



**Writing the Intifada: Collective Action in the Occupied Territories**

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## Review Articles

### WRITING THE INTIFADA Collective Action in the Occupied Territories

By IAN S. LUSTICK\*

- Rex Brynen, ed. *Echoes of the Intifada: Regional Repercussions of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991, 314 pp.
- Joost R. Hiltermann. *Behind the Intifada: Labor and Women's Movement in the Occupied Territories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, 265 pp.
- Michael C. Hudson, ed. *The Palestinians: New Directions*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1990, 268 pp.
- F. Robert Hunter. *The Palestinian Uprising: A War by Other Means*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 292 pp.
- Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin, eds. *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising against Israeli Occupation*. Boston: South End Press, 1989, 423 pp.
- David McDowall. *Palestine and Israel: The Uprising and Beyond*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, 322 pp.
- Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock, eds. *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*. New York: Praeger, 1990, 347 pp.
- Don Peretz. *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990, 246 pp.
- Zeev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari. *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising, Israel's Third Front*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990, 352 pp.

THE Palestinian intifada (uprising) began on December 9, 1987, as a series of confrontations between Israeli soldiers and crowds of angry Palestinians. To the amazement of almost everyone, these clashes led to the most prolonged episode of militant Palestinian oppositionism in the hundred-year history of Zionist-Arab relations in Palestine/the Land of Israel. Indeed, almost five years later, in October 1992, the Israeli chief of staff warned his countrymen that the uprising had still not ended.

From the beginning of its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, Israel outlawed almost all forms of political activity by the Arab inhabitants of those areas. It was therefore not at all uncommon for Palestinians protesting various aspects of the occupation to meet with

\* I would like to thank Jerrold Green for his comments on a preliminary version of this article.

violent responses from Israeli troops. Customarily these outbursts died down after the army opened fire; in December 1987, however, the crowds did not disperse after the army began to shoot. Instead, the demonstrations expanded, drawing such large numbers of protestors into the streets that Israeli units were overwhelmed.

Within weeks there emerged a clandestine coordinating committee that helped sustain an uninterrupted series of commercial and general strikes and mass demonstrations. In the first exhilarating months of the uprising, "liberated" zones were established within Palestinian villages, towns, and refugee camps. Israel's elaborate system of collaborators and informers was on the verge of almost total collapse. Israeli vehicles on roads in the occupied territories were subjected to constant harassment by youths throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. Despite dozens, then scores, then hundreds of Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers, police, and settlers, and official policies of beatings, mass arrests, and collective punishment, the intifada continued. It was soon clear that a genuine civil rebellion was under way, unlike any other form of Palestinian resistance to the twenty-five-year-old occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The flow of Israeli settlers to the territories slowed to a trickle; and in some settlements houses were abandoned by residents who returned to the relative safety they associated with life within the borders of Israel proper.

In addition to being unprecedented in the Palestinian context itself, the intifada was also the first of many mass-based, illegal, nonviolent or semiviolent challenges to nondemocratic governing structures to burst upon the world scene at the end of the 1980s. Algeria and Jordan erupted in 1988. Mass mobilizations subsequently appeared in Burma, in the Baltic states, and in most East European countries in 1989, then in China, South Africa, Kenya, and in many of the constituent republics of the former Soviet Union. As a phenomenon they drew the attention of both the media and scholars to the brightening prospects for democratization and to the heroic nature of struggles by oppressed peoples rising up against the coercive power of states to demand political and economic rights. But although the Palestinians may have been first chronologically, and although their efforts were sustained over a longer period of time than were the "uprisings" in the other cases, the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation has usually been omitted from media accounts of the worldwide trend toward "democratization" and from scholarly consideration of circumstances leading to such measured forms of revolutionary collective action.

In this essay I seek to respond to these omissions in two ways. First,

by assessing many available treatments of the intifada, I can trace the contours of the movement and identify both the questions asked in this substantial body of work and the range of answers offered. Second, by surveying recent developments in literatures whose organizing questions pertain to the etiology and dynamics of mass collective action, I can establish the degree to which the intifada is comparable to other contemporary mass movements for radical political change, which in turn will suggest how much the intifada, and the Israeli-Palestinian relationship in general, has to offer students of comparative politics. In the process I raise an often ignored methodological complication in the use of monographic materials to evaluate theoretical claims.

#### THE STATUS QUO ANTE

Two kinds of questions, corresponding to two different kinds of assumptions, can be asked about the occurrence of the intifada or of any other case of illegal mass political action. Reflecting beliefs about the likely stability of established authority structures, about the superficiality of the common political identity claimed by those who might be expected to revolt, or about the likely decisiveness of free-rider, cultural, or psychological barriers to the joint pursuit of shared interests, one type of question asks why such an upheaval should occur at all. If for these assumptions one substitutes expectations that identities claimed by masses of people are likely to be genuine and determinative and that their severe discontent cannot be easily contained, then the opposite question becomes salient: why such an upheaval should not have occurred earlier.

The studies and reports about the intifada reviewed here ask both questions, although the emphasis is clearly on the former. Why, ask most of these authors, in thousands of defiant encounters with Israeli troops, police, and settlers, did the Palestinians of the occupied territories suddenly demonstrate a willingness to endure substantial and prolonged punishment for the sake of ending the occupation? Although some authors do point to what they call an unappreciated series of precedents for sustained mass action and acceptance of high casualties by Palestinians in the territories, even they concede that no previous episode lasted more than four to six weeks, that none approached the intifada in the proportion of the population mobilized for political action, and that none elicited the scale of sacrifice associated with the uprising.

For years Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip were asked an uncomfortable, cruel, but not unreasonable question: if the occupation is so onerous and you are so discontented, if you

expect to achieve national liberation and a state of your own, then why have you not shown the same discipline and willingness to sacrifice that the Vietnamese, Cubans, Algerians, Iranians, Afghans, or even pre-1948 Zionists displayed in their respective struggles? It was a telling critique despite the undeniable fact that the Palestinians confronted a determined and well-equipped antagonist in topographical circumstances peculiarly unsuited to guerrilla warfare. Certainly, the PLO outside of Palestine did mount an armed struggle that produced long lists of martyrs, but many Palestinians on the inside, in the West Bank and Gaza, seemed either willing to let history have its way with them or particularly susceptible to the techniques of control exercised by the Israelis.

Virtually all analysts unconnected to the Israeli authorities have emphasized the injustices of the occupation, the active discontent of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, and the uniformity of Palestinian aspirations for independence from Israel. Accordingly, no one has seriously argued that the relative quiescence of Palestinians under Israeli occupation was due to a convenient or manipulated consciousness among them that made Israeli rule appear more satisfactory than it would have otherwise. Israeli domination was domination without hegemony. Instead, most explanations for the limited nature of West Bank and Gaza Palestinian resistance stressed the impediments to guerrilla fighting in such open and small areas, Israel's enormously sophisticated apparatus of surveillance and punishment, and the corruption of traditional Palestinian elites.

Under these circumstances, for ten years at least, the carrot-and-stick occupation policy implemented by Israeli defense minister Dayan in 1967 was extraordinarily effective. After an initial wave of nationalist mobilization and some (failed) attempts at violent resistance, the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza Strip reached a *modus vivendi* with the Israeli occupation. Although politically active Palestinians were treated severely, no Palestinian was required publicly to support the legitimacy or continuation of Israeli rule. The great majority of Palestinians refrained from mass political action or armed mobilization and in return were allowed to make money by working in Israel, to maintain their social institutions, and to preserve their ties with Jordan and the rest of the Arab world via the "open bridges" policy over the Jordan River.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime Israel for its part refrained from advancing formal claims to sovereignty over the areas (apart from expanded East Jerusalem). It con-

<sup>1</sup> The "open bridges" policy describes the Israeli practice of allowing, subject to sometimes rigorous and discriminatory screening procedures, movement of people and goods across the bridges linking the West Bank and Jordan.

ducted its settlement and land expropriation policies discreetly and promised that the eventual peace would be based on an end to the occupation. Dayan's policies were enforced in the main, not by terror or direct physical coercion, but by threats—of imprisonment, deportation, housing demolitions, and bureaucratic harassment.

In accord with Dayan's objective of gradual, de facto, but permanent "incorporation" of the territories into an Israeli sphere of control, and in return for employment possibilities in Israel and opportunities for trade and travel across the Jordan River, the Arabs of the territories assumed a generally passive role. This seemed moreover to grant the PLO the leadership role it desired while also providing an excuse to let events on the ground take their course. In this context commercial strikes could be called to protest new restrictions or taxes, petitions and court appeals could be filed ad infinitum in protest against land expropriation and settlement practices, and innumerable appeals could be issued to foreign dignitaries or sympathetic Israelis, but no general strikes could be sustained, no period of violent or semiviolent protest could be maintained for more than a month or two, and no territories-wide, coordinated attempts to overcome Israeli repression were forthcoming.

#### EXPLAINING THE INTIFADA AS A REVOLUTIONARY EPISODE

So what accounts for the intifada? Before examining answers that have been offered, some comments on the literature it has generated are in order. Most of what has been written about the intifada, including books reviewed here, has focused on documenting its character as a heroic, mass participatory, sustained, but mostly nonviolent (or only "semiviolent") rebellion. Most of these studies are written by Palestinians, by Arab, American, or European scholars sympathetic to the historic plight of the Palestinians, or by participant-observer journalists or anthropologists. Reading their work, particularly the contributions in the Lockman and Beinin and Nassar and Heacock volumes, it is easy to appreciate the tremendous surge of enthusiasm, excitement, and wonder that accompanied the first few months, or even most of the first year of the uprising. For the first time in twenty years of occupation the Israelis appeared to be on the defensive. The response of the political authorities and the army was confused and ineffective. The reversal of the David and Goliath template, with Palestinian youth now holding the slingshot, attracted enormous media attention and was as exhilarating to Palestinians and their friends as it was depressing and maddening to Israelis who did not sympathize with the Palestinian struggle. While *Les Misérables* was fill-

ing theater halls in Israel, offering audiences the vicarious thrill of justice demanded against all odds, Palestinians built their own barricades and savored the real thing.

