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## THE THREE FACES/PHASES OF PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM, 1948–2005

HELGA BAUMGARTEN

*This article takes a comparative look at the three main manifestations of Palestinian nationalism since 1948: the Movement of Arab Nationalists, embodying its pan-Arab phase; Fatah, its specifically Palestinian form; and Hamas, its religious (Islamic) variant. Tracing the origins of the three movements reveals that each arose as a consequence of its immediate predecessor's perceived failure to achieve Palestinian goals. The differing ideologies and strategies of each group are explored, and the points of similarity and contrast highlighted. The place of armed struggle in each is given particular emphasis. Despite the considerable differences between the three movements, arising at approximately twenty-year intervals, each has followed a similar trajectory, beginning with maximalist goals and progressively scaling them back, explicitly or implicitly, under the impact of Israel's overwhelming power.*

THE PALESTINIAN national movement seems to be passing through its most serious crisis since it came into being following the 1948 catastrophe (*al-nakba*). Whatever hopes for a “new era” of democratic reform some may have nurtured following the election of Mahmud Abbas as president of the Palestinian Authority (PA), and whatever hopes may have been fanned by U.S. president George W. Bush's recently restated “vision” of a “viable” Palestinian state alongside Israel, nothing can mask the bleak reality of the situation on the ground in the occupied territories. In the West Bank, fragmentation is accelerating, transforming it into a chain of disconnected ghettos, while the option of East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital increasingly appears foreclosed. In Gaza, the planned “disengagement”—as envisioned by Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon—promises to make the Strip the world's largest prison, even as segments of the international community seem prepared to accept it as the nucleus of a future Palestinian state.

Meanwhile, what Baruch Kimmerling has described as a policy of “politicide,” aimed at the “dissolution of the Palestinian people's existence as a

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legitimate social, political, and economic entity," continues unabated by Israel.<sup>1</sup> And within Palestinian society, the relatively smooth transfer of power after the death of Yasir Arafat—unquestionably a fundamental turning point in the history of Palestinian nationalism—cannot mask deep divisions over the best strategy for facing up to these challenges.

In short, there can be no downplaying the fact that after fifty years of struggle, the Palestinian national movement has failed to achieve even its scaled down objective of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. Certainly, the failure to achieve Palestinian goals is due first and foremost to the overwhelming balance of power in Israel's favor and Israel's virtually unconditional support from the United States. But it also seems fitting, at this particular juncture, to take a critical look at the history of the Palestinian national movement from 1948 to the present.

What immediately strikes the observer is that in the slightly more than half century since 1948, three separate and distinct Palestinian movements, with differing ideologies, approaches, and even, to an extent, goals, have arisen in succession: the Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN), Fatah, and Hamas. These three movements are in fact different manifestations—perhaps best understood as "faces" or "phases"—of Palestinian nationalism, which also coincide with and reflect overall ideological trends in the Arab world at large. Thus, MAN represents the Arab nationalist face/phase (and reflects the pan-Arabism that dominated Arab politics in the 1950s and early 1960s). Fatah is an expression of a more specific Palestinian nationalism (and, having been founded on the principle of a *separate* Palestinian movement, parallels the triumph of the Arab state system after the 1967 defeat). Finally, Hamas embodies Palestinian nationalism's religious variant (and reflects the wider Islamic current that has gained momentum throughout the Islamic world in the mid-1980s).

The degree of dominance of the three movements and extent of their following have varied: MAN was the leading—indeed the only—predominantly Palestinian movement at a time when Arab nationalism still held sway and when many Palestinians belonged to other pan-Arab groups, such as the Ba'ath party or the Syrian National Party; MAN never, even at its height, enjoyed a mass following. Fatah, by contrast, was a truly mass movement whose hegemony in Palestinian politics remained undisputed until Hamas's emergence in the late 1980s. Hamas has not achieved dominance in the Palestinian arena, and until now remains second to Fatah, but its wide and apparently growing support makes it a serious competitor, especially in the near future.

The apparent failure of each of these movements led to the creation of a new one—i.e., a new manifestation of Palestinian nationalism. Ideologically, Arab nationalism was followed by Palestinian nationalism, which in turn was followed by religious nationalism. Organizationally, MAN was replaced by Fatah, which, though not replaced, is challenged in its leadership of the wider movement by Hamas, which has emerged as its main rival. It should be noted, however, that the three movements continue to coexist, with MAN represented in the form of its successor organizations, the Popular Front for the Liberation of

Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front (formerly the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, or DFLP). Geographically, we can observe a shift from Beirut, the center of secular Arab nationalism, to the Gulf (especially Kuwait) at the margins of the Arab world, and from there via Jordan back to Lebanon, and finally, so to speak, back to Palestine, particularly the Gaza Strip.

This article takes a comparative look at these three movements, focusing on the period of the greatest influence of each: MAN from the 1950s to the mid-1960s, Fatah from 1967 until the late 1980s, and Hamas from the 1990s to the present. It highlights points of comparison and examines the reasons for each movement's relative success and then failure, and ultimately, the overall failure of all of them to this day.<sup>2</sup>

### MOVEMENT OF ARAB NATIONALISTS

The Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN, *barakat al-qaumiyyin al-'arab*) was founded in Beirut in the early 1950s by Palestinian and Arab students and graduates of the American University of Beirut (AUB)<sup>3</sup> who had begun their political activities after the 1948 war in the context of what had been a student cultural organization, *al-urwa al-wuthqa*.<sup>4</sup> George Habash, then a young Palestinian medical student (from Lydda), was the founder of the movement and headed it throughout its effective existence.<sup>5</sup> The profile of MAN's founders and leaders, all of whom soon became full time activists, largely corresponds to Hisham Sharabi's description of AUB students in the 1940s as predominantly middle or upper middle class from across the Arab world, with a high representation of Christians.<sup>6</sup> MAN's membership, however, encompassed all classes, and its popular base was from the refugee camps, especially of Lebanon and Jordan (East and West Bank). It recruited primarily in secondary schools (especially in the camps) and universities; students and teachers formed an important segment. Despite the diverse nationalities of MAN founders and leaders and its pan-Arab ideology, most of the members, even in Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, were Palestinian.

### The Impact of Constantine Zurayk

The foundational event, or "formative catastrophe," behind the creation of MAN was the Palestinian *nakba* of 1948. Most of MAN's founding members had been students of Constantine Zurayk, the influential AUB history professor. Zurayk's slim volume, *The Meaning of the Disaster*,<sup>7</sup> first published in summer 1948, had a profound impact on MAN's ideological development, and clearly laid the foundation for its beliefs.<sup>8</sup> According to Zurayk, the *nakba* resulted from Arab backwardness vis-à-vis the modern industrialized West. It had both a general Arab dimension (i.e., the military defeat of the Arab states by Israel) and a specific Palestinian dimension (i.e., the expulsion and flight of 750,000 Palestinians), but the Arab dimension was the decisive one, with the Palestinian dimension simply the visible expression of the Arab material and

moral collapse. Only through radical self-criticism would the Arabs be able to address the root causes of the catastrophe—militarily through long-term planning and organization; politically, through Arab unity. This entailed overcoming divisions to form a united “progressive” Arab nation-state, meaning modernization, industrialization, separation of state and religion, and culture and science as the major fundament of the state.<sup>9</sup> Israel—which Zurayk saw not merely as the enemy of the Arab nation but also as a model to be emulated—could not be defeated until after a fundamental transformation (*inqilab*) of Arab society, wherein “feudalism (not to mention tribalism), sectarianism, fatalism, and occultism”<sup>10</sup> had been overcome. The vehicle for such transformation would be a highly organized elite with a clear political program and a populist appeal capable of generating mass support.<sup>11</sup>

What we have here is almost a blueprint of MAN’s ideology, program, and organization. Its ideology was Arab nationalism, its identity was Arab. Because the majority of MAN’s founders were Palestinian Arabs, however, the movement’s identity can be said to have a Palestinian core (albeit completely integrated into the overriding Arab identity, the hegemonic identity of Palestinians in the early period). Thus, when George Habash and his closest associate, Wadih Haddad, moved to Amman to practice medicine after graduating from AUB, they understood the movement they had created as “a Palestinian-Arab political organization.”<sup>12</sup> It was the focus on Palestine that distinguished MAN from the much larger and more influential Ba‘th party, which also had a large Palestinian following.

