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Palestinian Women of the Intifada: the Women's Committees, 1987-1988

by

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Introduction

From 1987 to 1992, the Palestinian Intifada was characterized as a movement for national self-determination of Palestinians. The Palestinian women and women's committees aided the Intifada (uprising), while their institutional platform was impacted by a combination of forces such as class, political, and gender issues that permeated amongst the occupied territories known as the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in 1987. The Intifada broke out in December of that year, which has been explained as both a spontaneous outbreak as well as within the context of "twenty years of political struggle between Israel and Palestinians."¹ This twenty years of background is an effect of the 1967 War between Syria, Egypt, and Jordan against Israel. As a result, the Israel won the war that consequently led to the usurpation of lands from the Palestinian peoples of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.² Under occupation, Israeli measures were adopted that included not only land expropriation, but "exploitation of water resources, restrictions on agriculture and industrial development, and the like –have dispossessed of their lands and livelihood and forced into wage labor in the Israeli economy" giving a context for the creation of both Palestinian labor unions and women's committees.³

The first women's committee created in 1978, in Ramallah, West Bank, was a result of the fact that much of the middle class and none of the lower class Palestinian women could join the preexisting women's charitable societies, suggesting that class was a decision factor for the creation of the first women's committee. In the 1980s, the women's committee split into four factions implicating that political alignments fractured

¹ FACTS Information Committee Jerusalem, *Towards A State of Independence: The Palestinian Uprising, December 1987- August 1988* (Jerusalem: FACTS Information Committee Jerusalem, 1988), 2.

² Robert F. Hunter, *The Palestinian Uprising: A War by Other Means* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 16.

³ Souad Rashed Dajani, *The Intifada* (Amman: Centre for Hebraic Studies University of Jordan, 1990), 15.

the initial organization. By the time of the Intifada these political affiliations were, which resulted in the creation of Higher Women's Council (HWC) in December of 1988. The foremost concern of the women's committees was the right for Palestinian self-determination, while feminism tended to be relegated as a secondary concern. Furthermore, there were male and female gendered differences in gaining respect during the Palestinian uprising, while there was little difference in actual tactics amongst the genders. However, women across class lines were nevertheless increasingly involved within the political movement of the Intifada, in contrast to prior generations like the 1903 women's charitable societies.

Literature Review

The scholarship of the Palestinian Intifada, and particularly the women who were involved within the committees that aided the uprising, employed the themes of labor and class issues, gender, and the political tactics for nationhood within the rhetoric of their theses. Much of the literature, however, relied on multiple themes in addressing the issues of women's involvement within the Intifada. It has been evident that Joost R. Hiltermann's *Behind the Intifada* (1991) concerned itself with labor and political or public tactics during the movement, while Islah Jad's "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women 1919-1989" (1990) embodied the issues of gender and class. On the other hand, Hiltermann's "The Women's Movement during the Uprising" (1998) thematically mirrored Jad's work on popular committees.

For instance, Joost R. Hiltermann's *Behind the Intifada: Labor and Women's Movements in the Occupied Territories* (1991) explained that trade unions and women's

committees provided “economic, social, and political infrastructure of Palestinian society,” because “they have out administered the Israeli occupation by reaching those areas of daily life the occupier could not reach, and by mobilizing people whose loyalty the occupier could never gain.”⁴ In Hiltermann’s writing, he established that infrastructure, which can be defined as “soft” because it concerns itself with the building blocks of society such as education and healthcare, as embodying the spheres of politics, economics, and social aspects that make up a society. Accordingly, the women’s committees and other organizations were the essential “institutional infrastructure of resistance to the Israeli military occupation.”⁵

Behind the Intifada established that post-1967 war Israeli victory and consequently the occupation of the territories of the West Bank and the Gaza strip, necessitated these worker committees and mobilized the labor force during the Intifada. Other works that argue from the point of view on labor and proletarian groups as being essential to the initial year of the Intifada includes Penny Johnson’s and Rita Giacaman’s “Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers” (1989) which utilized anecdotal interviews, and Souad R. Dajani *The Intifada* (1990). Hiltermann established that women’s committees were essential to the Intifada movement during its initial years, as a consequence of military occupation rather than an inherently spontaneous movement, while arguing that the women’s involvement within the committees suggest that “the traditional obstacles to women’s participation in public affairs have eroded steadily over

⁴ Joost R. Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada: Labor and Women’s Movements in the Occupied Territories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 13.

⁵ Ibid, 13/14.

the past ten years, as women have increasingly joined mass organizations in spite of the taboos associated with their doing so.”⁶

However, Islah Jad’s “From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women 1919-1989” concerned itself with women’s popular movements overtime and established that traditional roles of women were merely extended from family to community within the Intifada movement. Unlike Hiltermann, Jad stipulated that there was an inherent lack of feminist consciousness within the women’s organizations during the Intifada because of the perpetuated gender division of labor and women taking part in their “vanguard role.”⁷ It is clear that the prevalent issues within Jad’s rendering concerned itself with both class and gendered issues. By detailing historically the evolution of women’s involvement from charitable societies of 1903 to the Women’s Worker Committee of the 1970s to their involvement within the uprising of 1987, the argument was how more women became involved within the issues that concerned the Palestinian society rather than a shedding of old traditional values. In fact, what made the Intifada different was that many women were involved despite their class. This becomes evident when juxtaposing the charitable societies being solely limited to the women of the urban elite,⁸ while the women’s committees were not exclusive to one particular sector or class of women in Palestinian society.