Three kinds of leaders emerged within weeks of the initial outburst. In urban neighborhoods, villages, and refugee camps thousands of young men and women assumed day-to-day responsibility for organizing "popular committees" to deal with specific issues, such as food, health care, security, education, and protest activities. Out of public view there also emerged a central coordinating leadership that issued communiqués in the name of the Unified National Command of the Uprising (UNLU) and the PLO. These contained instructions and advice for sustaining the uprising, schedules for strike activities, hours when businesses were to be opened and closed, and themes and slogans to be emphasized on different days. The Unified Command was comprised of representatives of each of the four main nationalist factions in the territories (that is, it did not include representatives of Muslim fundamentalist groups). Many of its most active members managed to elude capture for many months, and for several years at least the Command was able to replenish its ranks. It operated on the basis of consensus and assumed responsibility for judging how much to ask of Palestinians in their daily confrontation with Israeli soldiers and settlers. It maintained regular contact with the PLO's external leadership via telephone lines and facsimile machines, but (for the most part) deferred to the PLO leadership on the outside for strategic, diplomatic, or political decisions.

The third type of Palestinian leader associated with the uprising included professors, journalists, and familiar political personalities who mediated between the clandestine UNLU, the PLO, and the international and Israeli media. These people, like Sari Nusseibeh, Faisal Husayni, Hanan Ashrawi, Ziad Abu Ziad, Fayez Abu-Rahmah, and Hana Siniora, associated themselves with the uprising and claimed to articulate the sentiments of both Palestinians in the territories and the PLO; they used their ties with American and European diplomats and their status as media stars to dissuade the Israeli authorities from imprisoning or deporting them for their role in the intifada.<sup>2</sup> Though sometimes referred to with some cynicism by streetwise activists as the "Mickey Mouse" leaders, these are the people who emerged after the first years of the intifada as the PLO's link to the Palestinian delegation in Madrid and as those mainly in charge of conducting continuing negotiations with Israel and the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Most of these individuals, however, were held in administrative detention for various periods of time.



In its scale, intensity, and duration, if not in its tactics, the campaign of protest, resistance, and disengagement that these three strata of leaders were able to sustain was reminiscent of the Irish struggle against the British from 1919 to 1921. Between January 1919 and August 1921 British security forces killed 752 Irishmen and wounded 866. Five hundred and sixty soldiers and police were killed by the Irish during the same period. The rate of Irish Catholic deaths was approximately 23 per 100,000. With these figures in mind, one can appreciate the breadth of Palestinian mobilization, the massiveness of the repression exercised to contain it, as well as the distinctively nonlethal character of Palestinian actions against Israelis.

The total Arab population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1987 was approximately 1.7 million. From the beginning of the uprising in December 1987 to the end of February 1991, 787 Palestinians in these areas were killed by soldiers, police, and Israeli settlers. During that same period 349 Palestinians were killed by other Arabs, under conditions of general lawlessness or as suspected collaborators. The rate of Palestinian deaths (at the hands of Israelis) was 43 per 100,000 inhabitants—nearly double that for the Irish during the Anglo-Irish War. In September 1990 the Israeli Army released statistics showing that 13,100 Palestinians had been wounded in the first thousand days of the uprising (compared with 2,500 Israeli soldiers and 1,100 Israeli civilians).<sup>3</sup> Palestinian sources reported much higher Arab casualty levels, showing more than 100,000 serious injuries suffered by Palestinians during the first three years of the uprising.<sup>4</sup> In the region of Nablus, in the northern West Bank, it was reported that 5 percent of the total population (9,740 out of 200,000) had been hospitalized for wounds, although most injured Arabs were not hospitalized (Hunter, 207). In the first two years of the uprising the army demolished 350 Arab homes and arrested 60,000 Palestinians.<sup>5</sup> Sixty people were deported, and 40,000 were held in administrative detention, that is, without indictment or trial.<sup>6</sup> One Israeli lawyer estimated that about

<sup>3</sup> *Haaretz*, April 2, 1991; and *Maariv*, September 5, 1990. Between December 1987 and February 1991, twenty-six Israelis were killed by Palestinians. The Israeli human rights group, Btzelem, also reported that during this period eighty-five additional Arabs, including thirty babies, died shortly after exposure to tear gas. More recently Btzelem reported that after five years of the intifada a total of 923 Palestinians had been killed by the security forces (i.e., excluding those killed by settlers) and that 675 Palestinians had been killed by other Palestinians. Kol Yisrael (Radio Israel) broadcast, December 8, 1992, transcribed by *FBI, Daily Report: Near East and South Asia*, December 10, 1992, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> See "The Human Costs of the Uprising," *Palestine Human Rights Campaign Newsletter* 11 (January 1991).

<sup>5</sup> *Davar*, October 31, 1989.

<sup>6</sup> As reported by the Israeli minister of justice, *Maariv*, November 17, 1989. In December 1991 the Israeli chief of staff reported that since the beginning of the uprising "nearly

25 percent of the Palestinian population passed through the military court system in the first years of the uprising (Hunter, 26). The economic losses sustained by the Palestinians in this short time were also substantial. In 1989 Palestinian incomes were between one-half and one-third of what they had been two years earlier (Hunter, 195).

All the authors whose work is represented in these volumes agree that particular events or developments acted as catalysts for the intifada, helping to explain its timing. To their credit, however, none contend that such "accidental" factors can explain more than that. A number of precipitating events figure prominently in these accounts: Palestinian disappointment at the failure of the 1987 Amman summit to attach a high priority to the predicament of Palestinians in the occupied territories; the inspiring success of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command hang glider attack on an Israeli army base in the Galilee; a bloody road accident in the Gaza Strip; Israeli attempts to commandeer water resources in the Bethlehem area; and brutal behavior of Druse border patrolmen in a large West Bank refugee camp. Again, these events are not put forth as explanations. Rather, their importance is identified only in relation to background developments or underlying processes whose effects created new conditions, conditions that then allowed incidents such as these to have a radically different kind of effect at the end of 1987 than similar events had had during the previous twenty years of occupation.

Explanations for the intifada, for this sudden, sustained, revolutionary expression of Palestinian political militance, can be sorted into variations on four overlapping themes:

- the intifada as an explosion caused by pent-up despair and humiliation
- the intifada as a strategic extension of the PLO's struggle to gain Palestinian national liberation
- the intifada as having sprung from and been modeled after grass-roots organizations active in the territories during the preceding decade
- the intifada as the reflection of changes in Israeli politics and policies toward the territories

The volume by Schiff and Ya'ari, Israel's veteran military and Arab affairs journalists, was published before the others; the Hebrew version appeared in early 1989. The first chapter (titled "The Surprise") describes the technical and tactical errors made by then Defense Minister

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100,000" Palestinians had been held in various detention centers or prisons for intifada offenses.

Yitzhak Rabin, and the failures committed by the security services and military intelligence, which the authors say allowed the disturbances to erupt and prevented them from being brought under control quickly. The purpose of this chapter, however, is not to provide the groundwork for an explanation of the intifada as an avoidable "accident." In fact the book concludes with an argument that conditions in the territories will require Israeli withdrawal and that such a move would serve Israel's national interests, including its security interests.

The purpose of this first chapter is instead to establish a rapport with Israeli readers. To put their controversial argument across, the authors need to avoid giving the impression of "vegetarianism" (Israeli slang for bleeding-heart attitudes toward Arabs). By offering the same sort of technical, tactical, and professional critiques leveled at the security establishment after the 1973 war and the Lebanon War, and by delivering harsh criticism of politicians (such as Yitzhak Rabin) identified with the antiannexationist side of the spectrum, they seek to earn the trust of Israeli readers as "professional," hardheaded, nonideological judges of Israeli interests. For similar reasons the authors are eager to demonstrate their "insider status" by explicitly citing their personal and confidential relations with Israeli military officers, the security services, the prison authorities, and the police. Indeed their primary source of information about participants in the intifada comes from classified reports by, and private interviews with, unnamed officers, operatives within various branches of the Israeli intelligence community, and Shin Bet (security service) interrogators.

Above all, Schiff and Ya'ari's explanation for the intifada emphasizes the cumulative rage of Palestinian refugees, workers, and farmers. In particular, they stress the unbearable conditions in Gaza refugee camps, the frightening new threats to divert some of what remained of the farmers' water resources to Israeli settlers, and, especially, the bitterness of Palestinians employed inside Israel at the routine humiliations inflicted upon them by soldiers, policemen, and border patrolmen. Even though they knew or cared little about the PLO or Palestinian nationalism, say Schiff and Ya'ari, once they witnessed a number of dramatic, horrifying, and/or inspiring confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians in 1986 and 1987, the Arab masses of the territories—villagers, refugees, and workers—could no longer contain their fury. When their rage erupted, it did so with such force and constancy, and in so many localities at roughly the same time, that the small Israeli units stationed in the territories lost their deterrent effect.

Schiff and Ya'ari credit the early organizers of the UNLU (most of

whom, they note, were deported) with courage, sophistication, and effectiveness. By contrast, they portray Arafat and the "outside" PLO as undeserving but jealous claimants to the mantle of Palestinian leadership—as individuals who claimed responsibility for a mass mobilization of Palestinian sentiment that they neither anticipated nor understood.

The other authors of these studies are more explicitly sympathetic to the goals of the intifada and the aspirations of Palestinians. While they would agree with Schiff and Ya'ari about the privations endured by Palestinians under Israeli occupation and about the dimensions of popular anger, most would reject as inadequate or pejorative the "volcano" theory of the intifada these two authors are said to present, a theory that attributes Palestinian mobilization to the kind of blind emotion usually associated with mobs or with primitive peoples, but not with disciplined and worthy national movements. Opponents of this explanation argue that it devalues Palestinian political action, Palestinian heroism, and the effectiveness and sophistication of Palestinian organization. They hold that reliance on overwhelming, determinative surges of emotion recapitulates analytically the same kind of error made by those who before the uprising had adopted the view of an irreversible juggernaut of Israeli annexation, thereby underestimating the autonomous importance of political and organizational factors.<sup>7</sup>

While stressing the unleashed rage of Palestinians as an underlying factor, almost all interpreters of the intifada characterize it as an unprecedentedly broad and sustained mobilization of the Palestinian masses in a direct, disciplined political struggle against Israelis. Since most observers agree that the degree of oppression and discontent in the occupied territories had long before the late-1980s reached a point capable of justifying the sacrifices necessary in such a struggle, explanations for the timing of the intifada, its character, its successes, and its failures resolve into explanations of how the Palestinians finally managed to develop organizational frameworks and mobilizational techniques to overcome Israeli repressive capacities.