The strategy that MAN proposed for defeating Zionism and the State of Israel was counterforce, or “revenge” (*tha‘r*); *al-Tha‘r*, in fact, was the name of the movement’s first underground journal, founded in 1952. Revenge was “the only solution for the Palestinian question” and “for the return to Palestine.” The battle of revenge would be “the battle of the whole Arab people,” with the refugees as the “vanguard of the Arab nation.” The “only road that can lead to victory [is] the road of unity.”<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, the list of enemies as designated by MAN expanded. In addition to the primary enemy, Israel, other enemies included colonialism in the region (led by Great Britain and the United States), UNRWA, and, up until 1955–1956, *all* the Arab governments without distinction.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, MAN’s immediate target was less Israel than the Arab states (all seen as subservient to the West) because their overthrow was the prerequisite for Zurayk’s *inqilab al-‘arabi*.<sup>15</sup>

### Under Nasser’s Tutelage

In 1955, Egypt’s new leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, concluded the “Czech arms deal,” securing Soviet weaponry and reorienting his country’s foreign policy. This opened a new political phase for MAN, which embraced Nasser as the only leader capable of uniting the Arab nation in the struggle against colonialism and Western attempts to impose peace with Israel.<sup>16</sup> MAN’s enthusiasm for Nasser only increased with the unity fever that gripped the Arab world following the Syro-Egyptian union in 1958 (disbanded in 1961).<sup>17</sup>

MAN's close ties with Egypt also led to an ideological shift that ultimately led to a split in the movement. Nasserist socialism began to exert a powerful influence on MAN members studying in Cairo, who soon introduced it to Lebanon, where the movement was effectively centered. The first result was the establishment in 1959—a year after *al-Tha'r* ceased publication—of a new MAN journal, *al-Hurriya*, in whose pages MAN's ideological development toward its own form of socialism can be traced. Although MAN's socialism evolved from Nasser's, it was in the name of “socialism” that MAN's left wing, led by Muhsin Ibrahim and Nayif Hawatima, launched vitriolic attacks against their former mentor after 1967.<sup>18</sup>

The *Hurriya* group first made its influence felt at the 1962 MAN national conference in Beirut. It was there that the slogans that had dominated MAN until then—“unity,” “liberation,” “revenge”<sup>19</sup>—were replaced by a new set of slogans: “unity,” “freedom,” “socialism,” and “regaining Palestine.”<sup>20</sup> Despite this last slogan, the Palestine question seemed to take second place to the far-reaching ideological developments underway. In general, the movement after its embrace of Nasserism seemed to move farther and farther from its original purpose, the liberation of Palestine, by entrusting the task to the Egyptian leader.

The establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 at Nasser's initiative and under the leadership of Ahmad Shukayri represented a slap in the face of MAN, which had always seen itself as the ideological-political movement that would mobilize the Arab world behind Nasser for liberating Palestine. In Nasser's eyes, MAN was a small, rather marginal movement—which in fact it was in terms of Arab (as opposed to Palestinian) politics. For Nasser, MAN was useful in limited ways, for example, in his rivalry and conflict with Hashemite Jordan.

Meanwhile, MAN faced increasing competition from a new brand of Palestinian organization that had begun to emerge in the early 1960s. By 1965, Fatah, the most prominent of these groups, was launching cross-border guerrilla attacks against Israel that, though militarily innocuous, were denounced in the Nasserist press as CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) operations, because they were seen as playing into Israel's hands. MAN, though far larger than Fatah at the time, was in a bind. On the one hand, its strategy was based on the premise that Palestine could only be liberated by the regular Arab armies fielded when the time was right by Nasser, following the achievement of Arab unity; within this framework, cross-border attacks could only put this strategy at risk by provoking Israeli retaliation prematurely. On the other hand, with Fatah presenting itself and being seen as an activist force that seized the initiative, MAN increasingly seemed a largely irrelevant group subservient to and instrumentalized by Nasser. MAN tried to compete with the new groups, but its slogan on the role of armed struggle at the time clearly reflected its dilemma: *fawq al-sifr; tabt al-tawrit* (above zero but short of entanglement).<sup>21</sup> In other words, take limited action, but not enough to provoke Israel and draw in the Arab states. Thus, while Fatah was launching operations (however limited) for

the liberation of Palestine, MAN activists felt compelled to put Nasser's interests above those of the population they claimed to represent.

### The Failure of MAN

By the mid-1960s, it had become obvious that MAN's program had failed to achieve any of its objectives: Arab unity was farther from political reality than ever; Israel was becoming more entrenched; reactionary Arab governments had not been overthrown, except in Egypt (and arguably in Syria and Iraq with the Ba'athist coups). Still, it was not until Nasser's massive defeat in the 1967 war that the Arab nationalist era was brought to a close, with strong repercussions for MAN and its Arab nationalist ideology.

Already as of the early 1960s, in response to the failed attempts at Arab unity and in an effort to counter the rising competition from the new Palestinian activist groups, a new current had begun developing within MAN to refocus directly on the Palestine problem. This current, in uneasy coexistence with MAN's socialist current, centered on Ibrahim's *al-Hurriya*, organized itself around *Filastin*, a supplement of the pro-Egyptian Beirut daily *al-Muharrir* edited by Ghassan Kanafani. But although the *Filastin* group realized the importance of independent Palestinian action, it could not entirely "liberate" itself from Nasser—hence the half-hearted military forays exemplified in *fawq al-sifr; tabt al-tawrit*. Whatever the misgivings, the Arab nationalist ideology overrode the Palestinian nationalist component.

After the June 1967 defeat, however, the *Filastin* group seemed to prevail: in December 1967, George Habash led his movement back to its original *raison d'être*, the liberation of Palestine, by forming the PFLP as an independent *Palestinian* organization, no longer officially tied to any Arab political or ideological force. The new organization encompassed for a time both ideological currents, but in early 1969, Nayif Hawatima (of Jordanian origin) and his group broke away to form the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP, later the DFLP).<sup>22</sup> Thus the split between MAN's two currents—the diffusely left-leaning Palestinian-Arab nationalists focusing on "recovering Palestine" and the self-proclaimed radical leftists focusing on "socialism"—was consecrated in the establishment of two rival, not to say hostile, organizations. By that time, however, it was clear that Fatah had become *the* Palestinian national movement, and the PFLP and the DFLP—which had adopted, following Fatah, armed struggle as the means of liberating Palestine—were now its increasingly marginal "little brothers." Fatah's domination of Palestinian nationalism, consolidated with its takeover of the PLO in 1968/9, had begun.

MAN's failure to maintain its preeminence within the Palestinian national movement was threefold. First, it shared in the same historical-political failure as the broader Arab nationalist movement of which it was a part. More specific to MAN was that at Nasser's behest, it became more engaged in trying to foment coups in various Arab states (e.g., Jordan in the late 1950s, Yemen in 1960–1962, Syria in 1963) than in actions aimed at liberating Palestine.<sup>23</sup> The bitter

attacks on Nasser by his erstwhile followers largely flowed from the perception that he had led them astray with empty promises instead of preparing for war against Israel.

Second, MAN, in its obsession with ideological rigor, became increasingly doctrinaire, absorbed by ideological infighting rather than mobilization for a clear-cut political program. In fact, MAN was hardly ever involved in actual politics, dealing instead with words and propaganda in keeping with its continuously changing ideology. The same held true with regard to armed struggle. Founded by students, MAN remained dominated by a student outlook throughout its existence, a characteristic that can be said to apply as well to its successor organizations, the PFLP and DFLP.