Hiltermann’s “The Women’s Movement during the Uprising” painted the relationship of the rebellious as social revolutionaries “in which the younger generation rebelled against its elders, street activists rebelled against the authority of the PLO, and

⁶ Ibid, 171.

⁷ Jad, “From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989,” 139.

⁸ Ibid, 126.

women rebelled against their traditional place in a patriarchal society.”⁹ Accordingly, what set the uprising apart from previous ones was that Palestinian women of all ages and from all different social backgrounds became involved within the uprising, including women from refugee camps and villages. Like Jad’s “From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women 1919-1989,” Hiltermann went on to outline the evolution of the Palestinian women’s committees during the 1970s. As well, the inherent sentiment of the women’s committees to charitable societies was impatience towards the latter’s lack of teaching women skills such as literacy, health, and food-processing.¹⁰ The women’s committees were then able to support the Palestinian communities during the uprising because of their method of teaching skills rather than exclusively rendering services as the charitable societies. Essentially, the women’s committees provided both skills and services to combat food shortages as a result of Israeli boycotting and army curfews.¹¹

While women have achieved a better social standing as a result of their contributions within the family that differed from previous years, such as having control over money, Hiltermann also established that the role of women has been marginalized in the male dominated group’s communiques such as the UNLU, citing that women were merely mentioned in relation to others like men and children.¹² Using the voice of a member of the Union of Palestinian Working Women’s Committee, the essay went on to conclude, that during the uprising women had not had a feminist agenda. Meanwhile, in

⁹ Joost R. Hiltermann, “The Women’s Movement during the Uprising,” in *Palestinian Women of Gaza and West Bank* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 41, URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.04742.0001.001>.

¹⁰ Ibid, 42/43.

¹¹ Ibid, 45.

¹² Ibid, 47.

1988, the Islamic Resistance Movement insisted that women wear the hijab, which became mandated in the Gaza strip by the end of 1989. Hiltermann lastly added that Palestinian women's committees, being the beacon of the women's movement, must take up concrete action to enact further gains for women.¹³

Like Jad, Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson's "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers" addressed the gender within the context of Palestinian Women. Though it was mostly within the framework of the Intifada, Jad had described the vast historical experience of Palestinian women's charitable societies to women's committees. Furthermore, Giacaman and Johnson addressed the issue of political alignments and class issues. The rendering relied in part on an interview with Umm 'Uthman and her daughter Ruqayya's experience as Palestinians under Occupation. Ruqayya was said to have mobilized after the destruction of her house.¹⁴ Giacaman and Johnson's observations, and interviews with leaders of women's committees explored "how the dramatic political changes outlined above have affected the position of Palestinian women in the world of politics."¹⁵

Another aspect of their work stated how there have been two divergent thought processes within the women's movement, of which

the three committees on the left clearly stress the need for action to achieve social change and call for a women's liberation that is separate from national aspirations, the fourth committee is characterized by "mainstream" views and equates national liberation with female liberation in a mechanistic way.¹⁶

¹³ Ibid, 50.

¹⁴ Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson, "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers," in *Intifada: the Palestinian Uprising against Israeli Occupation*, eds. Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 156.

¹⁵ Ibid, 157.

¹⁶ Ibid, 167.

On the other hand, having a “purely radical feminist agenda” would lack accountability towards historical circumstances pertaining to oppression of different societies and social classes, which has been why a unilateral conceptualization of women and male equality have deprived women of what can be realistically achieved. As such, other considerations, like the replacement of shari’a law with civil legislation as well as equal opportunity in the work place, have taken precedence with the three of the four committees.¹⁷ It was clear that there were differences amongst the women’s organizations in Giacaman and Johnson’s rendering on Palestinian women, while Jad’s conclusion demonstrated that there was a disconnect within the women’s movement for wanting social change. Women play a role within the Intifada, though crucial, it consisted of a motherly one, according to Jad.¹⁸ It must also be noted that both these renderings embodied the formative years of the Intifada, as Giacaman and Johnson’s work was published in 1989 and Jad’s work was published in 1990. Therefore, there has been an inherent lack in formulating a historical thesis. In addition, these works did not show the last two years of what occurred during the Intifada. Jad’s “Patterns of Relations within the Palestinian Family during the Intifada” (1998) and Giacaman and Johnson’s “Intifada Year Four: Notes on the Women’s Movement” (1998) were better suited to grasp in conjunction with their other works the entirety of the women’s movement. This study, however, seeks to address the initial year of the Intifada and the how the themes of gender, class, and political alignments were interconnected.

Women’s Committees: Political Alignments and Public Tactics of the Intifada

¹⁷ Ibid, 168.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Women's committees during the Intifada engaged in political and public tactics such as "throwing stones, burning tires, transporting and preparing stones, building roadblocks."¹⁹ This section has sought to address the various alignments of these committees prior to the Intifada, and how during the uprising the women's organizations engaged in public demonstrations on a united front that was evident on March 8th, 1988 Women's International Day. It has become evident through analysis that the national concerns of Palestinians were paramount for the women's committee's over their political alignments because women's organizations were part of a unified front, starting on the March 8th date of protest.