The enthusiasm for the intifada of some of these writers is tempered somewhat by their obvious concern that its success might contribute to Israeli efforts to marginalize the PLO by substituting the problem of the West Bank and Gaza for the larger historical problem of Palestinian self-determination and the future of masses of Palestinians living in refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and elsewhere. An argument devel-

<sup>7</sup> See Hiltermann, 174-76; Samir Abdallah Saleh, "The Effects of Israeli Occupation on the Economy of the West Bank and Gaza Strip," in Nassar and Heacock, 48; and Salim Tamari, "What the Uprising Means," in Lockman and Beinin, 134.

oped and emphasized by Helga Baumgarten and Ali Jarbawi in their contributions to the Nassar and Heacock volume, Rashid Khalidi in his contribution to the Lockman and Beiniv volume, and by Don Peretz is that although the intifada was in some degree "spontaneous," it must be understood as the product of a partnership between inside and outside leadership cadres, all affiliated with the PLO or, more specifically, with the four major factions associated with it—Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and the Palestinian Communist Party. Without the nation-building work, organizational foundation, and political experience gained from twenty years of PLO activity, they contend, the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza would not have had the political maturity or the organizational density to sustain their struggle beyond an initial outburst.<sup>8</sup> Nor would the Palestinian people as a whole have been able to translate sacrifices on the ground into diplomatic achievements and international pressure on Israel. While Baumgarten goes so far as to suggest that the intifada was instigated according to a plan developed by Arafat, this is an extreme view and shades into an early Israeli interpretation of the uprising that most of these writers (including Baumgarten) reject out of hand, namely, that the intifada was the result of "outside agitation."<sup>9</sup>

The politically correct Palestinian position, advanced by most writers, runs as follows: The timing of the intifada was spontaneous, the result of circumstances on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Its energy was drawn from the grass-roots level of Palestinian society. There is not and never was any real separation at all between intifada activists in the occupied territories and the "external" PLO leadership. The Pales-

<sup>8</sup> Helga Baumgarten, " 'Discontented People' and 'Outside Agitators': The PLO in the Palestinian Uprising," in Nassar and Heacock, pp. 207–26; Ali Jarbawi, "Palestinian Elites in the Occupied Territories: Stability and Change through the *Intifada*," in Nassar and Heacock, 287–305; Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinian People: Twenty-two Years after 1967," in Lockman and Beiniv, 113–26; Peretz, 87–90.

<sup>9</sup> Although both Israeli officials and experts fairly quickly abandoned early characterizations of the uprising as the transient result of the activities of a small number of inciters, much of the work that has been done on the intifada by Israeli Arabists (professional advisers and experts on Arab affairs often enjoying close ties to the government and the security services) does tend to ignore the populist base and cellular organization of the uprising, which were among its most salient features. Ironically, by focusing on the role of the external PLO leadership, these studies implicitly endorse a view of the PLO, led from the outside, as virtually the only mobilizational framework within the Palestinian community—a view substantially in tension with the official Israeli rejection of the PLO as the Palestinians' "sole legitimate representative" and its insistence on the separability of the problem of the inhabitants of the territories from that of Palestinians living outside Palestine. See especially contributions by Asher Susser, Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, and Matti Steinberg, in Gad Gilbar and Asher Susser, eds., *B'Ayn HaSichsich: HaIntifada* (At the core of the conflict: The intifada) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1992).

tine Liberation Organization, it is said, enjoyed the allegiance of Palestinians from all walks of life both "inside" (in the occupied territories) and "outside" (in the Palestinian diaspora). On that basis, it was able to build an organizational structure of resistance that empowered Palestinians to revolt, produced a united leadership on the ground to guide the revolt, and then coordinated an international political and diplomatic campaign to exploit the new circumstances created by the intifada. Once launched, the tasks of leadership were divided between the UNLU (including representatives of each of the three main PLO factions and the Palestinian Communist Party), which decided on tactics and schedules for protest activities, and the PLO leadership outside, which decided on political and diplomatic moves.

The intifada is thereby cast as but one stage in the long-standing Palestinian struggle for national liberation, not as the Palestinian revolution itself. A number of writers, however, even while paying lip service to the PLO's status as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," analyze the cause of the intifada as associated with the PLO's failures—failure to cope with the real needs of the people under occupation, failure to produce a plan capable of halting Israel's de facto incorporation of the territories, and failure to maintain unity among its factions. An unintended result of these failures, these authors argue, was that Palestinians in the territories developed their own organized resistance to the occupation, which was more effective than anything the external leadership of the PLO had been able to devise or implement. These arguments are presented against a generally agreed-upon background narrative of the PLO's struggle, which in the context of this review must be made explicit.

Once Israel crushed PLO attempts in the first few years of the occupation to wage a Guevara-type guerrilla war in the territories, the organization cast about for ways to maintain its leadership position. The PLO was uncomfortable with communist efforts in the early 1970s to organize the Palestinian National Front (PNF), a semiclandestine umbrella organization coordinating political struggle within the territories with the explicit aim of creating an independent Palestinian state alongside of Israel. Fearing that such initiatives might lead to a local leadership operating outside its control, the PLO gave the PNF only lukewarm support and was not displeased when it was uprooted by the Israelis. On the other hand, the PLO fully endorsed the Egyptian and Syrian war launched in October 1973 as a means of liberating captured Arab territories. But that conflict, although it led to return of the Sinai to Egypt, left Syria with only a small slice of the Golan and left the Palestinians

with nothing but an offer of Begin-style autonomy—that is, a fig leaf for *de facto* annexation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel.

The PLO's primary response to the Camp David Accords was to strengthen its political and military base in Lebanon while joining with Jordan and other Arab states to channel funds to its supporters in the territories. The state within a state in Lebanon was meant to shelter the military and civilian PLO organizations, while keeping at least the principle of armed struggle alive. Financial contributions from the Arab states, delivered to Palestinians in the territories under the joint auspices of the PLO and Jordan, were calculated not only to increase local "steadfastness" against Israeli efforts to buy land and encourage large-scale emigration but also to prevent the emergence within the occupied territories of an alternative leadership with the prestige and resources to challenge the PLO on the outside.

But the PLO suffered crippling blows when Israel invaded Lebanon, on a small scale in 1978 and on a much larger scale in 1982. The 1982 war was an extended operation that penetrated all the way to Beirut and destroyed the PLO's political, economic, administrative, and military base in that country. Although the organization survived and continued to enjoy the expressed loyalty of the overwhelming majority of Palestinians, its forced relocation to Tunis was symbolic of its estrangement from the daily life of Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

After the war the PLO was caught in an increasingly cruel dilemma. The settlement and land expropriation policies of the Begin and then Shamir governments in the early 1980s aroused fear among West Bank and Gaza Arabs that permanent incorporation of the territories into Israel would soon be an irreversible fact of life, setting the stage for Israel to push them out of Palestine entirely. This led to calls for drastic compromise, to "save what could be saved" before it was too late; if the PLO accepted this logic, however, it would risk displacement by Jordan or by leaders from the territories with whom the Israelis would be more likely to negotiate. Furthermore, it would open itself to accusations of betrayal by its core constituencies within the Palestinian diaspora who hoped for a state in Palestine to which they might someday return. On the other hand, if the PLO rejected pleas by West Bank and Gaza Palestinians for more flexibility, it risked losing whatever chances for a negotiated solution still existed and alienating itself from the mass of Palestinians still living in Palestine. Meanwhile, the PLO's rivalry with Jordan, corruption of many of its agents in the territories, factional disputes over political strategy and the disbursement of funds, and increasingly stringent Israeli policies pushed Palestinians toward new forms of mobilization.

According to some of the most perspicacious studies of the intifada, the secret of the uprising lies in the weakening of the PLO's direct influence over events in the territories and in the frustration of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians with its ineffectiveness or venality. These analysts emphasize the crystallization of grass-roots organizations in all spheres of Palestinian life under occupation—organizations that began forming in the late 1970s. They provided needed services within a nationalist context, but without relying on external financial assistance or guidance from national-level leaders.

David McDowall advanced one of the strongest versions of this argument: he portrayed West Bank and Gaza Palestinians as having become disillusioned with a PLO leadership it considered too close to Jordanian interests and too ready to make concessions to Israel. According to McDowall, in the late 1970s and early 1980s local Palestinian intellectuals realized the corrupting and debilitating effects of donations from abroad on Palestinians in the territories; this referred not only to funds delivered by the PLO-Jordan Joint Committee, but also to aid from international charities and remittances from relatives working in oil-rich states of the Gulf. Their response was to build frameworks for action that blended nationalist purposes with practical solutions to housing, educational, health, legal, and economic problems. These organizations were to constitute a Palestinian mobilizational base free of outside influence and capable of sustaining a long struggle for the complete liberation of Palestine. As described by McDowall, these intellectuals envisioned grass-roots organizations operating under local leadership and according to participatory norms that would produce more Palestinian activists than Israel could ever imprison or deport.

