Verso, 2001); Wendy Pearlman, ed., *Occupied Voices: Stories of Everyday Life from the Second Intifada* (New York: Nation Books, 2003); and *When the Rain Returns: Toward Justice and Reconciliation in Palestine and Israel*. Philadelphia, PA: American Friends Service Committee, 2004.
- <sup>13</sup> See <http://www.btselem.org/english/statistics/Casualties.asp>.
- <sup>14</sup> See "Activist Mubarak Awad on Resisting the Occupation," *Palestine News Network* (25 April 2004), available at <http://www.palestinenet.org/english/archive2004/apr/week4/250404/mubarak25apr.htm>, and Ali Abunimah, "On Violence and the Intifada," *The Electronic Intifada* (22 January 2003), available at <http://electronicintifada.net/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/7/1098>.
- <sup>15</sup> These statistics come from the Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, the group that has been the most active in documenting the Wall: for more information and background on the organization, see [www.stopthewall.org](http://www.stopthewall.org). It also draws on figures from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
- <sup>16</sup> See Ali Abunimah, "On Violence and the Intifada," *The Electronic Intifada* (22 January 2003). Available at: <http://electronicintifada.net/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/7/1098>.
- <sup>17</sup> See "Activist Mubarak Awad on Resisting the Occupation," *Palestine News Network* (25 April 2004). Available at: <http://www.palestinenet.org/english/archive2004/apr/week4/250404/mubarak25apr.htm>.
- <sup>18</sup> See Souad R. Dajani, *Eyes Without Country* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple UP, 1995); see also Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

## SOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

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- International Quaker Working party on Israel and Palestine. *When the Rain Returns: Toward Justice and Reconciliation in Palestine and Israel*. Philadelphia, PA: American Friends Service Committee, 2004.

## WEB RESOURCES

- Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel: [www.adalah.org/eng](http://www.adalah.org/eng)
- Addameer Human Rights and Prisoner's Support Association: [www.addameer.org](http://www.addameer.org)
- Alternative Information Center: [www.alternativenews.org](http://www.alternativenews.org)
- The Association of Forty - For the Recognition of the Arab Unrecognized Villages in Israel: [www.assoc40.org/index\\_main.html](http://www.assoc40.org/index_main.html)
- Aswat: [www.aswat-palestiniangaywomen.org](http://www.aswat-palestiniangaywomen.org)
- Al-Awda: The Palestinian Right to Return Coalition: [www.al-awda.org/](http://www.al-awda.org/)
- BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights: [www.badil.org/](http://www.badil.org/)
- Birzeit University Right to Education Campaign: [right2edu.birzeit.edu/](http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/)
- Defense for Children International: [www.dci-pal.org/english/home.cfm](http://www.dci-pal.org/english/home.cfm)
- Electronic Intifada: [www.electronicintifada.net](http://www.electronicintifada.net)

The Global Palestinian Right of Return Coalition:  
[www.badil.org/Campaign/campaign-coalition.htm](http://www.badil.org/Campaign/campaign-coalition.htm)

Al-Haq – Palestinian Affiliate of the International  
Commission of Jurists: [www.alhaq.org/](http://www.alhaq.org/)

Holy Land Trust: [www.holylandtrust.org/](http://www.holylandtrust.org/)

Ittijah: The Union of Arab Community Based Organizations:  
[ittijah.org/about/about01.html](http://ittijah.org/about/about01.html)

Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights:  
[www.mezan.org/site\\_en/index.php](http://www.mezan.org/site_en/index.php)

Muwatin: The Palestinian Center for the Study of Democracy:  
[www.muwatin.org/](http://www.muwatin.org/)

Nonviolence International:  
[www.nonviolenceinternational.net/](http://www.nonviolenceinternational.net/)

Palestinian Center for the Dissemination of Democracy and  
Community Development:  
[www.panoramacenter.org/index.asp](http://www.panoramacenter.org/index.asp)

Palestine Center for Human Rights: [www.pchrgaza.org/](http://www.pchrgaza.org/)

Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between People:  
[www.rapprochement.org/](http://www.rapprochement.org/)

Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Campaign:  
[www.stopthewall.org](http://www.stopthewall.org)

Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group:  
[www.phrmg.org/](http://www.phrmg.org/)

Palestine News Network: [palestinenet.org/english/](http://palestinenet.org/english/)

Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network:  
[www.pngo.net/](http://www.pngo.net/)

Palestinian Prisoners ' Society:  
[www.ppsmo.org/e-website/index.htm](http://www.ppsmo.org/e-website/index.htm)

Ta 'ayush: [www.taayush.org](http://www.taayush.org)

Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees:  
[www.upmrc.org/](http://www.upmrc.org/)

Union of Palestinian Women 's Committees:  
[www.upwc.org/E\\_Home.htm](http://www.upwc.org/E_Home.htm)

Wi'am: Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center:  
[www.planet.edu/~alaslal/](http://www.planet.edu/~alaslal/)



## American Friends Service Committee

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[www.afsc.org/faces\\_of\\_hope](http://www.afsc.org/faces_of_hope)

### **Faces of Hope: A Campaign Supporting Nonviolent Resistance and Refusal in Israel and Palestine**

Faces of Hope: A Campaign Supporting Nonviolent Resistance and Refusal in Israel and Palestine is an AFSC campaign to support the growing movement of nonviolent resistance present in both Israel and Palestine. These courageous Israelis and Palestinians need wider support and visibility in order to strengthen their efforts to end the Israeli military occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Through this educational and advocacy campaign, AFSC seeks to build a well informed network of people living in the United States who will support the vision and efforts of these nonviolent activists and work to end U.S. support for Israeli occupation.

### **AFSC principles and positions**

The AFSC's position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is based on the Quaker belief that there is that of God in each person and a commitment to nonviolent action for social change. Based on these beliefs and within the framework of international law and the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the AFSC strives for a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians that provides justice and security for all peoples living in the region.