Third, largely as a result of ideological transformations and infighting, MAN cut itself off from the relatively wide social base, especially the camps, that it had at the outset. It became increasingly sect oriented, with its ever-narrowing social base constituting the "sect." Its financial base shrank accordingly, especially as of the early to mid-1960s, when MAN in its socialist phase expelled the "bourgeois" members who had been financing the movement. Though new financial support did arrive, first from Egypt and then from the Soviet Union, it always remained small and limited MAN's freedom of ideological and political movement.

Throughout its existence, MAN had always been deeply suspicious of politics and even more so of diplomacy. The PFLP, as the movement's primary successor, continued along this path. Thus, it remained aloof from the Palestinian diplomacy that began in the early 1970s and instead focused on grassroots work to mobilize the "masses" for the revolution. As with MAN, Arab governments, and only secondarily Israel, were the target of the PFLP's action. This began to change only with the first intifada, and especially during the al-Aqsa intifada, when the PFLP participated with other organizations in armed operations against the Israeli occupation.

## FATAH

While MAN had come into existence under the direct impact of the 1948 *nakba*, the formative catastrophe, or the central foundational event, for Fatah as a *mass movement* was the 1967 war. And while MAN's ideology could be encapsulated in the slogan "Arab unity is the way to liberate Palestine," Fatah's was embodied in the reverse: "the liberation of Palestine is the way to Arab unity." Another contrast, which in part explains the ultimate failure of MAN and the success of Fatah, is that the former in its move to the left progressively narrowed its social base, while Fatah moved in the opposite direction, successively mobilizing all of Palestinian society for its political goals, ideology, and form of struggle.

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### Identity and the Diaspora Experience

The Movement for the Liberation of Palestine (*barakat al-tabrir al-filastini*, the reverse acronym of which is Fatah)<sup>24</sup> became the dominant force in Palestinian politics only after the 1967 war administered the coup de grâce to Arab nationalism. Its actual establishment, however, was almost a decade earlier, in 1958 or 1959. The founders and early members of Fatah were of lower-middle-class backgrounds, many from Palestine's coastal region and who as teenagers became refugees in the Egyptian-ruled Gaza Strip. Most of them later studied at Cairo universities and were active in student politics—Yasir Arafat was the head of the Palestinian student movement there from 1952 to 1956.<sup>25</sup> A number of Fatah's founders had roots in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, but the movement's "implicit religiosity"<sup>26</sup> probably owed more to the Islamic cultural environment of Egypt, where they came of age; MAN's greater secularism, by the same token, was doubtless a factor of the secular environment of Beirut.

After graduation, the young activists found work in the Gulf (especially in Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia) as engineers, teachers, and civil servants, mostly in the public sector. Increasingly, they felt the need for a new kind of Palestinian movement: Israel was thriving, the situation of the Palestinian refugees was deteriorating, the Arab national struggle against Israel was being waged with words rather than deeds, and the only "Palestinian" organization, MAN, was seen as doing Nasser's bidding. When Israel in the late 1950s began to construct a National Water Carrier to pump water from Lake Tiberias to the coastal region and the Negev, making feasible the settlement of ever more immigrants, the activists were spurred to found their movement. Against outworn Arab nationalism, with its stress on liberation through united Arab action, the new movement proposed a *Palestinian* nationalist ideology in which Palestine would be liberated by *Palestinian* action, with Palestinian refugees taking matters into their own hands.

It is difficult to overestimate the extent to which the diaspora experience shaped the formation and ultimate success of Fatah. Though the early members had earned a certain privileged status through their jobs in the Gulf,<sup>27</sup> the organization they founded was very much a response to the despised status of the refugees and to a lesser degree of migrant labor. The importance of the refugee condition is quite clear in the movement's statement of purpose, as published in its new underground journal, *Filastinuna*, in November 1959:

The youth of the catastrophe (*shibab al-nakba*) are dispersed. . . . Life in the tent has become as miserable as death. . . . [T]o die for our beloved Fatherland is better and more honorable than life, which forces us to eat our daily bread under humiliations or to receive it as charity at the cost of our honor. . . . We, the sons of the catastrophe, are no longer willing to live this dirty, despicable life, this life which has destroyed our cultural, moral and political existence and destroyed our human dignity.<sup>28</sup>

Fatah's response to this situation, as expressed in 1960 (again in *Filastinuna*), was to mobilize Palestinians for the

liberation of our beloved Fatherland. . . . The sons of Palestine are called to carry the flag of freedom for their Fatherland. They are called to arms, in order to declare revolution with the goal to do away once and for all with the illegal Jewish robbery of our Fatherland. . . . The avant-garde in Algeria provides the best model for us.<sup>29</sup>

The humiliations and insults to which refugees were subjected in the Arab world were a powerful force in forming a separate identity and the determination to act independently of the Arab states. Fatah's emphasis on a specific Palestinian (rather than Arab) identity struck a chord with the refugees and contributed greatly to its success. In the words of a young man from the West Bank who joined Fatah in the mid-1960s, the Palestinian people "had been forced to forget its own name," but Fatah "reawakened Palestinian national identity and brought it back to life."<sup>30</sup> The vehicle through which this national identity was to be realized was armed struggle. At the same time, Palestinian identity was essential for liberating the homeland: identity and liberation were inextricably intertwined. The word *kiyan*, the central slogan in Fatah's ideology, especially until 1963/64 (i.e., before the establishment of the PLO), conveys the idea of identity via independent existence, which can mean anything from identity in an existential sense to an institutional or political existence—i.e., statehood.<sup>31</sup>

### **Armed Struggle and the Legacy of Karameh**

From the outset, armed struggle was the most crucial element of Fatah's ideology and its central mobilizing myth.<sup>32</sup> Fatah's concept of armed struggle harked back partly to historical precedent, notably the Palestinian rebellion of 1936–1939 and to the military role of Palestinian fighters under the leadership of 'Abd al-Qader al-Husayni during the 1948 war. The contemporary historico-political context, however, was the model and inspiration provided by the recent and ongoing wars of national liberation. Fatah emerged and developed at a time when third worldism and the romance of guerrilla action and "people's wars" were at their height internationally. As *Filastinuna* editorialized in 1960,

Revolutions all over the world are inspiring us. The revolution in Algeria lights our way like a bright torch of hope. When the Algerians took up their revolution in 1954, they were only some hundred Arabs facing 20,000 French troops and well-armed settlers. . . . The revolution in Algeria proved to us that a people can organize itself and build its military strength in the very process of fighting.<sup>33</sup>

Following the examples of the Algerians, Cubans, Vietnamese, and earlier the Chinese, Fatah aimed to turn the Palestinian refugees of 1948 into a people

revolting against their fate, taking up a struggle of national liberation, and, in the process, transforming themselves from despised refugees into proud revolutionaries fighting for the liberation of their homeland.<sup>34</sup> Revolution for Fatah became synonymous with national liberation, itself interchangeable with armed struggle.

As noted earlier, it was “armed struggle”—which after 1967 seemed the only viable alternative to the defeated conventional Arab armies—that transformed Fatah from a small clandestine organization into the dominant force in Palestinian politics. Almost immediately after the war ended, when Arab nationalists everywhere were reeling and MAN was moving to regroup as a purely Palestinian movement, Fatah, by then led by Arafat, began to organize armed struggle against Israel’s new occupation of the West Bank.<sup>35</sup>

The real turning point for Fatah was the battle of Karameh in the Jordan Valley in February 1968, when the Israeli army moved a large force against the village and refugee camp of that name that was also the main headquarters of the embryonic Palestinian guerrilla movement. At that point, Arafat—who was first and foremost a politician—took the bold decision that propelled Fatah to the center stage of Palestinian politics: instead of withdrawing his fighters, as dictated by the logic of guerrilla warfare, he faced down the overwhelmingly superior force, risking Fatah’s entire fighting force.