McDowall's portrayal of this movement as an engineered response by West Bank intellectuals to PLO policies perceived as dangerously moderate, or as reflecting their strategic, a priori analysis of the Palestinian predicament, is overdrawn. By "intellectuals" he seems to mean the second-echelon leaders of the Communist Party and the main anti-Fatah factions of the PLO—the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. These elements did play a crucial role in the intifada and many of them did resent and distrust the external PLO leadership. But in the early 1980s the majority of Palestinians in the territories, including intellectuals, greatly feared the near-term consequences of Israel's annexationist policies. Their frustration with the PLO was not that it was wavering in its commitment to the complete liberation of Palestine, but that it did not seem capable of beginning negotiations with Israel over more attainable goals or of re-



sponding to the actual needs of Palestinians in the territories confronted with the apparent Israelization of the territories. Studies of volunteer work cooperatives, health care organizations, women's organizations, trade unions, student associations, youth groups in refugee camps, and other grass-roots organizations repeatedly show that these mobilizing frameworks for collective action evolved gradually, from discrete, small-scale, cooperative responses to the practical needs of Palestinians in various sectors or locales, into networks linked through representatives of the various PLO factions to the overall nationalist movement.<sup>10</sup> The predominant tone of their nationalist appeals was not a rejection of compromise with Israel, but a more generalized commitment to Palestinian statehood and to the principle of basing the struggle for national rights on the empowerment of masses of Palestinians. The strategic emphasis was disengagement from Israel, leaving political and diplomatic decisions to the external leadership of the PLO.<sup>11</sup>

Nonetheless, McDowall's identification of the "popular organizations" as a crucial innovation in Palestinian resistance to the occupation, his contention that they emerged as the result of frustration with the PLO, his identification of the crucial role of activists from various PLO factions in their formation, and his argument that they formed the seedbed of the intifada are echoed by excellent studies published subsequently by Joost Hiltermann, F. Robert Hunter, and Salim Tamari. Although Hunter argues that the PLO sought to control the influence of grass-roots movements in the territories by authorizing mayors, intellectuals, and notables

<sup>10</sup> For accounts of the pre-intifada development of such grass-roots organizations and the crucial mobilizational role they played, see Islah Abdul Jawwad, "The Evolution of the Political Role of the Palestinian Women's Movement in the Uprising," in Hudson, 63-76; Lisa Taraki, "The Development of Political Consciousness among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, 1967-1987," in Nassar and Heacock, 59-62; Mustafa Barghouthi and Rita Giacaman, "The Emergence of an Infrastructure of Resistance: The Case of Health," in Nassar and Heacock, 73-87; Hiltermann, passim; Husain Jameel Bargouti, "Jeep versus Bare Feet: The Villages in the Intifada," in Nassar and Heacock, 107-9; Peretz, 74; Salim Tamari, "The Palestinian Movement in Transition: Historical Reversals and the Uprising," in Brynen, 20-22; and Hillel Frisch, "MiMa'avak Mizuyan Legiyus Politi: Temurot BiEstrategiya shel Ashaf BiShtachim" (From armed struggle to political mobilization: Trends in PLO strategy in the territories), in Gilbar and Susser (fn. 9), esp. 50-58. On the predominant role of the four major PLO factions in the territories, see esp. Hiltermann, 64-66, 173-217; Hunter, 65-66; Jarbawi (fn. 8), 296-300; and Jawwad, in Hudson.

<sup>11</sup> Regarding pre-intifada attitudes of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians toward a "separate state" solution with Israel, see Ann Mosely Lesch, *Political Perceptions of the Palestinians on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip* (Washington, D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1980); Emile Sahliyeh, *In Search of Leadership: West Bank Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1988); Moshe Ma'oz, *Palestinian Leadership on the West Bank* (London: Frank Cass, 1984); Ann Mosely Lesch and Mark Tessler, *Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinians: From Camp David to Intifada* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Mohammed Shadid and Rick Seltzer, "Political Attitudes of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," *Middle East Journal* 42 (Winter 1988).

to act as its semiofficial representatives, he also cites Fatah's mobilization of its West Bank supporters to compete with Communist Party/PNF organizing in the late 1970s as a key step in the development of a mass-based nationalist movement in the territories (pp. 31, 78–79). Hiltermann's book contains a detailed, informant-based analysis of Palestinian labor and women's organizations in the decade preceding the uprising. According to Hiltermann, the PLO provided the strategic context for these and other popular organizations to contribute to the nationalist movement. He criticizes intra-PLO factionalism as the biggest obstacle to the attainment of Palestinian rights and like other authors cites the PLO Congress in Algiers in April 1987, where substantial progress was made toward unity among rival organizations, as an essential precondition for the beginning of the intifada.

Hiltermann's main purpose, however, is to explain the growth of the popular organizations as the response of (mostly leftist) activists in the territories to the conservatism of Fatah's policies from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. Although, as Hunter points out, the PLO authorized formation of mass-based organizations, the established leadership of Fatah channeled its monetary resources to businessmen, urban notables, and established professionals, thereby delaying the growth of these organizations and intensifying factional jealousies within them. But as these "joint (Jordanian-PLO) committee" funds dried up, disappearing entirely in 1985, the popular organizations were forced to find their own resources. Hiltermann identifies resource scarcity and intense competition among rival factions as conditions helping to lay the groundwork for the intifada by increasing the number of Palestinians mobilized by the unions and women's organizations. No longer able to depend on outside funds, they were forced to develop innovative techniques for responding to the concrete problems of their constituents. Fearful that their own organizations would be overshadowed by more successful rivals, each PLO faction, in every locality and organizational setting, worked desperately to mobilize recruits from among groups not previously drawn into political activity—especially women, refugees, and workers commuting to jobs in Israel. By competing with each other within each organizational setting the PLO factions not only added useful services to the nationalist appeals they offered but also decentralized and democratized their operations.<sup>12</sup> By proliferating at the grass-roots level, these organizations produced enough capable leaders in enough different localities to

<sup>12</sup> Hiltermann, pp. 65–66; Islah Jad, "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919–1989," in Nassar and Heacock, 131; Salim Tamari (fn. 10), 22; and Taraki (fn. 10), 67.

frustrate the Israeli policy of decapitating Palestinian organizations by regularly imprisoning or deporting leaders who emerged at the national or regional level.

In one of his three contributions to these volumes Salim Tamari emphasizes the failure of the Palestinians in the territories to launch the uprising earlier. His explanation for this "nonevent" includes unusually pointed criticism of both the PLO and its most visible supporters within the territories (Tamari, in Brynen, 13–28). The funds for "steadfastness" (*sumud*) distributed by Jordan and the PLO, he argues, smothered the development of nationalist consciousness, reinforced the power of clan leaders and other traditional elites, and stifled the growth of effective forms of resistance—not in the least by allowing the Palestinian bourgeoisie to appear patriotic simply by staying in Palestine and feathering its nest. According to Tamari, the radically populist grass-roots organizations that propelled the intifada were the response of thousands of lower-echelon activists disgusted by the model of a nationalist resistance leadership whose only form of struggle was the construction of more lavish residences.

Tamari's candid and critical treatment reflects one of the many ironic symmetries between Zionism and Palestinian nationalism. A prominent and psychologically revealing theme in Israeli analyses of Zionism's success and its validity as a national movement is the extent to which the development of Zionism was a function of stresses, forces, ideas, and choices made *within* the Jewish community. By explaining outcomes as functions of *self-created* conditions and real struggles *inside* their community, for status, power, and material resources, Palestinian authors highlight in the structure of their argumentation the ontological integrity of their people's claim to separate national existence. By advancing this kind of analysis, rather than portrayals of Jews or Palestinians as reacting to or manipulated by outside forces, both Zionists and Palestinian nationalists have sought to establish their peoples as subjects, not just objects, of politics and history—even at the cost of exposing unattractive aspects of their own communities. Thus, much of the impetus for the kind of explanations for the intifada advanced in the work by Palestinians (and other sympathetic analysts, most notably Hiltermann) is to depict their people as commanding their own fate by reacting to their own self-created predicaments in creative and determinative ways.

An equally prominent theme in the studies under review is an effort to trace forms of Palestinian struggle and their differential success to the nature of the Palestinians' primary antagonist and to changes in Israeli politics and policies. On the simplest level this is the argument of the

colonial dialectic. By seeking ruthless and complete domination over Palestinians in the territories, and by making real threats to force them out of Palestine altogether, the "internal colonization" of the territories is seen as having "sown the seeds of its own destruction," giving rise to counterhegemonic mobilization based on the unification of the entire Palestinian community.<sup>13</sup>

Construed as a colonialist phenomenon, one of the distinctive aspects of Zionism, both inside Israel and within the territories, is its exclusivity—its unwillingness, in principle as well as in practice, to consider non-Jews, and particularly Arabs, as capable of becoming full-fledged members of the Israeli-Jewish national community.<sup>14</sup> Jamal Nassar and Roger Heacock thus make a telling point in their discussion of the intifada's unprecedentedly successful campaign against collaborators and informers.<sup>15</sup> In light of Zionism's ethnonational exclusivity, and in the absence of any Israeli formula for satisfying minimal Palestinian political and material demands, they note that "even collaborators were never and could never have become convinced Zionists, proponents of Greater Israel, or even convinced advocates of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands." Accordingly, the only Palestinians used in this way by the Israelis were individuals with highly suspect personal histories who commanded no respect among Palestinians generally and/or against whom the authorities could use various types of blackmail and bribery (Nassar and Heacock, 202). In this sense the ideological inability of Israel to advance a plausible hegemonic project for Palestinians as part of its control of the territories made those it called *shitufei peula* (collaborators) less useful than those who served the British (the Royal Irish Constabulary in Ireland; the Gurkhas and the Raj in India; the monarchy in Egypt) and French (tribal chiefs and *évolués* in French West Africa; traditional regional magnates in Morocco; the *harkis* in Algeria) in comparable capacities. This meant, *ceteris paribus*, that a united "anticolonialist" counter-

<sup>13</sup> Samih K. Farsoun and Jean M. Landis, "The Sociology of an Uprising: The Roots of the Intifada," in Nassar and Heacock, 19.

<sup>14</sup> See Ian S. Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980); and Yoav Peled, "Ethnic Democracy and the Legal Construction of Citizenship: Arab Citizens of the Jewish State," *American Political Science Review* 86 (June 1992), 432–43.

<sup>15</sup> This campaign against informers was highly successful in the first year of the uprising; but it degenerated later after a prolonged period of lawless conditions within Palestinian communities whose policemen had resigned, and as a result of systematic disinformation and ruthless counterintelligence operations by the Shin Bet and special Israeli army units disguised as Arabs. The best evidence for this sequence is the virtual prohibition imposed by Israeli censors on public discussion in Israel about Palestinian anticollaborationist activities in the first year of the uprising, followed, in 1989, by the high profile accorded by Israeli government officials to Palestinian killings of "suspected collaborators."

mobilization was easier for Palestinians to achieve than it otherwise might have been.