The Intifada broke out in December of 1987 after four Palestinians were killed by an Israeli truck driver in the Gaza Strip. It then spread to the West Bank; nevertheless, the causes of the uprising were not indicative in one event, nor has it been a movement that sprang from nowhere as if in a political vacuum, rather its context must be given to "twenty years of political struggle between Israel and Palestinians," and to administrative expansion of committees a decade prior to the uprising.²⁰ After the 1967 War between Syria, Egypt, and Jordan against Israel, the Israeli victory encompassed [1] the encroachment and usurpation of lands from the Palestinian peoples and [2] a restructuring effort among Gazans and West Bankers that took on the persona of the previous Palestinian Diaspora of 1948.²¹

1967 and onward marked a continual conflict-phenomenon between Israel and Palestine. In the name of the right to self-determination, the Palestinian people created demonstrations, organized strikes, and exhibited violent rioting against the Israeli

¹⁹ Jad, "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989," 133.

²⁰ FACTS, *Towards A State of Independence*, 2.

²¹ Hunter, *The Palestinian Uprising: A War by Other Means*, 16.

occupied army, building up to the 1987 Intifada uprising. Furthermore, the 1967 generation who spurred on the Intifada, were raised within an occupied culture that created a “confrontational attitude,” and with each year seemingly became “more hopeless” than the previous because of a lack of change within their immediate environment.²² “This gradual shift in perspective of the population,” Leila Hudson postulated in “Coming of Age in Occupied Palestine: Engendering the Intifada” (1994), “helps explain the change of mood in the occupied territories from one characterized by faith in extralocal processes to one characterized by active local resistance and confrontation.”²³

The Intifada of 1987, as characterized by the Facts Committee of Jerusalem and by the scholarship, suggest that it was an active political resistance due to twenty years of militant experience and embodied an objective of Palestinian self-determination.²⁴ During the Intifada, the women’s committees sought to integrate their knowledge base as a tool to aid the uprising in hopes of obtaining Palestinian nationhood. Nationhood was one issue that the Palestinian women felt took precedent, while gendered issues such as a feminism tended to be set aside by the women’s committees. The first committee was founded in Ramallah (West Bank) in 1978, and its goal was to “train and assist women to be more useful to themselves and to society.”²⁵ Furthermore, proletarianization became a

²² Leila Hudson, “Coming of Age in Occupied Palestine: Engendering the Intifada,” in *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition, Identity, and Power*, eds. Fatma Muge Goccek and Shiva Balaghi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 123.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, “Introduction: On Achieving Independence,” in *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*, eds. Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock (New York: Praeger, 1990), 1.

²⁵ Hunter, *The Palestinian Uprising*, 23.

“serious consequence of the occupation and most revealing indicator of the dependence and integration of the West Bank and Gaza Strip into Israel.”²⁶

The Women’s Work Committee (WWC) was created under the auspices of the 1978 International Women’s Day on March 8th. Since these women mobilizers were active within political organizations, they were not allowed to join the preexisting charitable associations.²⁷ These women studied at universities in Egypt or Lebanon or at the newer West Bank universities, and had “participated in voluntary work committees organized in municipalities after the election of 1976, and drew on both experiences for discussion of gender roles and the place of women in the national liberation effort.”²⁸ The WWC was to split into four groups that aligned with the major factional divisions within the PLO: (1) The Union of Women’s Work Committees (the WWC, known later as Palestinian Federation of Women’s Action Committees or FPWAC) established in 1978, and in March 1987, had 6,000 members and 188 committees throughout the occupied territories; (2) The Union of Palestinian Working Women’s Committees (UPWWC) was also established in 1978, and in 1987, comprised of 63 committees, and a membership of over 2,000 women; (3) The Union of Women’s Committees for Social Work (WCSW) was established in 1981, and by 1985 had 22 committees and a membership of 750; and (4) The Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees (UPWC) was established in 1981 and consisted of 37 committees and 950 women by 1984.²⁹

²⁶ Dajani, *The Intifada*, 14.

²⁷ Islad Jad, “From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989,” in *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*, eds. Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock (New York: Praeger, 1990),” 131.

²⁸ Philippa Strum, “West Bank Women and the Intifada: Revolution within the Revolution,” in *Palestinian Women of Gaza and West Bank*, edited by Suha Sabbagh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 64, URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.04742.0001.001>.

²⁹ Dajani, *The Intifada*, 52.

These committees sought to improve their community; however, the foundation of their political program had initially differed in politics because of how they sought to address the national question, “the main goal of the Palestinian movement,” as one UPWC activist said.³⁰ For instance, the UPWC were supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), both constituting left-wing politics and democratic principles.³¹ UPWWC concerned itself with unions and workers, and aligned itself with the Palestine Communist Party, while the WWC (FPWAC) also concerned itself with unity of workers but was aligned with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine; and lastly, the WCSW was associated with pro-Fatah supporters like the Shabbiba (youth movement).³² On the other hand, UPWWC, the FPWAC, and the UPWC, have claimed adherence to Marxist-Leninist ideology, while the WCSW had no strong ideological leaning, and may be considered politically flexible “mirroring the stand of Fatah in the national movement.”³³

During the Intifada, these different popular committees had kept watch at night as they were determined to “provide some protection for villages and refugee camps against settler’s vigilante raids.”³⁴ These unified relief committees were set up to distribute food and clothing to camps and villages under siege. Furthermore, “the committees have been able to overcome narrow special interests, and to work for the common good.”³⁵ The women’s committees were grassroots popular committees that aided the Intifada between 1987 and 1988. It became evident that women’s committees overcame these factional

³⁰ Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada*, 164.

³¹ Joost R. Hiltermann, “Trade Unions and Women’s Committees: Sustaining Movement, Creating Space,” In Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), MER164/165 (May- Aug., 1990), 33, accessed: January 18, 2014, DOI: 10.2307/3012690.

³² Ibid.

³³ Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada*, 163.