The military roulette turned into a political success of historic dimensions. Fatah was hailed as the first Arab force to put up a fight against the Israeli enemy and force it to withdraw with material and human losses. The fact that it was the regular Jordanian army that had actually turned the tide did not diminish Fatah’s aura: the photographs that galvanized the Arab street were of young Fatah *fiḍa’iyun* hurling themselves with grenades against approaching Israeli tanks.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, the role of the Jordanian army encapsulated the deep contradiction within Fatah between its military strategy and its relations with the Arab states.

At the center of Fatah’s ideology was a jealously guarded independence of Palestinian initiative and action, yet it was well aware that it could not liberate Palestine without the decisive support of the Arab states. First, its guerrilla actions against Israel could only be pursued from the Arab countries—“host” states—bordering Israel. Moreover, Fatah demanded that a Palestinian national revolutionary government be established in areas of Palestine that had remained Arab<sup>37</sup>—in other words, in the West Bank and in Gaza, then under Jordanian and Egyptian rule, respectively. According to Fatah,

this presence is the first step towards revolutionary work. Whoever fights against this presence puts himself on the side of the Jews and colonialism. . . . The Palestinian people cannot start a revolution against the Jews as long as they do not have their own independent existence (*kiyan*), as long as [Arab] rulers fight against their *kiyan* and oppress their revolution.

This has been all the history since the *nakba*. We warn all those who fight against us: you are nothing but a horsewhip in the hands of the Jews.<sup>38</sup>

Fatah demanded that all the Arab states support it in its struggle against Israel, even while publicly criticizing these same states and openly appealing to their populations to support the Palestinian revolution against them.<sup>39</sup> Though not explicitly stated, it was clear that Fatah's strategy of launching guerrilla operations from the host countries was aimed at provoking Israeli retaliation, which in turn would draw the host country's army into the fighting. As Fatah leader Khalid al-Hasan put it, "We will make actions, the Israelis will make reactions. Now the Arab governments either will support us against the Israelis, or will fight us. If they fight us, the people will support us. When the people will support us the governments either will support us or they will confront us with their own people."<sup>40</sup> Yet at the same time, one of Fatah's declared principles was "non-interference" in the internal affairs of the Arab host states. The patent irreconcilability of this principle and Fatah's actions was demonstrated in Jordan (1968–1971) and in Lebanon (from the 1960s–1982).<sup>41</sup> The contradiction was not resolved until the 1993 Oslo agreement, which effectively took the PLO out of the Arab environment.

Paradoxically, Karamah's success produced a double-edged legacy. It catapulted Fatah to center stage and made it the dominant Palestinian guerrilla force. It made possible its 1968 takeover of the PLO, until then an instrument of Egyptian control over the Palestinians. But at the same time, Karamah imposed on the young movement, and even on the entire Palestinian national movement, armed struggle as the only viable strategy against occupation. In the first months after the 1967 war, Fatah, particularly Arafat, had attempted to start a movement of armed struggle in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The abominable failure of that experiment should have forced the young nationalists to do some hard thinking about how best to defeat an occupation in the prevailing conditions, but Karamah preempted such reflection. Instead of concentrating on developing a viable strategy, Fatah got caught in a trap of its own making—the trap of armed struggle as the only way to achieve liberation. Because armed resistance had given it legitimacy and won it the leadership of the PLO, Fatah appeared to think that these could be maintained only through continued adherence to the strategy of armed struggle. Yet for Fatah, almost from the outset, it was far more a mobilizing ideology than a real program to be pursued and implemented.<sup>42</sup>

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### **Rhetoric vs. Practice**

By the early 1970s—certainly by the 1973 war—it had become clear to Fatah's leadership under Arafat that politics and diplomacy constituted a

potentially more successful strategy than armed struggle and that there was no way that any territory in pre-1967 Israel was going to be liberated. The leadership did not hesitate to shift its emphasis to politico-diplomatic action and in effect began to scale back the original goal of a state in all Palestine to a state *alongside* Israel in the territories occupied in 1967—in a sense going back to its earlier demands that Egypt and Jordan return former Palestinian territories to the Palestinians.

At the rhetorical level, however, Fatah for many years held fast to the doctrine of armed struggle as the *only* way to liberate Palestine (*all* Palestine). The ideological transformation toward politics as a principal means and toward statehood in only part of historic Palestine as a goal was slow. Reality only gradually overtook the last remaining ideological fixations. Successive meetings of the Palestine National Council (PNC), the Palestinian parliament in exile, made cautious moves toward the two-state solution in 1974. This process would culminate in the November 1988 proclamation of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital, by the PNC meeting in Algiers.<sup>43</sup>

The split between Fatah's rhetoric and its actual strategy was not without consequences. In contrast to its revolutionary "models" of Algeria and Vietnam, which had never hesitated to combine armed struggle with politics and diplomacy in their wars of liberation and had never presented one route as morally superior to the other, Fatah until 1988 continued—at least rhetorically—to privilege armed struggle and to depreciate politics and diplomacy as the suspect domain of corrupt Arab regimes. Diplomacy was pursued, but in secret, thereby depriving it of legitimacy and preserving the almost sacred nature of armed struggle. By the same token, the population was not being actively mobilized behind the important changes in strategy and goals that had begun to take shape as of the early to mid-1970s; no support strategy was ever developed for the politico-diplomatic struggle. This failure is closely related to the neopatrimonial leadership and rentier politics that characterized Fatah from its very early years, although their extremely negative consequences only became fully apparent with the establishment of the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority following Oslo.<sup>44</sup>

Ironically, it was the unarmed struggle of the intifada, which broke out in late 1987, that liberated Arafat from the sacred cow of armed struggle and enabled him to embrace unambiguously and openly the new paradigm of politics and diplomacy at the Algiers PNC meeting a year later. By that time, and despite the absence of active efforts to mobilize the population behind its goals, a good part of the population of the occupied territories supported Fatah's new approach.

Yet the renunciation of armed struggle, coupled with the abandonment of the old goal of liberating all of historical Palestine, was not welcomed by all. It is not a coincidence that at the very time the PLO's political acceptance of a two-state solution was reaching its climax, a new movement arose in the Palestinian national arena that was to challenge Fatah for the first time in twenty years on

the very issue that had been Fatah's founding doctrine: armed struggle and the maximal demand of the liberation of all Palestine.

### **HAMAS: THE MOVEMENT OF ISLAMIC RESISTANCE**

Unlike MAN and Fatah, which in their heyday had enjoyed undisputed pre-eminence within Palestinian politics, Hamas so far has not achieved this status. But it has ended Fatah's hegemony and presents itself as a serious rival within the Palestinian national movement, despite Fatah's virtual control, beginning in 1994, of the governing body in the occupied territories (the PA).<sup>45</sup>

Hamas is the acronym of *barakat al-muqawama al-islamiyya*, the Movement of Islamic Resistance, and the name encapsulates its very essence. In place of the Arab nationalism proposed by MAN as the way toward liberation, and the Palestinian nationalism proposed by Fatah, Hamas proposed, in its first communiqué on 14 December 1987, "Islam as the solution and the alternative."<sup>46</sup> Resistance is Hamas's other key component. "Liberation" had been the watchword of both MAN and Fatah, both shaped entirely by the 1948 expulsion and the diaspora refugee condition. Hamas, by contrast, was founded and developed *inside* Palestine and was therefore shaped by the occupation, simultaneously the context and the driving force behind its emergence. Thus, while Hamas's "formative catastrophe," as for all Palestinian movements, was ultimately the 1948 *nakba*, its direct "foundational event" was the occupation and more specifically the intifada in 1987 as the culmination of the growing popular resistance against the occupation. As a result, whatever its formal ideology proclaimed, Hamas from the outset has been programmatically dominated by the concept of resistance instead of, like its predecessors, by the concept of liberation.