I have already noted the extent to which these authors explain the grass-roots "cellular" nature of the uprising as an unintended consequence of Israeli policies that criminalized politics of any sort and targeted regionally or nationally based Palestinian leaders for imprisonment or deportation. In these works the timing of the intifada—the fact that it took twenty years to materialize—is also seen at least in part as a function of change in the nature of Israeli policies. Specifically, many of these authors trace the uprising to the consequences of the 1977 political "reversal" in Israel.<sup>16</sup>

The Labor Party-led coalition governments that formulated and implemented occupation policies from 1967 to 1977 were fundamentally ambivalent about the future of the territories, fearful of embarking on decisive attempts to absorb or relinquish them because of the imperatives of coalition politics, and convinced of the advisability of using a carrot-and-stick approach with the Arabs who lived there. Despite land expropriation, strict limits on water use, and irritating restrictions on their daily life, many Palestinians managed to get along, if not prosper economically, as long as they stayed well clear of politics. When the Likud replaced the Labor Party as the organizer of Israeli governments, however, the fundamental meaning of the occupation changed. Under Begin, Sharon, and Shamir, the official policy of the government was to do everything possible to ensure that the territories could have no future other than permanent absorption by Israel. The carrots were largely removed from Likud government policies toward the Arabs, massive land expropriations were implemented, and under Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan and Defense Minister Sharon, policies of repression became markedly more brutal and less discriminating. Along with large-scale programs of Jewish settlement, these policies were designed to make life for Arabs so miserable that as many as possible would choose to leave.

The effect, however, was to unify the Palestinian population behind the idea of struggling collectively against the occupation rather than seeking individual options of accommodation. Tamari's essay in the Nasser and Heacock volume, for example, focuses on the merchants and the urban bourgeoisie, groups that had managed to do rather well under the occupation until Israel's introduction of a value-added tax in the territories in 1976. When the second Likud government greatly intensified

<sup>16</sup> Israeli commentators have labeled the return of the Labor Party to power after the June 1992 elections, following fifteen years of Likud domination of the political scene, as another *maapach*.

tax collection activities and staffed the military government with officers hostile to the very existence of Arab communities in the West Bank and Gaza, merchants, shopkeepers, and urban entrepreneurs found themselves unable to maintain their middle-class standard of living. This left them as frightened of the consequences of continued Israeli rule as other, previously more vulnerable classes of Palestinians. As Tamari puts it:

A combination of increasing tax pressures and a shift in the perception of the military government, which now saw the urban middle classes as part of a hostile subject population rather than as part of a "pragmatic majority that wants to live quietly" (a shift that was itself brought about by the ascendancy to power, and the staffing of the military government, by extreme right-wing elements) . . . hastened the process of involving the shopkeepers as willful activists in the uprising.<sup>17</sup>

The most profound sense in which the intifada is a reflection of its antagonist has to do with Palestinian perceptions of Israel as "rational." Thus, the uprising is described by almost all of these analysts as in large measure an attempt to change the balance of costs and benefits experienced by Israelis in their rule of the territories—an attempt rooted in the belief or unexamined assumption that Israelis and the Israeli political system are rational enough to respond to determinations that the occupation is not worth the price needed to sustain it. Indeed, it is ironic that in the 1980s, while many Israeli antiannexationists were despairing of their country's decline into the irrationalities of Jewish fundamentalism and ultranationalism, and while others believed their state to be locked into an antiaccommodationist stance by processes of settlement pushed well beyond the "point of no return," most Palestinians retained an image of Israel, if not of the Likud government, as a rational, responsive, adaptive entity.

The strategic rationale for the intifada as a calibrated mobilization designed to effect profound changes in Israeli public opinion and Israeli government policies is manifested in these writings by evaluations of its relative success in terms of changes made in Israeli cost/benefit calcula-

<sup>17</sup> Salim Tamari, "The Revolt of the Petite Bourgeoisie: Urban Merchants and the Palestinian Uprising," in Nassar and Heacock, 163. Regarding this particular dialectic between exclusivist Israeli annexationism and the widening basis for Palestinian mobilization, see also Tamari (fn. 10), 14–18; Samir Abdallah Saleh, "The Effects of Israeli Occupation on the Economy of the West Bank and Gaza Strip," in Nassar and Heacock, 37–51; Farsoun and Landis (fn. 13), 19–27; and Hunter, 47. For a case study of a Palestinian family that illuminates how the transformation of Israeli policies under the Likud eliminated any economic opportunities for Palestinians willing to accommodate themselves to Israeli rule (thereby producing the basis for the broad, cross-class alliance of forces that produced and sustained the uprising), see Beshara Doumani, "Family and Politics in Salfit," in Lockman and Beinun, 143–54.

tions regarding the value of continuing the occupation. All agree that the uprising changed these calculations. Most describe the occupation as having been a net benefit to Israel (in economic terms especially) before 1987 and a net drain afterward; they note this shift as a necessary but not sufficient condition for bringing an end to Israeli rule.

Raja Shehadeh, for example, while acknowledging the difficulties of estimation associated with Israel's refusal to announce its own budget for administering the territories, states "without reservation" that before the intifada "the occupation in no way constituted an economic burden for Israel." Quoting from work done by Meron Benvenisti's West Bank Survey Data Project, Shehadeh reports \$800 million in nonlocal taxes paid to Israel by Arab inhabitants of the territories in the first twenty years of the occupation. Another \$1 billion in insurance and benefits were deducted from the wages of Palestinians working inside of Israel and transferred to Israeli general accounts to which Palestinians have virtually no access. Other sources of revenue include a host of fees and permits required of Arabs in the occupied territories. In 1986, for example, \$35 million was collected in permits, fees, and travel taxes at the Jordan River bridges.<sup>18</sup> By contrast, the Bank of Israel reported that in its first year the intifada cost Israel \$650 million in export losses, reduced business sector production by 1.5 percent, sharply reduced Israel's "trade surplus" with the territories, and produced \$180 million in "nationally motivated" arson. In September 1989 the Defense Ministry announced that it expected the simple military cost of fighting the uprising to reach \$1.8 billion by the end of fiscal year 1990.<sup>19</sup>

In his somewhat more nuanced analyses Azmy Bishara portrays the intifada as having "made the occupation a losing economic proposition for Israel," but emphasizes that "the uprising cannot defeat Israel economically" (in Lockman and Beinín, 225–26). Because of the polarization of Israeli politics on the issue of the disposition of the territories, Bishara argues that transformation of the occupation into an economic and even political liability is a necessary but hardly sufficient condition for Israeli withdrawal. An Israeli decision to leave the territories, he suggests, will

<sup>18</sup> Shehadeh, "Israel and the Palestinians: Human Rights in the 1980s," in Brynen, 37.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 38. Howard Rosen uses the figure of \$1 billion, or 2–2.5% of Israel's annual GDP, as the cost of the intifada to the Israeli economy in 1988 and 1989. Rosen, "Economic Consequences of the Intifada," in Robert O. Freedman, ed., *The Intifada: Its Impact on Israel, the Arab World and the Superpowers* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991), 384. Quoting figures published in the Israeli press, Azmy Bishara reports that Israel's annual pre-intifada tax revenue from the territories exceeded its expenditures there by \$143 million. See Bishara, "The Uprising's Impact on Israel," in Lockman and Beinín, 225–26. See also Peretz, 150–51. Samir Abdallah Saleh's judgment in 1989 was that if the intifada had not made the occupation a net economic liability for Israel, it had made it "tangibly less profitable." Saleh (fn. 16), 49.

require more Israeli casualties, strong external pressure, and an alliance between Israeli antiannexationists and Palestinians to overcome the political power of the Israeli right wing and make the "irrationality" of the occupation politically decisive.<sup>20</sup>

The predominant view of the intifada—as the Palestinians' response to their confrontation with an adversary perceived to be at least sluggishly rational—is also reflected in the sparse and generally hostile treatment most of these authors give to the Islamicist dimension of the uprising. Apart from Jean-François Legrain's excellent treatment of the role played by Islamic Jihad and Hamas in the outbreak of the intifada in the Gaza Strip, and Schiff and Ya'ari's discussion of the difficulties encountered by Israeli interrogators as they sought to "crack" imprisoned members of these organizations (p. 230), few of these authors offer any serious consideration of Muslim fundamentalism in the uprising.<sup>21</sup> This lacuna is mainly attributable to the political sympathies of the authors. It reflects the dominant Palestinian view of Israel, at least as conveyed by these books, as rational, adaptive, and capable of change in response to convincingly and painfully sustained Palestinian demands. The Islamicists challenge this view, and undermine the strategy based upon it, by describing Israel as evil incarnate and rejecting any accommodation with the Jewish state. They equate the intifada with jihad and promote images of Israel as a blind, nonrational power structure incapable of satisfying the minimal needs of Palestinian Arabs. For Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the solution to the problem of the Palestinians is not, as the nationalist leadership of the intifada presents it, to elicit change in and from Israel (via application of direct or indirect pressures) but to define the problem as part of the worldwide challenge facing Islam and then to mobilize Islamic forces inside and outside of Palestine to destroy or dismantle the Jewish state.<sup>22</sup>

#### CONSEQUENCES OF THE INTIFADA

It is not surprising that these books, written while the intifada was still unfolding, spend much more time explaining its etiology and dynamics

<sup>20</sup> Bishara, "The Third Factor: Impact of the Intifada on Israel," in Nassar and Heacock, 276–85.