³⁴ FACTS, *Towards A State of Independence*, 6.

³⁵ Ibid.

differences since nationhood was a more important issue to the groups than political alignments. However, it has been disputed by one scholar that these committees were nevertheless indistinguishable regardless of political alignments because “women’s role in popular committees controlled by leftist organizations (PFLP, DFLP, Communist party) and those controlled by the centrist Fateh.”³⁶ This was evident in the fact that the women’s role was merely an extension of teaching and rendering services. Regardless of the women’s committees factional divisions, their goals and activities were consistent with one another, because they all stressed education and vocational training for women, and the need for productive work, as well as having an emphasis on housewives becoming productive members of society.³⁷ Furthermore, the popular committees were institutions that many viewed at the time that would aid in obtaining a future independent Palestinian state.³⁸

For example, the UNLU called women into action through the women’s committees, which resulted in the four women’s committees becoming a united front, on March 8, 1988, or International Women’s Day. Furthermore, the UNLU commissioned all women to participate by boycotting work, opposing settlers and soldiers, as well as “to promote a ‘home economy’ of locally produced food and clothing.”³⁹ The leaflet that contained this comprehensive program addressed women and their future involvement within the Intifada uprising by stating the following:

Our heroic women, mothers of martyrs, the imprisoned the injured, their wives, sisters and girls. To all the Palestinian women in camps villages and cities who

³⁶ Jad, “From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989,” 135.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jad, “From Salons to the Popular Committees,” 134.

³⁹ Hiltermann, “The Women’s Movement during the Uprising,” 44.

are united in their struggles and their political confrontation with repression and terrorism...to all our sisters in the battle where all hostile theories have been burnt...let our activities participate extensively in the popular committees in neighborhoods, cities, villages, and camps. Let them participate in making programs to promote the intifada and support our steadfast people. Let us send representatives to collect donations and expose the various occupation practices. Let our working women participate in the unions and organize as workers; and step by step we'll achieve victory. Oh working women, join your fellow workers in boycotting work on strike days for you mostly suffer from racism and continuous oppression [...] This is a step in boycotting Israeli goods and paralyzing their economy. We can achieve this goal by going on the land, the source of goodness and happiness.⁴⁰

UNLU directives were issued in order to prompt women's committees into organizing action and to encourage women to participate in popular committees and trade unions, while also prompting women to provide alternative education to children in homes, churches, and mosques as a result of school closures.⁴¹ According to Hiltermann, women were less active in villages and camps within the popular committees than their urban counterparts.⁴² Nonetheless, women had become leaders in neighborhood committees throughout the occupied territories in March 1988, paralleling politically oriented popular committees, while taking on a community-service functions like home gardening and teaching.⁴³

Leila Hudson in "Coming of Age in Occupied Palestine: Engendering the Intifada" also showed in "Palestinian Women in the Occupied Territories" pamphlet that women must protect the young men from getting arrested because they must "consider any man arrested or injured as one of their sons and try to rescue him."⁴⁴ In Islah Jad's "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989," it was

⁴⁰ Jad, "From Salons to the Popular Committees," 133/134.

⁴¹ Hiltermann, "The Women's Movement during the Uprising," 44.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Giacaman and Johnson, "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers," 164.

⁴⁴ Leila Hudson, "Coming of Age in Occupied Palestine: Engendering the Intifada," 133.

suggested that the women's popular committees were inherently limited, since women's participation was not indicative of an increase in decision making.⁴⁵ Additionally, hundreds of women early on during the Intifada were requested by the women's committees, to knit sweaters for youth who had been arrested or detained. Though there may not be an overt increase in decision making for women who participated within the Intifada, the grassroots committees were becoming increasingly institutionalized and organized integral structures throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁴⁶

The Women's Work Committee developed a cohesive plan on educating and developing the home economy, first aid skills, and education. Moreover, the Intifada necessitated the further development of trade unions, voluntary work committees, women's committees, and medical relief committees, as resistance to military occupation.⁴⁷ These popular committees provided extensive aid to villages and refugee camps against "settler's vigilante raids" and allowed for people to obtain food and clothing while under siege. For example, Umm Ruqayya, a member of a Seamstresses' Union in Jericho, was strategically driven to improve working conditions at the sewing sweatshop she worked at and even mobilized those within her village upon the demolition of her home.⁴⁸ The committees, including women's grassroots organizations, were coming together from different classes, and narrow special interests were secondary, as maintaining their Palestinian identity, procuring independence and therefore ending Israeli occupation was paramount.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Jad, "From Salons to the Popular Committees," 135.

⁴⁶ Dajani, *The Intifada*, 94.

⁴⁷ Joost R. Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada: Labor and Women's Movement in the Occupied Territories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 13.

⁴⁸ Giacaman and Johnson, "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers," 155/156.

⁴⁹ FACTS, *Towards A State of Independence*, 6.