### **Hamas's Roots: The Muslim Brotherhood**

Hamas was born with the first intifada, which broke out in December 1987, but its ideological and organizational roots go back to the Muslim Brotherhood—in fact, the organization was directly created from the Brotherhood's Gaza branch. Founded in Egypt in 1928 and established in Gaza in the late 1940s, the Muslim Brotherhood was traditionally non-activist, working instead to change society mainly through education and social and cultural activities. Beginning in the early 1980s, however, it became increasingly politicized through the experience of the occupation. Pressure to move toward activism increased after 1983, when a number of its members broke away to form Islamic Jihad, whose operations against Israel won it wide support and posed a direct challenge to the Brotherhood, particularly because of its appeal to younger members. (Hamas considers the period 1983–1987 the preparatory phase<sup>47</sup> for the decisive transformation of the Muslim Brotherhood from a movement of indirect resistance into a movement of direct military and political resistance.<sup>48</sup>) When the intifada broke out, the Brotherhood established Hamas as its "political wing," through which its members could participate in

the struggle. Hamas's formal establishment, however, apparently did not occur until some months later, when it published a charter outlining its own political program.

Hamas's leaders and founders were mostly 1948 refugees from the coastal region of Palestine or their descendants, though a few were from the original Gaza population.<sup>49</sup> Unlike the founders and leaders of both MAN and (for the most part) Fatah, who were townsmen, they almost invariably came from villages. Important here is the fact that whereas the towns and in some cases even the homes of the leaders of the older movements remained standing as a point of reference and address for return, the home villages of Hamas leaders had been razed to the ground, thereby reinforcing their focus on ending the occupation of 1967. Most of the founders, of lower-middle-class origins, had university or college training, mainly in the sciences, engineering, and medicine—in other words, men moving up the social ladder on the basis of education and professional status.<sup>50</sup> Mobilization for Hamas membership was carried out mainly in the sprawling refugee camps and universities (especially the Islamic University) of Gaza, the same constituency comprising Fatah's base (though not its leadership), resulting in competition for the same support group. MAN's successor organizations also recruited primarily in universities, but they generally targeted different social strata.

Hamas's charter is firmly rooted in the anti-colonialist, anti-Zionist, anti-American, and anti-Soviet tradition of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, itself founded in response to the Western colonialist enterprise. But Hamas abandoned the sophisticated politico-philosophical argumentation of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hasan al-Banna and the later Islamic thinker Sayyid Qutb. Rather, it took the main tenets of the Brotherhood's thinking, projected them in a populist style, and applied them directly to the political problem at hand: the Israeli occupation. For example, the nuanced thinking of the Brotherhood, especially of Banna, on social and economic development in the 1940s and 1950s, was reduced by Hamas to "social solidarity" as the precondition for confronting the occupation. Similarly, while for the Brotherhood educational reforms were the foundation of a relatively progressive and comprehensive program of social and economic transformation,<sup>51</sup> Hamas concerned itself with the more immediate establishment of an infrastructure intended to help Palestinian society confront the occupation. In short, for Hamas, the fine points of philosophy and theology hold little importance in and of themselves; rather, their basic premises are used primarily as pragmatic tools buttressing a particular political line of action or as mobilizers in the service of its political—and essentially nationalistic—goals.

### **Hamas and Its Nationalist Competitors**

Hamas's emergence, aside from being a response to the outbreak of the intifada, was also a response to the peace efforts already underway. Thus, in its December 1987 communiqué, Hamas hails the intifada both as a "resounding rejection of the occupation and its pressures" and as a wake-up call to those

who “are grasping after a sick peace, after empty international conferences, after treasonous partial settlements like Camp David.”<sup>52</sup> At least indirectly, then, Hamas’s creation was a response to Fatah.

Nonetheless, despite the contrast in their ultimate visions for Palestine—Hamas’s Islamic state,<sup>53</sup> MAN’s pan-Arab state, and Fatah’s Palestinian nation-state—the extent to which Hamas’s founding positions echo those of its rivals in their early years is striking. Like MAN in the 1950s and Fatah in the 1960s, Hamas, according to its charter, “does not believe that conferences are capable of meeting demands, restoring rights, or giving justice to the oppressed.”<sup>54</sup> And like MAN throughout its existence and Fatah early on, Hamas insists on total liberation, its stated goal being “to raise the banner of God over every inch of Palestine.”<sup>55</sup> Islam, certainly, informs Hamas’s positions: Peace conferences and partial settlements, for example, are rejected because “no one has the right to relinquish or cede any part of” Islamic land; the ideological insistence on total liberation is based on Palestine being “an Islamic land entrusted to the Muslim generations until Judgment Day.”<sup>56</sup> The conclusions drawn, however, are the same: like the other movements, Hamas calls on its followers to “free Palestine,” to fight “until the enemy is defeated,”<sup>57</sup> and proclaims, “There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except through struggle (*jihad*).”<sup>58</sup> That Hamas’s concept of what the “struggle” or *jihad* entails differs from that of its predecessors does not change the fundamental parallels.

Whatever the Islamic underpinnings, all these positions denote Hamas’s essential nationalism, which according to the charter is “part and parcel of [Hamas’s] religious ideology.”<sup>59</sup> The charter specifically addresses “nationalist groups operating in the arena for the sake of liberating Palestine,” promising to help and support all that do not support either the “Communist East” or “Crusading West.”<sup>60</sup> Yet its Islamic base differentiates it from the nationalist groups. With regard to the PLO, Hamas affirms that it “cannot exchange the Islamic nature of Palestine to adopt the secular ideology,” but promises that “[t]he day that the PLO embraces Islam as a way of life, we shall be its soldiers.”<sup>61</sup> In the meantime, its position toward the PLO will be that of “a son toward his father, a brother towards his brother, and a relative towards his relatives.”<sup>62</sup> On the ground, however, Hamas’s relations with Fatah and the PLO have been dictated far less by religious and ideological factors than by pragmatism and, especially, by the very concrete factors of rivalry and power struggle, on numerous occasions degenerating into armed clashes (initiated mainly by Hamas pre-Oslo and since by Fatah and the PLO). But whatever the state of their interactions, Hamas has at no time denied the importance of the PLO or the pioneering role of Fatah. In June 2003, for example, Khalid Mishal, the head of Hamas’s politbureau, said in a clear reference to Fatah, “Palestine has been put on the map with the beginning of the Palestinian resistance. It will disappear from the map the moment we stop our resistance.”<sup>63</sup>

Hamas also differs from its competitors in its relations with the Arab world. Like them, it asks the neighboring Arab states “to open their borders to ease the



movement of the mujahidin to and from it,"<sup>64</sup> but unlike them, it has consistently refrained from criticizing the Arab states and has never wavered from

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***Unlike MAN and Fatah, Hamas has consistently refrained from criticizing the Arab states and has never wavered from its clear focus on Israel as "the enemy."***

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its clear focus on Israel and Western colonialism as "the enemy." Similarly, Hamas has always insisted that the "field of confrontation with the enemy is Palestine"<sup>65</sup> and has never involved itself in any military action outside the borders of historical Palestine, that is, beyond Israel and the occupied territories.

Beyond the differences in approach to resistance and struggle, perhaps the sharpest distinction between Hamas and the other organizations is its emphasis on

social solidarity and the resources it has devoted to expanding the impressive network of charitable organizations, health, and social services established by the Muslim Brothers in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>66</sup> Hamas's social services have contributed not only to its wide popular support but also to its close ties with its political base. The latter is reinforced by its reliance for much of its funding on *zakat*, the Muslim tax, which it receives in the form of donations from all over the Muslim world but especially from inside Palestine. Hamas's dependence on donations from its constituency is the polar opposite of the patronage and rentier politics (and the accompanying corruption) characteristic of Fatah and the PA; it also distinguishes Hamas from the myriad NGOs that have proliferated in the occupied territories, many of them dominated by activists from the PFLP and the Democratic Front. One might suggest that this financial support constitutes a kind of democratic "control" or accountability, a way of making sure that Hamas remains closely connected to the people and avoids the gap between leadership and mass base that characterizes most of the other movements. It also allows it to avoid the one-leader phenomenon typical of Arafat's Fatah.