<sup>21</sup> Jean-François Legrain, "The Islamic Movement and the Intifada," in Nassar and Heacock, 175–90.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Lisa Taraki's attack on Hamas as either an instrument of Israel or a cynical attempt to carve out a niche for itself in the future Palestinian state as the "Islamic opposition." Implicit in Taraki's depiction of Israel, and of her praise of the UNLU for the "clarity of its political vision and . . . the concreteness of its aims" is that the Jewish state is substantially more rational than Hamas's desperate strategy implies. Taraki, "The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Palestinian Uprising," in Lockman and Beinun, 174–75.



than its consequences. The Brynen and Hudson volumes do contain many contributions that treat the uprising's effects on various Arab countries, Europe, the Soviet Union/Russia, and the United States. But despite initial claims by the editors of these volumes about the powerful regional and international repercussions of the intifada, most of the essays show the opposite—that except for Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian communities in Israel and the territories, the uprising has not been a watershed of any kind. Rather, both masses and elites elsewhere tended to experience it as one digressive, short-lived episode among many, which was soon subsumed within the patterns, cycles, and categories of political life in each country. In Egypt, Syria, and North Africa the impact of the uprising on events and attitudes was either marginal or short-lived or both. In the United States its impact, though also shallow, was nevertheless consequential, because of America's enormous importance in the Arab-Israeli political equation. Of greatest significance was the new impetus toward "evenhandedness" and diplomatic activism in American foreign policy in the waning months of the Reagan administration and during the Bush presidency.<sup>23</sup>

Among the Palestinians and in Israel, however, the uprising is portrayed as having effected a fundamental break with the past. Having finally succeeded in putting Israel on the political, diplomatic, and moral defensive, and with Jordan having officially and substantially cut its ties to the West Bank and Gaza, their Arab inhabitants, it is said, will never again be consigned to the political oblivion of the previous twenty years—neither by Israel nor by the PLO. The former leadership of the notables, already weakened, is now gone for good. If the uprising has not led to a revolution in gender relations or cultural attitudes, it has mobilized tens of thousands of men and women into an active engagement in political life of a sort they had never imagined possible.<sup>24</sup>

Within Israel, as Mark Tessler describes most systematically, the inti-

<sup>23</sup> The most useful discussions of the particular effects of the intifada in various Arab countries are Lamis Andoni, "Jordan," in Brynen, 165-94; and Fred Lawson, "Syria," in Brynen, 215-34. See also F. Gregory Gause III, "The Arab World and the Intifada," in Freedman (fn. 18), 191-219.

<sup>24</sup> Regarding the greatly increased clout of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians within the Palestinian movement as a whole, see Khalidi (fn. 8), 124-26. On the irreversible effect of the intifada's psychological, cultural, and political vitalization of the occupied territories on Palestinians, see Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi, "The Politics of Cultural Revival," in Hudson, 77-83; Rex Brynen, "Israel and Palestine: Implications of the Intifada," in Brynen, 7-9; and Hunter, 216. Regarding the displacement of traditional elites, see, for example, Bargouti (fn. 10), 110-18. On the significant but very incomplete success of Palestinian women in their efforts to use the intifada to advance gender equality, see Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson, "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers," in Lockman and Beinun, 155-70; Jad (fn. 11), 125-42; and Jawwad (fn. 10), 63-76.

fada forced the previously most popular policy toward the territories—maintenance of the status quo—virtually to disappear from surveys of public opinion as an option favored by respondents. While short-run reactions included higher proportions of Israelis favoring mass deportations of Arabs, the more lasting and substantial effect of the intifada was to convince more Israelis more fully of the attractiveness of separating the two communities—whether by banning entry of West Bank and Gaza Arabs into Israel proper, deporting them from the territories, or by ending Israeli rule of the territories.<sup>25</sup> Although the rise to power of a Labor-led government that would in principle be willing to grant Palestinian demands for an end to Israeli rule was the central objective of the uprising leadership, no author anticipated that it would occur as rapidly as it did.

Still the most prominent judgments offered about the effects of the intifada on Israel are consistent with images of the Jewish state as at least sluggishly adaptive. Tessler and other authors stress the significance of reinvigorating the substantive importance of the pre-1967 border, the “green line” separating Israel from the territories. The intifada delivered a mortal blow to Israeli annexationist efforts to erase that line from the everyday life of Israelis, to routinize the incorporation of the territories into Israel and thereby remove the question of what to do with the West Bank and Gaza from the agenda of Israeli politics (Tessler, in Brynen, 63–66). If the Palestinians are ever to see an end to the occupation and the fulfillment of their demand for national self-determination, this re-problematization of the territories—making changing cost/benefit calculations meaningful in the Israeli political debate and relevant to Israeli policy choices—was a necessary step.<sup>26</sup>

A crucial element in this regard was the insistence of the intifada leadership and of the PLO outside that the appropriate role of Israeli Arabs (the “Palestinians of 1948”) was not to join the uprising but to support it from within Israel with material assistance and political pressure. As Nadim Rouhana’s research thoroughly documents, Israeli Arabs steered clear of integrating themselves into the uprising, which vividly reinforced the green line by allowing their legal status as citizens within Israel to take precedence over their emotional, national, and even family

<sup>25</sup> Tessler, “The Impact of the *Intifada* on Israeli Political Thinking,” in Brynen, 43–96. The question of whether the Rabin government will actually reach and implement an agreement with the Palestinians that would lead to such an outcome is an open and quite different question. For another highly nuanced analysis of the impact of the first year and a half of the intifada on Israeli society, see Peretz, 119–62.

<sup>26</sup> See Ian Lustick, “Israeli State-Building in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Theory and Practice,” *International Organization* 41 (Winter 1987).

ties to Arabs a few miles away in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.<sup>27</sup> As a result of what in this and other respects was an extraordinarily well calibrated struggle, leading Israelis to feel relatively safe on one side of the green line and in danger on the other, few Israelis could insist that there were no differences between Jewish-ruled territory on either side of the green line or that the eventual disposition of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was not an open and serious question facing the country.

#### THE INTIFADA AS EVIDENCE FOR THEORIES OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

Conspicuously missing from these studies of the Palestinian uprising is any sustained discussion of conceptual or theoretical issues. With the partial exception of Hiltermann, no serious attempt is made to use theories or concepts of collective action or revolution to explain the onset, development, or consequences of the uprising. Nor are these authors interested in criticizing or corroborating claims advanced in those literatures on the basis of what they learned from the events they recounted. Even Hiltermann limits himself to introductory nods to work by Jeffery Paige and Charles Tilly and an overall Smelserian framework for considering how mobilizational facilities combine with increasing structural strain to produce mass political action.

The most prominent themes and motifs in these studies do, however, correspond to the main points of contemporary debate about how revolutions and other forms of collective action should be studied. Recall, for example, the strong attacks by most of these authors on "volcano" accounts of the intifada, accounts that attribute the uprising to an uncontrolled explosion of pent-up anger and resentment. These attacks echo what has now become conventional wisdom in pertinent theoretical discussions—rejection of efforts in the late 1960s and early 1970s to explain revolts, implicitly classified as nonrational, violent, and/or "deviant" outbursts of disorder, by aggregate measures of discontent, frustration, or anomie.

The single most important theoretical impetus for studying the relationship between discontent and collective action has been rational choice. Rational-choice and game-theoretic models encourage analysts to replace images of the "irrational mob" with models of dissidents as motivated by the same rationalist calculi as operate in the minds of those

<sup>27</sup> Rouhana, "Palestinians in Israel: Responses to the Uprising," in Brynen, 97–117. For a different view, one more reflective of traditional Israeli Arabist perspectives, stressing the uprising's "Palestinianizing" impact on Arabs in Israel, see Elie Rekhess, "The Arabs in Israel and the Intifada," in Freedman (fn. 19), 343–69.

representing the "forces of order." Equally important in explaining the enthusiasm with which rational-choice models have been applied to revolution and revolt is that the main intellectual challenge confronting rational-choice theory—explaining collective action despite the logical force of the free-rider problem—is posed starkly in studies of illegal mass political action, where, it would appear, risks associated with participation are high and the salience of individual contributions negligible. By studying popular revolts and revolutions, scholars can test the validity of their conceptual inventions while responding to an important challenge in a prestigious academic field.

Monographic studies of episodes of illegal mass collective action, including the kind of work reviewed here, provide both comparativists and collective-action theorists with a way to respond to the claim of Edward Mueller and Karl-Dieter Opp that thought experiments and survey research are the only methods for determining how collective-action problems are really solved.<sup>28</sup> Intensive, nonquantitative consideration of specific cases provides an attractive and popular alternative for testing hypotheses or at least corroborating hunches.

The difficulty with this approach is that the ideographic renderings of the cases upon which the individual theorists rely to test their theories are themselves organized around prior, usually implicit determinations of which variables and which mechanisms were responsible for outcomes. Such an expectation does not require any conscious suppression of unfavorable evidence. All that would be required is the expectation that political scientists facing their operational database (that is, the monographic literature on their cases) would exhibit the same tendency toward "experimenter demand" that is so well established in the social psychology literature. It has been amply documented in that field that unless precautions are taken to ensure that subjects are blind to the purpose of the research, or even under false beliefs about its purpose, the likelihood of responses supportive of the investigator's hypothesis is significantly increased. The same logic applied in this domain, where the database is monographic literature rather than responses by experimental subjects, leads to the expectation that researchers will treat some sources and some interpretations or readings of sources as more salient and persuasive than others. Specifically, it is highly probable that sources or interpretations of sources that are supportive or consistent with theories and hypotheses under consideration will be deemed more salient than those organized according to different categories and/or whose findings

<sup>28</sup> Mueller and Opp, "Rational Choice and Rebellious Collective Action," *American Political Science Review* 80 (June 1986), 475.

run counter to hopes or expectations. Monographic treatments of the intifada, for example, are better understood as writings *of* it—accounts that, in a sense, create it (for the comparativistically inclined analyst)—rather than as discussions *about* it, which would imply some independent and unambiguously available narrative of what it was or is.

This reality means that the actual role of monographic evidence for the collective-action theorists is not to provide a transparent, inclusive record of “the facts” with which to test and refine independently generated theories. Instead, when theorists cite such material in support of their propositions, we learn that the hypothesis or theory advanced by the researcher, or at least the underlying categories, was also the hypothesis, theory, or categories chosen by the author of the monograph as best able to elucidate the “facts” as he/she had collected them. It is therefore no simple matter to mobilize secondary source material in *decisive* support of one set of theoretical claims over others. At the same time it is unnecessarily pessimistic to ignore the usefulness of the weight of monographic evidence, indicating, *ceteris paribus*, that the postulates and lines of analysis judged most useful by those closest to the primary sources are consistent with theories advanced by the researcher.

Both the promise and the limitations of this strategy for testing solutions to the collective-action problem can be illustrated by showing that many of the contending claims of those who have been grappling with it can find support in the record of the intifada, a record substantially established by the works under review.