However, by comprehending the overarching Palestinian concern for self-governmental autonomy, the issue that predominated was nationalism rather than an outright concern for feminism during the first year of the uprising. To be in control of day to day living was the real concern for many Palestinians. On the other hand, in Beshara Doumani's interview "Abu Farid's House: Family and Politics in Salfit" that appeared within *Middle East Report*, No. 157, Israel Faces the Uprising (Mar. - Apr., 1989), Abu Farid's life goal was "simple and traditional" of which he wanted "to build his own home, marry and have children." Farid was able to obtain job opportunities by Israeli employers and thus lacked a political commitment as his father due to the job opportunities that prevented him from living a life of extreme poverty.⁵⁰ Yet, "popular committees" such as women's grassroots organizations during the Intifada uprising were depended on the communities in which they served. One reason popular committees were vital during the first year of the Intifada was the fact that they were not simply temporary constructions, but rather they represented a "permanent structural change in the form of organization of Palestinian society" and were relied upon entities.⁵¹

Because women worked together more efficiently under the auspices of the Intifada, what eventually emerged was the Higher Women's Council (HWC) in December of 1988, which united the four women's committees.⁵² The HWC coalesced because of the coordination the Intifada required under the UNLU directives, and because they sent out joint statement such as the International Women's Day communique.⁵³

⁵⁰ Beshara Doumani, "Abu Farid's House: Family and Politics in Salfit," in *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*, MER157, Israel Faces the Uprising (Mar. -Apr., 1989), p. 29, accessed: January 18, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3012853>.

⁵¹ FACTS, *Towards A State of Independence*, 14.

⁵² Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada*, 198.

⁵³ Ibid.

Thus, it was logical to create one representative force. While the creation of the HWC was not a formal unification of all four committees, the four alignments worked together continuously despite having supposedly separate political alignments.⁵⁴ These tended to be denigrated to secondary issue over a unified front for the purposes of nationalism.

Women and Gender during the Intifada

Palestinian women's committees stressed the importance of creating a unified mass women's movement to reach all sectors and classes of Palestinian society, with a goal of mobilization in order to obtain national self-determination.⁵⁵ While nationalism was an issue of great importance to the Palestinians and the women's committees, one may ponder how the women's committees viewed gendered issues that permeated Palestinian society. Gender was a prevalent aspect when considering the Intifada because socially women experienced differential treatment than their male counterparts while under occupation. This is evident when women seek work outside the occupied territories, and the socially acceptable rituals that predominated. This section also has sought to describe that feminism was a secondary issue to the women's committees during the initial year of the Intifada.

On the one hand, women activists debated the issue of women's struggle and the national struggle, of which one representative of the UPWWC stated that they had not had a feminist agenda and were concerned with the political ramifications of occupation.⁵⁶ As such, the UPWWC exhibited a traditional approach in order to prevent

⁵⁴ Ibid, 199.

⁵⁵ Dajani, *The Intifada*, 53.

⁵⁶ Hiltermann, "The Women's Movement during the Uprising," 50.

the potential alienation from society. However, the UPWWC representative further stated that they “weren't necessarily aware that we were not on the right track. Recently, we have come to realize that this approach doesn't work. We realize that if we don't raise issues now, we won't be able to push them later on, and we'll be abused by the national movement.”⁵⁷ On the other hand, FPWAC (formerly the Women's Work Committee, WWC) suggested that liberation of women would not come to pass with one fell swoop but in stages, for them it was more important to get women out of the house to be politically active alongside men for national liberation.⁵⁸

The mainstream male leadership, such as Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the and the Palestinian National Council (PNC), tended to relegate Palestinian women as motherly protectors of the Intifada within their communiques, rather than showing that women were as politically active as their male counterparts. For example, the PLO “Executive Committee: Statement on the Intifada” (April 1988) clearly stated in 1988, one year into the struggle, that “it was another day of glory and confrontation in the steadfast West Bank and Gaza against all methods of fascist terrorism invented by Israeli's rulers and generals including the war of starvation, the economic and media blockade, the perpetration of crimes and acts of slaughter against women, children, and defenseless citizens, and the demolishing of houses and communal arrests.”⁵⁹ Another way in which women were described can be seen in a PNC declaration which Palestinian women were described as “guardian[s] of sustenance and life, keeper of our people's

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada*, 172.

⁵⁹ PLO, “PLO Executive Committee: Statement on the Intifada (April 1988),” in *The Israeli-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, eds. Walter Laquer and Barry Ruben, (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), 323.

perennial flame.”⁶⁰ It has seemed that within the main leadership of Palestinian society women were defined as the defenseless, as in the PLO statement, or as timeless protectors in the PNC declaration. Though it has become apparent that the women’s involvement within the movement was valued by the PNC, the PNC situated women as merely the mother of the community. The language of the PNC and PLO inherently spoke of an “appropriate nature.” When juxtaposing the PNC and PLO statements with leaflet No. 23 of UNC which stated that “the women’s committees and forums were charged with special responsibility to organize sit-in strikes and other appropriate activities,” there has been a trend amongst the leadership to separate women’s activities from men’s.⁶¹

Women tend to be mentioned in passing and juxtaposed in a way that ultimately allowed a reader to conclude women were viewed as secondary, as seen in the PLO’s statement. Regardless, the women’s formation of organizations has seemed necessary to the Intifada cause; however, what has been more pertinent to these women’s organizations was the right to self-determination of the entire Palestinian community rather than a blatantly feminist agenda. Such action can be seen during the initial stages of the Intifada. For instance, by March 8th of 1988, three months after the uprising began, women were participating in public and political life, “whether this change was (or is) obvious to the largely male leadership of the uprising remain[ed] a question.”⁶²

⁶⁰ PNC, “Palestine National Council: Declaration of Independence (November 15, 1988),” in *The Israeli-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, eds. Walter Laquer and Barry Ruben, (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), 357.

⁶¹ UNC, “Leaflet No. 23: The Deportees Proclamation,” in *Speaking Stones: Communiques from the Intifada Underground*, trans. Shaul Mishal and Reuben Aharoni, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 115.

⁶² Giacaman and Johnson, “Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers,” 159/160.