### **Jihad and Resistance**

In contrast to its competitors, Hamas sees the struggle for liberation—*jihad*—not only as a national but also as a religious duty: "When an enemy usurps a Muslim land, then jihad is an individual religious duty on every Muslim."<sup>67</sup> Importantly, however, Hamas's definition of jihad has always been broad and flexible. According to its charter, "Jihad means not only carrying arms and confronting the enemy. The positive word, excellent article, beneficial book, aid, and support . . . also constitute jihad for the sake of God."<sup>68</sup> The result is that Hamas from the outset, in striking contrast to MAN throughout its existence and Fatah in its early years, has stressed that struggle encompasses both military and political dimensions: "Political activity, in our view, is one means of holy struggle against the Zionist enemy."<sup>69</sup> Even Hamas's statement that jihad is a "comprehensive struggle in which armed struggle is a basic instrument,"<sup>70</sup> which seems to give priority to military means, indicates through its use of the indefinite article that more than one means exists.

Indeed, Hamas in the early years emphasized peaceful means of combating the occupation (demonstrations, strikes, and so on) at least as much as violent means; in this, it parallels MAN (but not Fatah). Before its military wing, the Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades, was formed in 1992 as a “classical” guerrilla unit, Hamas’s use of violence was extremely limited and until 1994 almost exclusively targeted the Israeli military. The first suicide operation, in spring 1994, was in retaliation for Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein’s February massacre of twenty-seven Muslim worshippers during the holy month of Ramadan in the Haram al-Ibrahimi mosque, one of Islam’s holiest sites. Since then, Hamas suicide bombings have been largely limited to two periods: 1994–1997 and 2001–2003. The first “moratorium” on suicide bombings was called by Hamas leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin after his release from Israeli prison in fall 1997. By the time the suicide attacks resumed in March 2001, five months after the outbreak of the second intifada and after the deaths of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, such bombings were widely supported by the Palestinian population at large as the only effective weapon against Israel’s totally unrestrained violence.

All along, Hamas has insisted that its use of violence is a “last means” in a political struggle and has always subordinated it to political calculations. Commenting on a Hamas unilateral cease-fire decision in 1995, spokesman Mahmud Zahar noted that his organization always calculates “the benefit and cost of continued armed operations. If we can fulfill our goals without violence, we will do so. Violence is a means, not a goal. Hamas’s decision to adopt self-restraint does not contradict our aims.”<sup>71</sup> Repeated unilateral “cooling off periods” and “cease-fires” demonstrate this very pragmatic approach.

As mentioned above, Hamas’s insistence on the occupation as the sole target of its armed struggle has always been clear and unambiguous. However, there has been ambiguity concerning *which* occupation Hamas is referring to—the Israeli occupation of 1967 or Israel’s establishment in 1948 on Palestinian land. But here, too, Hamas has shown a remarkable degree of pragmatism that has enabled it to come to terms with the possibility of a political recognition of its enemy in a far shorter time frame than its rival movements. Even without officially recognizing Israel, there have long been hints of Hamas’s willingness to work within a 1967 framework, one example being Shaykh Yasin’s mention in autumn 1997 of full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the removal of settlements as conditions for a truce with Israel. This evolution has become increasingly explicit: Hasan Yusuf, leader of the West Bank branch of Hamas, referred in December 2004 to “a long-term truce with Israel on the basis of the establishment of a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.”<sup>72</sup>

### **Hamas at a Crossroads?**

With the waning of the al-Aqsa intifada and the intensification of intra-Palestinian dialogue, Hamas faces new challenges, primarily adapting to a

political situation where resistance is no longer the dominant mode and integration into a political system from which it has traditionally held itself apart. The question arises as to whether Hamas is already approaching its point of crisis—less than twenty years after its founding—or whether it is simply taking one of the ideological, political, or programmatic turns taken as well by the other nationalist organizations in the course of their thus far unsuccessful struggle to achieve Palestinian goals.

Much of Hamas's popular appeal derives from the perception that it has taken over the role that Fatah was seen to have abandoned: unrelenting armed struggle against Israel and insistence on the full realization of Palestinian rights. This being the case, the very clear shift in Palestinian opinion during the latter half of 2004 away from support for suicide bombings and the new mood favoring political solutions and giving nonviolent resistance a chance had a significant impact on Hamas's support. The public was further disappointed by Hamas's refusal to participate in the presidential elections in January 2005, raising questions about Hamas's willingness to really be part of a national political process.<sup>73</sup>

With its characteristic pragmatism and adaptability, Hamas was quick to react to its loss of public support by signaling political change beginning as far back as spring 2003. This change being signaled was in two directions: its readiness to enter the Palestinian political arena as a *political* force and direct competitor of Fatah and its readiness for a political-diplomatic solution of the Palestinian struggle along the lines of a two-state solution implying de facto recognition of Israel (albeit in the guise of a long-term armistice or truce). What had been hinted at for almost two years became public and unambiguous in winter 2004–2005: Hamas threw itself wholeheartedly into the rounds of municipal elections held since December 2004 and then announced its intention to run in the legislative council elections scheduled for mid-July 2005, setting the stage for a head-on struggle for power. As of June 2005, Hamas was presenting itself as the champion of the long overdue parliamentary elections, which President Abbas postponed without setting a new date (significantly, immediately upon his return from meeting with President George W. Bush in Washington).

What remains to be seen is whether Hamas will be able to convince the Palestinian public that its transformation into a political force within the nationalist movement represents a *strategic* change. It also remains to be seen whether Hamas can carry its huge popular support along this new path. A split within Hamas—along the lines of the splits within MAN and its successor organizations in the 1960s and within Fatah in the 1970s and 1980s—is not to be excluded, especially given the statements made by some of the “outside” leadership based abroad and by the mood on the street among Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip and the refugee camps. Other problematic issues for Hamas include the party's perceived exclusion, arising from its Islamic identity, of Christians and secular Palestinians. It seems that Hamas is aware of the problem, and there are reports that its activists approached Christian personalities in several towns asking them to stand for elections with the full and open

backing of the organization. Hamas's lack of international legitimacy and the pressures likely to be exerted by the United States and Israel to prevent its full participation in the political arena constitute additional barriers in its plans to challenge Fatah's leadership of the Palestinian movement. On the other hand, Hamas's reputation for integrity and connectedness to the people, especially in contrast to the ruling party's reputation for rampant corruption and cronyism, will stand it in good stead. The impressive success Hamas achieved in the municipal elections points in this direction.

## CONCLUSION

Looking back over the three successive "manifestations" of the Palestinian national movement, one is struck by the fact that they emerged at approximately twenty-year intervals, Fatah gaining mass strength in 1968, almost twenty years after MAN's beginnings, and Hamas emerging about twenty years after Fatah had become the dominant force in Palestinian politics. Each movement, as shown here, was created following its conclusion that its rivals and predecessors had failed to achieve Palestinian goals and that a new approach would lead to success.