In 1981 Harvey Waterman characterized the theories of rebellion, revolt, and revolution that had been popular in the 1960s and early 1970s as assuming the nonrational character of mass revolutionary action. This approach traced illegal mass action to the emotions of crowds and explosions of accumulated passions unconnected to calculations that collective mobilization could effect desired improvements. This approach, which was associated with models of relative deprivation, notions of anomie, and images of disequilibrium, discouraged consideration of collective political action as the product of rational calculation. Rather, it treated the occurrence of uprisings or revolts as an artifact of particularly stressful junctures in the process of modernization, or it focused on violence (deemed deviant) as the dependent variable rather than on the broader and analytically more interesting category of collective political action.

To evaluate this overall perspective, Waterman surveyed the findings of fifty-eight studies of mass political activity. In Waterman's account, scholarly treatments of cases ranging from the Poujadists, to the East German revolt of 1953, to the Basque national revival movement were

seen as having advanced much beyond the older nonrational, "expressivist," or accidental constructions of collective political action.<sup>29</sup> Waterman argues that by understanding collective political action in value-added terms, newer work was able to link claims about historical, economic, or social preconditions for various types of mobilization to a model of mass mobilization as rational—a function of the perceived desirability of mass action by participants purposively seeking to better the circumstances of their lives. Waterman's basic point corresponds directly to the rejection by most writers on the intifada of "volcano" models of the uprising, and to their vigorous insistence on the collective rationality of Palestinian behavior—including mass demonstrations, riots, stone throwing, and harassment—as calculated to have specific and beneficial political consequences.

From the perspective of most work on the topic during the last decade, however, it is Waterman's perspective that seems archaic. Implicitly he assumed that there is always a latticework of organizations among potential participants in collective political action, thereby permitting expression of the collective rationality of action despite what would appear to be the irrationality for any single individual to take the risks or pay the costs of participation. In the Palestinian case it was precisely the absence of organizational frameworks in the 1960s and 1970s and their crystallization in the 1980s that made the intifada possible. Closer to the mark, therefore, is Rod Aya's critique of theories of revolution associated with Ted Robert Gurr, James C. Davies, Neil Smelser, and Chalmers Johnson. Like Waterman (and most writers on the intifada), Aya insists that "collective violence is no mere eruption of rage" and cannot be satisfactorily explained by treating it as an epiphenomenon of social change, as a reflection of disequilibrium, or as the result of shifts in aggregate levels of discontent, whether absolute or relative.<sup>30</sup> Reflecting work done by Charles Tilly and his students, Aya emphasizes the political, organizational, and mobilizational tasks that need to be accomplished to translate diffuse anger into collective political action and that, once accomplished, provide strategic explanations for its occurrence. In the treatments of the intifada surveyed above, the theme of the uprising as a result of disciplined political organization by Palestinians who had too often been deemed only objects but not subjects of history conforms pre-

<sup>29</sup> Waterman, "Reasons and Reason: Collective Political Activity in Comparative and Historical Perspective," *World Politics* 33 (July 1981), 558–60.

<sup>30</sup> Aya, "Popular Intervention in Revolutionary Situations," in Charles Bright and Susan Harding, eds., *Statemaking and Social Movements: Essays in History and Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), 326.

cisely to Aya's critique of older theories of revolution and the proper new orientation of what he calls "the political model of mass mobilization."<sup>31</sup>

Beginning in the late 1970s, analysts of revolutions and other less spectacular forms of collective political action have taken as givens its value-added character, its collective rationality, and the need for organized, mobilizing frameworks for action. These assumptions have allowed and encouraged them to frame their analyses more specifically as explanations of collective political action, especially revolutionary behavior, by identifying mechanisms for overcoming the free-rider problem, that is, for producing collectively rational coordinated activity out of what would appear to be individually irrational choices. Although writers of the *intifada* virtually never explicitly cite this work as inspiration or support for their own arguments, most of the mechanisms identified or hypothesized by collective-action theorists can be found in the works reviewed here, as they seek to specify (1) the mobilizational techniques and responses that translated generalized discontent into sustained collective action and (2) the larger circumstances that account for the occurrence of revolutionary mobilization only in the late 1980s and not earlier.

In his influential work on revolutionary activity by Vietnamese peasants, Samuel Popkin emphasizes the importance of locally active political entrepreneurs who offer peasants the opportunity to solve existential problems by collective action with revolutionary payoffs.<sup>32</sup> Once they are convinced that only through cooperation can they survive, and knowing that noncooperators will benefit much less, if at all, from the direct action of those who do cooperate (such as raiding Japanese food-storage facilities), cooperation rather than defection becomes a dominant strategy. A subsidiary but crucial element in Popkin's account is the role that countrywide organizations and ideologies play in providing local entrepreneurs with the information, skills, and reputation for trustworthiness they need to begin the mobilization process. Another dimension of his "solution" to the free-rider problem is akin to one suggested originally by Mancur Olson, namely, that if groups are small (for example, organized on the village level), monitoring of defectors is expected, the risks of free riding are increased, and the rationality of participation enhanced.

Ample support from the Palestinian case is available for Popkin's model of rational villagers mobilized by local entrepreneurs to "bootstrap" themselves over the free-rider problem into mass collective action.

<sup>31</sup> See Aya, "Theories of Revolution Reconsidered," *Theory and Society* 8 (July 1979).

<sup>32</sup> I draw from Popkin's account in his essay "Political Entrepreneurs and Peasant Movements in Vietnam," in Michael Taylor, ed., *Rationality and Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Hiltermann, for example, shows in great detail how operatives of the various PLO factions with nationalist, revolutionary motivations created grass-roots techniques for providing, through participation in labor unions, youth organizations, and women's groups, needed services to individual Palestinians.<sup>33</sup> Precisely consistent with Popkin's model is the identification in many of these studies of several thousand local leaders active in networks of small, local, grass-roots organizations. Through these organizations, leaders could provide selective, concrete benefits to participants, monitor individual defections, and ready themselves to shift the mobilizational potential of their groups to a national struggle when the opportunity presented itself. Equally consistent with Popkin's argument is the emphasis I have noted in these same studies on the importance of the PLO's overarching position as the recognized representative of Palestinian nationalism and the status of local bootstrapping leaders as representatives of the PLO through its various factions. There is, however, one mechanism of bootstrap mobilization that receives little attention from Popkin but is identified (though not named as such) by Hiltermann, Tamari, Jad, and Taraki—competitive intensification of factional efforts to expand constituencies by providing new incentives.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast and in response to Popkin's work, James Scott and Michael Taylor have cited as primary one of the factors that Popkin treats as subsidiary—a preexisting sense of community among participants in collective revolutionary action that makes it possible for organizers to appeal to the rationality of their constituents as a basis for participation.<sup>35</sup> Indeed evidence for this critique is as available in the accounts of the intifada I have surveyed as is material illustrating Popkin's argument. Two important themes recur in discussions of the etiology of the uprising and its resilience: the vitalization of nationalist consciousness in the occupied territories in the decade prior to the uprising and the solidarities of family, clan, neighborhood, and locale that lay behind the willingness of individuals to take the risks associated with confronting Israeli soldiers and Shin Bet (security service) agents. The crucial early role in the uprising played by villagers and inhabitants of refugee camps is vividly depicted: close-knit communities transformed themselves from be-

<sup>33</sup> On the crucial activity of intifada activists as seeking, with direct services to constituents, to "outadminister" the Israeli authorities and draw previously nonpoliticized individuals into the national struggle, see Hiltermann, 53–57, 68, 78, 87–89, 126–28, 143, 163–72, 209–11; Hunter, 121–41; George T. Abed, "The Economic Viability of a Palestinian State," in Hudson, 210–11; and other sources cited in fn. 10.

<sup>34</sup> See fn. 10.

<sup>35</sup> See Scott, "Hegemony and the Peasantry," *Politics and Society* 7, no. 3 (1977); and Taylor, "Rationality and Revolutionary Collective Action," in Taylor (fn. 32).



ing convenient for the operation of informer networks to protective and supportive environments for self-help projects and militant resistance.<sup>36</sup>

Michael Hechter's argument is a representative response to this "community," "iterated game," or "preexisting norm" explanation for collective action. Examined closely, writes Hechter, these notions camouflage some larger, already solved collective-action/free-rider problem and so cannot themselves be considered the solution to the problem itself. Returning to Popkin's theme, Hechter emphasizes the key role of formal organizations (in contexts permitting monitoring of contributions to joint efforts) in activating community solidarities and associated norms.<sup>37</sup> This line of argument is also present in depictions of the intifada. Indeed, virtually all the accounts just cited as emphasizing preexisting or latent community identities as ingredients in the intifada include at least some discussion about how the actions of specific kinds of individuals with more education, prison experience, ideologically organized beliefs, direct ties to PLO factions, and/or special leadership qualities were instrumental in eliciting these identities and endowing them with revolutionary meaning.

Following Mancur Olson, traditional rational-choice approaches have little difficulty explaining why elites participate in collective action: the payoff for collective success is tangible, direct, and individual—the consolidation or advancement of their status as leaders. This "selective incentive" explanation for activism by elites is less satisfying, however, to the extent that the following conditions are present: the settings involved are only embryonically organized, the size of the group to be organized is small (and hence, presumably, less "profitable" to lead), the prospects of success are dim, the cost of failure is extremely high, and the number of competing or parallel groups is large. Under these circumstances, explaining activism by elites or by those who view themselves as potential leaders faces virtually the same free-rider problem as does explaining nonelite participation. In very great measure these are the circumstances

<sup>36</sup> On the crystallization of a distinctive Palestinian nationalist consciousness among Arabs in the territories in the 1970s and 1980s and its relationship to the intifada, see especially Taraki (fn. 10), 53–71. On the emergence of latent *gemeinschaft* affinities in Palestinian villages and refugee camps as an ingredient in the uprising, see Adil Yahya, "The Role of the Refugee Camps," in Nassar and Heacock, 91–106; Bargouti (fn. 10), 107–23; Hunter, 120–48; Penny Johnson and Lee O'Brien with Joost Hiltermann, "The West Bank Rises Up," in Lockman and Beinín, 29–42; Anita Vitullo, "Uprising in Gaza," in Lockman and Beinín, 43–56; Melissa Baumann, "Gaza Diary," in Lockman and Beinín, 57–66; and Giacaman and Johnson (fn. 24), 155–70. For illustration of the complex interconnections between familial and local community ties that bind individuals together while opening opportunities for collaborators to penetrate villages on behalf of the Israeli authorities, see Helen Winternitz, *A Season of Stones: Living in a Palestinian Village* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1991).