As a result of group activism, the more politically established factions of the national movement became closer.⁶³ While those like Islah Jad have argued that the “essential goal” of these popular committees was to “find new members for the mass organizations of each faction” and “women’s role in the popular committees became an extension of what it traditionally had been in society: teaching and rendering services.”⁶⁴ The UPWC, however, issued pamphlets “to build the basis for women’s emancipation by constructing economic projects.”⁶⁵ Julie M. Peteet’s *Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement* (1991) established that political leadership had co-opted elements of tradition to allow for the mobilization of the community at the crux of uprising. In the case of the Intifada, it has been evident that women were not only conceptualizing their political activism of which “did not substantially distinguish [themselves] from traditional gender ideologies” but one could also argue that the social reality and the male-dominated leadership also co-opted this component for defining the female role within the Intifada.⁶⁶

Furthermore, the “construction of gender and gender relations was a conscious process among women who were vividly aware of the historical moment.” During times that call for activism, “women leaders were acutely cognizant that wartime and continuous crises were periods of cultural ambiguity.”⁶⁷ For example, Janet Varner Gunn recounted in her memoir that took place in the refugee camp Deheishe, located in the West Bank, on the subject of young Palestinian women who graduated from high school were able to become practical nurses hired by the UNRWA program, which resulted in

⁶³ Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada*, 197.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 196.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Peteet, *Gender in Crisis*, 6.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 7.

their ability to carry identity cards allowing them to travel to Jerusalem or Ramallah for study.⁶⁸ Women's "travel [was] far unrestricted, they [were] becoming their family's chief, sometimes only, means of support, a fact that contributes to changes in their social and political status in the camp."⁶⁹ Work and political activity have become porous and dynamic for Palestinian women. In Gunn's example, there may have been cases where women were able to overcome the Israeli contingencies, like curfews or strict access to areas outside of camps, because "their male cohorts were issued restrictive green cards after being released from administrative detention or prison—simply for being regarded as security risks on the basis of their age and Deheishe residency," while young women were to carry red cards, enabling them to be more mobile throughout the West Bank and Israel.⁷⁰

On the other hand, the Deheishe identity card example was also an extenuation of patriarchy, in which men were seen by Israeli soldiers and officials as a threat, while women were seen as not menacing, but instead, as docile and capable of following regulations. Like Giacaman and Johnson said, Palestinian women were extending their role within the community rather than exchanging their identity or role for a completely new one. In that sense, women were able to extend their abilities either in the job market or overt action against the Israeli soldiers.⁷¹ Meanwhile, young men utilized male rituals to acquire respect within the community through beatings by Israeli Defense Forces. This

⁶⁸ Gunn, *Second Life*, 29.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Giacaman and Johnson, "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers," 161.

empowered them to resist against Israeli occupation, as it had imbued them with qualities such as adulthood, honor and manhood.⁷²

While men used beatings to gain respect within their community, women were also active participants during the uprising. For example, Umm ‘Uthmam, Umm Ruqayya’s mother, exemplified the devastation caused during the beginning of the Intifada, in a story told to Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson, accentuated in “Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers”:

It was on the night of October 30 that our lives were pulled upside down. That evening, just a day or two after the bus incident, we heard helicopters flying in the sky. They came down towards our village at the same time as soldiers began to move in. We immediately closed our door, put out the lights and went to bed, wondering to whose neighbor’s house they were heading. So you can imagine our shock when they began to ferociously bang at our door. They came in and began to break everything they had in front of them. They took away my five sons and informed me that I had ten minutes to pack my belongings because they were going to demolish the house. But there was no one to help me pack because they had kept away all the villagers and had succeeded in isolating us and our house. I was alone with my youngest child. I was hardly able to carry some clothes for my baby with me when I was pushed, shoved and forced out of the house, and the house with everything in it and all our belongings were dynamited.⁷³

Ruqayya mobilized immediately in the face of destruction of their house by leaving for Jerusalem to talk to lawyers, using her skills and contacts developed through her activism in the local women’s committee and her Seamstresses’ union, “[...making her the] antithesis to the image of obedient wife and mother, of the silent woman who executes the wishes of husband and kin without a word uttered.”⁷⁴ Although the PLO “Executive Committee: Statement on the Intifada (April 1988)” statement suggested that

⁷² Julie Peteet, “Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: A Cultural Politics of Violence,” in *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology*, ed. Estelle Disch, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 157.

⁷³ Giacaman and Johnson, “Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers,” 156.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 156/157.

“the perpetration of crimes and acts of slaughter against women, children, and defenseless citizens” constituted gendered language by encasing women in a group of peoples considered vulnerable,⁷⁵ Ruqayya exemplified that women were active participants during the uprising.

Women also used confrontational methods as their male counterparts: “a middle-aged woman in Ramallah helps young men build a barricade, a woman in Aida camp fights and even bites a soldier who is trying to take her son, women in Gaza carry trays full of rocks on their heads to supply the demonstrators, women in camps under extended curfew defy the military to smuggle food and fuel into the camp.”⁷⁶ These confrontational aspects resonated with the young male tactics, which experienced the brunt of beatings and imprisonment. However, the resistance of males was preserved for the young men (under 25 years of age), while older men played little, if any role, as far as resistance activities in camps, villages, and urban neighborhoods had gone.⁷⁷

Similarly, “political activity has become an accepted part of ‘girlhood,’” a period where women just before marriage have been able to be politically active in politics and the labor force, while after marriage “commitment to and identification with domesticity tend to override political commitments.”⁷⁸ Furthermore, “it is not always a simple matter of male opposition to a wife’s activism,” because domestic duties disallowed for time to be contributed toward activism.⁷⁹ Women were still in a patriarchal society, according to Janet Varner Gunn in her memoir *A Second Life: A West Bank Memoir* (1995), a then

⁷⁵ PLO, “PLO Executive Committee: Statement on the Intifada (April 1988),” 323.