In a sense, all three movements—even at twenty-year intervals—had the same starting point: the liberation of all of historical Palestine, principally if not totally by armed struggle. And all three (with MAN in the guise of its successor organizations), up against the stark reality of Israel's overwhelming power, were led—by stages and with varying degrees of explicitness—to scale back their objective from a Palestinian state in all of historical Palestine to a Palestinian state alongside Israel in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. In other words, all three moved (in fact if not in ideology) from the goal of ending "the occupation of 1948" (with the creation of the State of Israel on 78 percent of historical Palestine) to ending the occupation of 1967. Fatah (or the Fatah leadership) began to move in that direction in the early 1970s, openly adopting the two-state solution as policy in 1988. Neither the PFLP nor Hamas has enshrined the scaled-down goal in their official programs, but both—Hamas more clearly and convincingly since the late 1990s—seem to have come round to that view in practice. Fatah has also led the way in terms of revising its practice of armed struggle, moving away from it (albeit with a high degree of ambiguity) since the early 1970s. At Oslo, it agreed to renounce violence in its conflict with Israel, but with the second intifada that restraint no longer held. After the death of Arafat, the new Palestinian leadership under Abbas unambiguously opted for politics and nonviolence, with a clear "no" to armed struggle. Neither of the other movements has done so, though Hamas, in principle at least, made a strategic decision against suicide attacks targeting civilians in June 2003 (notwithstanding several lapses) coupled with a far more "political" interpretation of "resistance."

Clearly, a new phase in the Palestinian-Israeli struggle has opened with Arafat's death and the obvious failures of the Oslo approach. The

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF MAN, FATAH, AND HAMAS ON KEY VARIABLES

	MAN	Fatah	Hamas
<b>Central foundational event (formative catastrophe)</b>	1948 Nakba Shaped by secular intellectual climate of Beirut (student movement/student politics)	1948 Nakba 1967 war as impetus for mass movement Shaped by diaspora and refugee experience	1948 Nakba 1967 occupation Immediate trigger: beginning of intifada in 1987 Shaped by occupation (Hamas founded <i>inside</i> Palestine)
<b>Founders</b>	AUB students and recent graduates; Urban middle and upper middle class backgrounds	Professionals working in Gulf states; had been refugees in Gaza, studied in Cairo; lower middle class urban backgrounds	Leaders of Gaza branch of Muslim Brotherhood; refugees in Gaza, lower middle class, mostly rural backgrounds
<b>Membership</b>	High-school and university students, teachers, intellectuals, intellectual elite in camps	Initially labor migrants in Gulf, then students and camp refugees, progressively all levels of society and social backgrounds	Camp refugees, lower and lower middle class, students, professionals (similar to Fatah membership in territories)
<b>Ideology</b>	Arab nationalism, with Palestine at heart of Arab nation. Arab unity and transformation of Arab society (modernization, reform) as prerequisites for liberating Palestine Liberation of Palestine by Arab action	Palestinian nationalism. Focus on identity ( <i>kiyan</i> : identity, entity, state) Establishment of Palestinian state equal to other Arab states Liberation of Palestine by <i>Palestinian</i> action (independence of Palestinian initiative)	Religiously based Palestinian nationalism; (Islam as mobilizer for nationalist goals) Islamization of society, Islamic state if democratically chosen, otherwise Palestinian state with strong role for Islam Liberation of Palestine by Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic action; in practice, emphasis on resistance to occupation
<b>Political program</b>	Overthrow of reactionary Arab regimes (subservient to West) to achieve Arab unity and defeat Israel Embrace of Nasserism as vehicle for achieving unity; follow Nasser's lead and fit into his strategy for liberating Palestine Political mobilization through cultural activities	Armed struggle and war of liberation (Algeria, Vietnam models) In practice (as of early 1970s), diplomacy and politics to achieve goal of sovereign Palestinian state in occupied territories in coexistence with Israel Mobilization through nationalist appeal based on neopatrimonial (clientelist and patronage) structures	Resistance against occupation (armed and peaceful) As of late 1990s, willingness to consider a long-term truce with Israel in exchange for 1967 borders (i.e., state next to Israel) Developing and expanding extensive network of social charities and welfare.
<b>Funding</b>	(Limited) financial support from wealthy members, later from Egypt.	Support from Palestinian workers in Gulf. Later, until 1991 Gulf war, taxes collected from Palestinian workers in Gulf and other Arab states, and esp. Arab government subsidies.	Individual donations from Arab world (especially Palestine) and the West; government donations from Gulf (until late 1990s)

effectiveness—not to say feasibility—of armed struggle (which in any case none of the movements under study practiced with any plausible and consistent strategy) appears to have been exhausted. Yet Palestinian goals remain unmet. Should we expect, then, a new phase/face of Palestinian nationalism to emerge? Can Fatah, perhaps the most successful in terms of its ability to “learn” from its failures and defeats, “learn” to extricate itself from the neopatrimonial rentier system in which it is mired? Or will it be left to Hamas to serve as a model in that regard at least?

None of the organizations discussed ever gave nonviolent mass resistance against occupation a real chance. Could a grass-roots movement or new political party (secular or at most “implicitly religious,” democratic, and mass-based) emerge that is committed to mobilizing for such an approach? And would such a model prove capable of breaking neopatrimonialism and its dependence on external rents? Given Israel’s clear refusal to end the occupation, and the equally clear refusal of the international community to intervene meaningfully, this would seem to be the only hope for the Palestinian dream of freedom and independence ever to be achieved.

## NOTES

1. Baruch Kimmerling, *Politicide: Ariel Sharon’s War against the Palestinians* (London: Verso, 2003), pp. 3–4.

2. The approach used in this comparison is based on Maxime Rodinson’s concept of mobilizational (mobilization) movements and ideologies (*mouvements idéologiques, idéologies mobilisatrices*). See “Nation et Idéologie” in *Encyclopédie Universalis*, vol. 2 (Paris: Encyclopédie Universalis, 1975), pp. 571–574; and Maxime Rodinson, *Marxisme et Monde Musulman* [Marxism and the Muslim World] (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972), especially p. 137. This will be complemented by, among other approaches, Alain Touraine’s use of the concepts of “identity,” “opposition,” and the “global legitimacy of acting” to analyze popular movements. See Alain Touraine, *Soziologie als Handlungswissenschaft* [Sociology as Action Science] (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1974), especially pp. 175, 199.

3. The founding members were AUB graduates with the exception of Muhsin Ibrahim.

4. The following analysis draws heavily from my work on MAN: Helga Baumgarten, *Palästina: Befreiung in den Staat: Die palästinensische Nationalbewegung seit 1948* [Palestine: Liberation into the State:

The Palestinian National Movement since 1948] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991).

5. MAN continued for a time after Habash founded the PFLP in 1967, but went underground and eventually ceased to exist. Other top leaders of MAN were Wadiah Haddad, Ahmad al-Khatib, and Hani al-Hindi, respectively Palestinian, Kuwaiti, and Syrian.

6. Hisham Sharabi, “Looking Back at AUB,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 30 (Winter 1984), pp. 43–49. According to Hanna Batatu’s *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978, pp. 1029 ff), six of MAN’s eleven original leaders came from the coastal (Palestinian) trade bourgeoisie and the remaining five came from civil servant, professional, or religious middle- and lower-middle-class backgrounds. It is also true that a number of MAN’s founders and leaders were Christian, though the perception that the movement was Christian-dominated cannot be substantiated.

7. After a number of Arabic editions, an English translation was published: Constantine Zurayk, *The Meaning of the Disaster* (Beirut: Khayat’s College Book Cooperative, 1956).