<sup>37</sup> Hechter, "Comment: On the Inadequacy of Game Theory for the Solution of Real-World Collective Action Problems," in Karen Schweers Cook and Margaret Levi, eds., *The Limits of Rationality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 240–49.

under which the intifada was ignited and sustained. Hence, the problem is posed: why would thousands of people, despite the risks and costs, make such enormous individual efforts to assemble separate, largely self-contained organizations and committees? In this instance, after all, they had no reason to think that their individual efforts would make a decisive contribution to the end of the occupation or advance them toward leadership positions within the Palestinian community as a whole.<sup>38</sup>

One approach to this problem departs in two important ways from Olson's seminal treatment: by considering the "psychic rewards" of various behaviors as part of the economy of rational choice; and by introducing differences among interacting rational actors in the sophistication or substance of their intrapsychic operationalization of rationality. Mueller and Opp argue that rebellious behavior is best explained by a combination of sophisticated calculations of the relationship between public goods and private interest. These calculations lead individuals to perceive their personal interests as best served by redefining Prisoners' Dilemma-type games as assurance games. Mueller and Opp also cite a "martyr syndrome," which leads some participants to prefer the risks of great personal sacrifice to inaction that does not advance prospects for achieving public goods.<sup>39</sup> Jon Elster's treatment emphasizes the differential internalization of social norms, leading to a dynamic mixture of motivations among those having to choose whether to participate in collective action.<sup>40</sup> Timur Kuran explains the puzzling suddenness of revolutionary upheavals by postulating differences in the propensity of individuals to tolerate the psychic distress of contradicting private preferences or beliefs with public behavior. Embracing a kind of Guevarist "foco" theory of collective action, Kuran proposes that cascading patterns of transformation—from collective apathy toward acquiescence in, or support for, an authority structure, to collective defiance and explicit renunciation of its claims—are traceable to the catalytic effect of actions by individuals with low thresholds for tolerating psychic dissonance when many other individuals are near their thresholds.<sup>41</sup>

An obvious difficulty associated with testing this sort of approach to

<sup>38</sup> According to one estimate, there were 45,000 "popular committees" at the neighborhood, village, and block level in the occupied territories by mid-May 1988. *New York Times*, May 15, 1988. Cited and discussed by Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock, "The Revolutionary Transformation of the Palestinians under Occupation," in Nassar and Heacock, 199.

<sup>39</sup> Mueller and Opp (fn. 28), 471–88. For accusations that Mueller and Opp have abandoned rational choice altogether and for their response, see George Klosko, Edward N. Mueller, and Karl-Dieter Opp, "Rebellious Collective Action Revisited," *American Political Science Review* 81 (June 1987), 557–66.

<sup>40</sup> Elster, *The Cement of Society: A Study of Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1–49, 248–87.

<sup>41</sup> Kuran, "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44 (October 1991).

collective action is the need to observe intrapsychic phenomena in order, for example, to classify individuals according to Elster's different types of moral rationality and to do so independent of the behavior these differences are supposed to produce.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, many of the themes and motifs within the literature on the intifada are not only consistent with the claims and models put forward by Mueller and Opp, Elster, and Kuran, but also support their insistence that revolutionary collective action cannot be explained within the parameters of what Elster and Taylor have called "thin rationality."<sup>43</sup>

There are of course plenty of references in the works under review to the heroism, self-sacrifice, and dedication of Palestinian participants in the intifada. Anecdotes abound of individuals and villages willing to endure great hardship to make minor material or symbolic contributions to the collective struggle, and there are many descriptions of the sense of satisfaction reported by those whose losses would appear to have been most severe, including the "mothers of martyrs." The very secrecy that protected the identity of midlevel activists and made possible the sustained operation of the United National Command of the Uprising also deprived that leadership of almost any hope of personal reward for its efforts. Schiff and Ya'ari, Peretz, Said, Hunter, and Jarbawi emphasize an accumulation of rage and humiliation that seemed, in combination with catalytic instances of exemplary sacrifice, suddenly to reverse the terms of the collective-action problem. It shattered the psychological barrier of fear, which in turn removed the deterrent effect of the Israeli army, reduced the external cost of bringing public behavior in line with private preferences, and forced those seeking the most prudent course to adopt public behaviors consistent with the intifada rather than with the demands of the Israeli authorities.<sup>44</sup>

A prominent point of contention in treatments of revolution relates to the agent-structure problem. As Theda Skocpol has framed it: to what extent do revolutions (and we may say other sorts of mass collective action) "come"; to what extent are they made? Typically, "structuralist" approaches such as those advanced by Eric Wolf, Jeffery Paige, and Skocpol are counterposed to "voluntarist" arguments such as those of Taylor, Popkin, and Scott. As is often pointed out, however, these approaches are not necessarily contradictory. Structuralist theories can be

<sup>42</sup> There is of course the additional practical problem of making the required observations of so many individuals while a revolutionary process is under way.

<sup>43</sup> See Taylor (fn. 35), 66-67.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., Edward Said, "Intifada and Independence," in Lockman and Beinin, 14; Jarbawi (fn. 8), 296; Peretz, 39-52; Joe Stork, "The Significance of Stones: Notes from the Seventh Month," in Lockman and Beinin, 67-80; and Hunter, 89, 220.

understood as identifying the conditions shaping the distribution of probabilities that one or more of the "voluntarist" techniques for overcoming the collective-action problem will succeed. When Goodwin and Skocpol predict revolution as more likely in colonial settings characterized by exclusionary policies, featuring cross-class solidarities among the excluded, and incentives for broad-based, illegal mobilization, they are in effect identifying the conditions which make it more probable that Popkin's service-oriented, bootstrapping entrepreneurs, Elster's "everyday Kantian" activists, or Kuran's "foco" exemplars will produce solutions to the free-rider problem that can match mass action to aggregate rationality.<sup>45</sup>

Again, Goodwin and Skocpol's argument predicting revolution from the characteristics of the political space permitted by the governing regime for the expression of discontent finds substantial corroboration in the timing of the intifada and in the nature of Likud policies toward Arabs in the territories. They were policies that led virtually all Palestinians to consider themselves as equally and dangerously at risk from a continuation of the occupation. A similar sort of integration of structure and agency in explanations of collective action is achieved by Jeffrey Berejikian. Drawing on the work done by Amos Tversky and his collaborators on asymmetric framing of decisions in order to mitigate losses or to pursue possible gains, Berejikian argues that revolution is much more likely (that is, the various obstacles to collective action are more likely to be overcome) when discontent is framed as a response to threats of loss rather than as associated with missed opportunities for gain.<sup>46</sup> That is, of course, precisely what Tamari, Hunter, Peretz, Schiff and Ya'ari, and others whose work I have summarized say about the nature and effect of Likud policies of de facto annexation, of substituting sticks for all carrots in the implementation of occupation policy, and of the frighteningly prominent discussion of mass deportation as a solution to the "Arab problem."

In sum, then, the experience of the intifada, at least as presented in the works under review, provides strong support for the argument that new kinds of organizations are likely to be the decisive variable in producing sustained collective action where before there had been only widespread discontent. These are organizations that match real needs of individuals

<sup>45</sup> Jeff Goodwin and Theda Skocpol, "Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World," *Politics and Society* 17 (December 1989). This is the only theoretical or general work of which I am aware that explicitly includes the intifada as a case, or potential case, of revolutionary collective action.

<sup>46</sup> Jeffrey Berejikian, "Revolutionary Collective Action and the Agent-Structure Problem," *American Political Science Review* 86 (September 1992), 647-57.

to larger political purposes and are designed for, evolved in accordance with, or correspond to the distinctive contours of available political space, that is, the particular combination of constraints and opportunities that doom some forms of struggle while enabling others. With respect to the occurrence, timing, and persistence of the intifada, this conclusion accords, not only with the best substantiated and most frequently cited claims within the monographic works under review, but also, happily, with the general direction taken by theorists of collective action over the last decade.

To be sure, a host of less popular explanations of mass collective action, such as the crucial contribution of young people or the importance of the "entertainment value" of such activity, could also find corroboration within this body of work on the intifada.<sup>47</sup> In conclusion it is worth repeating, however, that there is at least one important explanation for the nonoccurrence of collectively rational action that no writer on the intifada even implicitly uses to explain why the uprising took more than twenty years to erupt. This unused line of argument is based on the distortion of individual perceptions and calculations associated with hegemonic beliefs. One might be tempted to infer support from this lacuna for James Scott's strenuous rejection of hegemonic explanations for patterns of collective inaction (at least among peasants).<sup>48</sup> It would be wrong to do so, since neither Likud nor Labor governments in Israel have even attempted to find a basis for advancing a hegemonic formula attractive to Palestinians. Nevertheless, the very absence of attempts by Israel to mystify its domination of Palestinians in language that Palestinians might conceivably accept and the unavailability of a plausible basis for such an appeal are themselves excellent reasons to predict that as long as the Palestinians remain in the occupied territories and under Israeli rule, the collective-action problem will not be a decisive barrier against sudden rebellion or sustained resistance.

<sup>47</sup> Gordon Tullock, "The Paradox of Revolution," *Public Choice* 11 (1971). On the vanguard role of youth in the uprising and the obvious thrill involved in confronting confused Israeli soldiers in the first weeks of the uprising, see Stork (fn. 44), 67-81; Hunter, 67; Hiltermann, 42, 210; Johnson and O'Brien with Hiltermann (fn. 36), 34; and Legrain (fn. 21), 186.

<sup>48</sup> See Scott, *Weapons of the Weak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). For evidence directly challenging Scott's thesis, see Susan C. Stokes, "Hegemony, Consciousness, and Political Change in Peru," *Politics and Society* 19, no. 3 (1991).