⁷⁶ Giacaman and Johnson, “Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers,” 160.

⁷⁷ Peteet, “Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: A Cultural Politics of Violence,” 155.

⁷⁸ Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada*, 171.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

middle-aged woman who went to the West Bank refugee camp Deheishe as part of her being in the society's human rights center organization during the summer of 1988.⁸⁰ It was postulated in Gunn's memoir that another aspect of patriarchy was prevalent amongst Israeli Defense. Israeli military forces manipulated the traditional code of honor by moral entrapment, known as *isqat*, which included "the secret photographing of young women in various states of undress" while trying on clothes and this "would often times lead to blackmail in the form of collaboration such as prostitution that inevitably included being disowned by the family."⁸¹ In Khalifeh's novel *Bab al-Saha*, the character Nuzha, a woman activist, ended up spending time in the Israeli jail for being a woman activist, and upon release, was suspected of prostitution.⁸² The translator Said I. Abdelwahed of *Opening the Gates: An Anthology of Arab Feminist Writing* (2004) stipulated that it was not unusual for women to be implicated as a prostitute after spending time in jail because Palestinian women were raped by their Israeli captors and "after such degradation, it was assumed that the only future for these women would be in prostitution."⁸³

In juxtaposition, Julie Peteet's "Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: A Cultural Politics of Violence" suggested manhood and masculinity enacted by Palestinian male youths were in relation to their beatings and detentions were framed within a context of rites of passage that built an "adult, gendered (male) self,"⁸⁴ which essentially can lead one to ponder why the imprisonment of men were highly valued while the female counterparts were seen as degraded, or in other words, likely to

⁸⁰ Gunn, *A Second Life: A West Bank Memoir*, xxvi/132.

⁸¹ Ibid, 133.

⁸² Said I. Abdelwahed, "Sahar Khalifa (1941-)," in *Opening the Gates: An Anthology of Arab Feminist Writing* ed. Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 446.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Peteet, "Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: A Cultural Politics of Violence," 153.

be prostitutes. As Gunn stated in her memoir, women were in a patriarchal or male-dominated society; however, it is imperative to comprehend that the Palestinian women's political participation in the uprising delineates a superseding nature over the supposed male domination. Hiltermann suggested that "the traditional social obstacles to women's participation in public affairs have eroded steadily over the years, as women have increasingly joined mass organizations in spite of the taboos associated with their doing so."⁸⁵

On the other hand, Lelia Hudson suggested that the rite of passage for boys to become men were linear in comparison to rites of passage for girls in the fact that there were none. However, it was delineated that "the implicit function of confrontation" has continued as a rite of passage as long as "the oppressor allows no other way for boys to become men and as long as the culture of resistance legitimizes the sacrifice and violence."⁸⁶ Although there have been male and female differences in gaining respect within the Palestinian culture, women across class lines nevertheless became increasingly involved within the political movement of the Intifada, in contrast to prior generations such as the 1903 women's charitable societies.

The Palestinian Women and Women's Committees of the Intifada: Class Issues

Gender and political tactics were pertinent aspects of the women's committees during the Intifada. This can be seen in how these particular grassroots organizations were both active participants within the uprising. While on the other hand, the main leadership such as the PLO, tended to marginalize the women's efforts as inherently

⁸⁵ Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada*, 171.

⁸⁶ Hudson, "Coming of Age in Occupied Palestine: Engendering the Intifada," 132.

secondary. However, women's committees and how they were viewed by Palestinian society were but one facet to their efforts within the Intifada movement. It must also be noted that those Palestinian women who were imperative to the cause were not always the women who were members of the women's committees. This section has sought to describe how the women's committees were a creation due to class differences, and how they involved a diverse group of peoples based on class structure when juxtaposed with the charitable societies that often aided Palestinian society.

Palestinian women's committees began to form in 1978; however, it is important to realize that the precedent of women's involvement in the political realm, and therefore, institutional development existed prior to these grassroots organizations. According to Philippa Strum in "West Bank Women and the Intifada: Revolution within the Revolution," elite Palestinian women have been involved within women's movements eighty years prior; therefore, and unsurprisingly, elite women had claimed to taking to the streets within the beginning of the Intifada.⁸⁷ This was because Christian upper-class and middle-class women were the first women's associations of Palestine in 1903.⁸⁸ The development of these associations, or charitable societies, have grown from its limited capabilities in 1903, in which they were only able to meet within churches, school rooms and private homes,⁸⁹ to 60 charitable societies within the West Bank cities by the 1980s.⁹⁰ While these charitable societies focused on traditional functions such as relief and services, it was the unofficial grassroots organizations that evolved within the occupied

⁸⁷ Strum, "West Bank Women and the Intifada: Revolution within the Revolution," 65.