8. For this and the following analysis, see Baumgarten, *Palästina*, pp. 81–88.
9. Interestingly, MAN's successors—the PFLP and the Democratic Front—still include cultural activities as an important part of their political mobilization.
10. Zurayk, *The Meaning of the Disaster*, p. 38.
11. Zurayk, *The Meaning of the Disaster*, pp. 43 f.
12. Interview with George Habash, Beirut, 2 February 1979.
13. From MAN's program, as approved by its first conference in Beirut, reproduced in full in the 6 May 1956 issue of *al-Tha'r*.
14. *Al-Tha'r*, 15 May 1956.
15. *Al-Urwa* 18, no. 4 (March 1953), pp. 16–19.
16. See *al-Tha'r*, 6 October 1955. For more on this issue, see Walid Kazzuha, *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World: Habash and His Comrades from Nationalism to Marxism* (London: Charles Knight, 1975), p. 75.
17. Baumgarten, *Palästina*, pp. 120–26.
18. Baumgarten, *Palästina*, pp. 127–32.
19. The first full formulation of these slogans in sequence can be found in the 12 January 1956 issue of *al-Tha'r*.
20. Muhammad Muslih, "Moderates and Rejectionists within the Palestinian Liberation Organization," *Middle East Journal* 30, no. 2 (Spring 1976), p. 138.
21. This slogan was used in interviews by, among others Bassam Abu Sharif, Abu 'Adnan and Taysir Quba'.
22. Based on interviews with George Habash, 26 February 1979; Abu Mahir, 26 July 1978; Abu 'Adnan, 25 August 1978; Taysir Quba' on 28 August 1978. See also Kazzuha, *Revolutionary Transformation*, p. 83.
23. For MAN's role in the Arab world, see Gerhard Hoepf, *From Nationalism to Socialism: History and Ideology of the Movement of Arab Nationalists and Its Successor Organizations* [in German] (Ph.D. diss., Humboldt University, 1985).
24. Fatah later changed its name to the National Movement for the Liberation of Palestine (*barakat al-tabrir al-watani al-filastini*).
25. Interviews with Sakhr Habash, Beirut, 28 September 1978, and Abu Hatim, Beirut, 5 July 1978. See also Alan Hart, *Arafat: Terrorist or Peacemaker?* (London: Sidgwick Jackson, 1984), pp. 77, 88.
26. Nels Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1982).
27. See the memoirs of Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf) with Eric Rouleau, *My Home, My Land* (New York: Times Books, 1979), pp. 38–39.
28. *Filastinuna* 2 (November 1959), p. 10.
29. *Filastinuna* 9 (July 1960).
30. Interview with a Fatah member (requesting anonymity) who had joined Fatah before 1967, Beirut, 5 July 1978.
31. See Baumgarten, *Palästina*, pp. 168–176, for an analysis of Fatah's *kiyan* debate, which took place in the pages of *Filastinuna*, especially 1960–1961.
32. See note 2.
33. *Filastinuna* 11 (November 1960), p. 3.
34. See *Filastinuna* 36 (April 1964) on China and *Filastinuna* 39 (September 1964) on Cuba. See also special pamphlets in the series *Dirasat wa tajarub thauriya* [Revolutionary Studies and Experiences] on China, Vietnam, and Cuba. On Algeria, see the Abu Jihad interview in Hart, *Arafat*, p. 123. See also the interview with Yasir Arafat in *Shu'un Filastiniya* 76 (1979) and with Abu Jihad in *al-Liwa'*, 4 January 1979.
35. Fatah's first military operation was in January 1965 as a response both to the establishment of the PLO and the completion of Israel's National Water Carrier. See Baumgarten, *Palästina*, pp. 188–94. See also Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian Movement, 1949–1993* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), especially pp. 106–8 on 1965, as well as pp. 157–64.
36. On Karamah, see Baumgarten, *Palästina*, pp. 212–15. Saleh Atta (Saleh Abdel Jawad), *Genèse et évolution d'un mouvement de libération nationale: Le Fath* [Genesis and Evolution of a National Liberation Movement: Fatah] (Ph.D. diss., University of Paris X-Nanterre, 1986), pp. 151–67, presents a critical case study of the battle. See also Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, pp. 174–79.
37. *Filastinuna* 11 (November 1960).
38. *Filastinuna* 9 (July 1960).

39. See for example *Filastinuna* 13 (January 1961), p. 5 and *Filastinuna* 18 (July 1961).

40. Quoted in Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 33.

41. For an analysis of this experience see Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*.

42. Among the outstanding critiques of Fatah's concept of armed struggle, see Naji 'Alush, *Masira ila Filastin* [The Road to Palestine] (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'a, 1964), and the debate between Fatah and MAN in *Filastin*, between 1965 and 1966. See the analysis of these sources in Baumgarten, *Palästina*, pp. 194–202.

43. Baumgarten, *Palästina*, pp. 305–10. This is treated only in passing by Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, p. 624, with no importance attached to it.

44. In a sense, the combination of neopatrimonial rule and rentier politics enabled Arafat to bring Fatah and the PLO along with him on the path of diplomacy. At the same time, the one-man leadership and top-down domination of society made possible by patronage, essentially financed by Arab government donations through the late 1980s, led to ever-increasing inflexibility, not to say rigidity, within the movement, and stifled the kind of political openness and dynamism necessary for confronting the Israeli occupation internally and internationally. Helga Baumgarten, "Neopatrimonial Leaders Facing Uncertain Traditions," in Roger Heacock, ed., *Political Transitions in the Arab World* (Birzeit: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute, 2002), part 2, pp. 45–86. My analysis draws on Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* [Economics and Society] (Tuebingen: Mohr, 1972), and S. N. Eisenstadt including *Traditional Patrimonialism and Modern Neopatrimonialism* (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1973).

45. The best work so far on Hamas is by Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000). See also Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), and earlier Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). For my work on Hamas since 2003, see *Hamas:*

*Between Terrorism, Radical Nationalism, and Democratic Opposition* (Vienna: Austrian Institute for International Affairs, forthcoming 2005). See also the April 2003 and January 2004 reports by the International Crisis Group (ICG), "Islamic Social Welfare Activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Legitimate Target?" (Amman and Brussels: ICG, 2 April 2003) and "Dealing with Hamas" (Amman and Brussels: ICG, 26 January 2004). For the general context see François Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003).

46. Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 265.

47. For this period, see Hroub, *Hamas*, pp. 32–36.

48. Interview with Ismail Abu Shanab, Gaza, 5 August 2003. See also the analysis in Mishal and Sela, *Palestinian Hamas*, pp. 16–20, and in Hroub, *Hamas*, pp. 32–36.

49. See Mishal and Sela, *Palestinian Hamas*, pp. 16–26, and Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 10–22. Also my own interviews with Hamas leaders in Gaza in summer 2003.

50. See note 48.

51. Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 260–63, 272–94.

52. Quoted from Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 265.

53. In an interview in Gaza on 5 August 2003, Mahmud Zahar pointedly stressed the Islamic nature of the state. By contrast, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, in an interview on the same day, focused more on the need to find a political solution that would allow Muslims, Christians, and Jews to live together without discrimination and with full respect for each other.

54. Quoted from the Hamas Charter, as reprinted in Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 275.

55. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 270.

56. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 273.

57. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 268.

58. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 275.

59. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 274.

60. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 283.

61. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 284–85.



62. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 285.

63. Khalid Mishal, interview by Giselle Khoury, *Bil'arabi*, al-Arabiya Satellite Television, 15 June 2003.

64. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 285.

65. Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) Introductory Memorandum, as reprinted in Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 296.

66. See ICG, "Islamic Social Welfare Activism."

67. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 276.

68. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 286.

69. Hamas charter, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 297.

70. Hamas Introductory Memorandum, Hroub, *Hamas*, p. 297.

71. Mahmud Zahar, *al-Quds*, 12 October 1995, quoted in Mishal and Sela, *Palestinian Hamas*, p. 71. This point was

also made in all of my interviews with Hamas leaders, above all by Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and Ismail Abu Shanab.

72. Interview of Hasan Yusuf on al-Jazeera, quoted here from Arnon Regular, "Senior Hamas Man: We Accept Israel Living in Peace, Security," *Ha'Aretz*, 3 December 2004.

73. The presidential elections were intensively debated within Hamas. Those favoring participation argued that, in contrast to Hamas's boycott of the January 1996 presidential elections as part of its boycott of everything related to the Oslo process, what was at stake now was no longer the Oslo process but rather gaining a place in Palestinian politics. Nonetheless, the decision was made against participation, first because Hamas had no strong candidate to field against Abbas, and second because it wanted more time to prepare for its political "coming out" through strong showings in the municipal elections.



Arafat reviews Fatah forces most likely in southern Lebanon (undated, 1970s). (AP Photo/Palestinian Authority)