⁸⁸ Jad, "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989," 126.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Dajani, *The Intifada*, 50.

territories who concerned themselves mostly with lower and middle-class Palestinians.⁹¹

These organizations were brought into fruition because of their impatience with charitable societies that only rendered services, while these Women's groups, or Committees, sought to teach the women they aided.⁹²

Women "have enlarged or extended their traditional role rather than adopting a completely new role," according to Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson, these roles have become permeable within the uprising, and imbued with an extension from the family to community.⁹³ It was because a larger group of women, of whom were notably non-urban who lived in refugee camps and villages, took on an actively political role that had previously been dominated by the urban Palestinian women, during the Intifada. Giacaman and Johnson further noted that "this constitutes a historic reversal in the orientation of the women's movement in Palestine although it is not yet reflected in women's leadership since decision making still remains largely in the hands of urban middle-class women;" nonetheless, it challenged the norm on who was traditionally involved in women's organizations.⁹⁴

However, it was not just women involved within these women's committees that aided the Intifada, but rather lower class individuals with no affiliation. In the Middle East Report no. 164/165, Penny Johnson's "Stories of Daughters" illuminated that Sahar Khalifeh stories had shown while "many Palestinian stories are stories of sons: heroes or victims, Everyman or Superman," Khalifeh's stories, "like her own life, are the stories of

⁹¹ Ibid, 50/51.

⁹² Hiltermann, "The Women's Movement during the Uprising," 42.

⁹³ Giacaman and Johnson, "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers," 161.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 160.

daughters, mothers and self.”⁹⁵ It was within her stories that the female heroine came to life, “in defending her family and community against all odds.”⁹⁶ Particularly, Khalifeh’s “Our Fate, Our House” detailed the character Umm Samih al-Saber as persistent in spite of confrontation with soldiers:

Women can take it better than men. I made him go to the kitchen and I went out to confront them. They were standing at the door of the boys’ bedroom. I told them, “Hush, the boys are sleeping.” They didn’t listen to me and kicked the door with their boots and tore our sofa with a knife and went around searching. One of them poked the children who were sleeping on the floor with his boots. “Mind your manners,” I told them, “don’t act like vagabonds! Don’t you dare touch anything with your hands or your feet. Do you understand? You don’t have a permit to beat anyone here.”⁹⁷

Khalifeh portrayed women as obstinate in spite of potential aggression, while also employing vernacular of the poor women within Nablus, West Bank.⁹⁸ Women of various sects and classes were also mobilizers, and like the novelist Khalifeh, many sought to better their community and help their family during the uprising.

Palestinian women confronted soldiers in conditions that were unprotected, late at night, in remote villages and curfewed camps, and aided in the development of the home economy. For instance, the “home economy” mobilized communities throughout the West Bank by maximizing land usage for cultivation to obtain communal self-reliance and minimizing the purchase of Israeli goods.⁹⁹ Furthermore, women’s involvement in the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip economic strata encompassed an infiltration into the labor market by taking up the unskilled and low wage jobs, in relation to Arab men. In addition, Arab men were in turn paid much less than Israeli citizens in

⁹⁵ Johnson, “Stories of Daughters,” 29.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Khalifeh, “Our Fate, Our House,” 30/31.

⁹⁸ Johnson, “Stories of Daughters,” 29.

⁹⁹ FACTS, *Towards A State of Independence*, 15.

the labor markets.¹⁰⁰ From the outset of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip occupation, Israel subjugated Palestinians to the labor market. These socio-economic changes catapulted Palestinian women into the work force, to support their families and set into motion the ability of women to form their own committees and movements due to their proletarianization.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, Palestinian women within the refugee camps in Lebanon were able to be activists because they were unmarried and it had freer access to organize committees, in comparison to men.¹⁰²

In Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson's "Intifada Year Four: Notes on the Women's Movement" (1998), during the Women's Day in 1988, there were "middle-class women in high heels, teenagers in jeans, and village women in traditional dress marched through the streets of Ramallah and other towns and villages throughout the West Bank and Gaza."¹⁰³ One established reason for Palestinian women and women's committees activism during the Intifada was due to the concern for Palestinian self-determination. Furthermore, the Palestinian experience of occupation, lack of sovereignty, and even dislocation, have contributed toward their Palestinian national identity, an aspect Palestinian women were proscribed to and were cognizant of during the Intifada. From the perspective of someone who was a dislocated Palestinian Canadian, Nahla Abdo's "Dislocating Self, Relocating 'Other': A Palestinian Experience" (2002) was a self-reflective essay based on her experience as a Palestinian in dislocation and aide to the Intifada. Prior to 1948, the Palestinians lived in neither the

¹⁰⁰ Jad, "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989," 129.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 128.

¹⁰² Hiltermann, *Behind the Intifada*, 170.

¹⁰³ Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson, "Intifada Year Four: Notes on the Women's Movement," in *Palestinian Women of Gaza and the West Bank*, ed. Suha Sabbagh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 217, URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.04742.0001.001>.

West Bank nor the Gaza Strip. The result was the partition of Palestine leading to the creation of Israel¹⁰⁴ and led to the diaspora of 1.4 million Palestinians outside of former Palestine into Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Kuwait, and other areas outside of the Middle East.¹⁰⁵ Dislocation was an effect of the 1948 diaspora. According to Abdo, the concept of 'dislocation' has historically intrinsic meaning for the Palestinians and has contributed to their socio-economic and political culture, and identity.¹⁰⁶ Palestinian identity also comprised as being positioned as 'self' or as 'other,' "though they see themselves as the rightful inhabitants, the indigenous people of Palestine who were dislocated from their own homes by the 'other.'"¹⁰⁷ Abdo had participated indirectly in both the 1987 Intifada and the 2000 Intifada.

The specific experience of Abdo, as a dislocated Palestinian, educated within Canada, and a women, created a struggle in reconciling feminism with nationalism as she developed her feminist identity, while nationalism often takes on forms of contradictions that include gender, class, ethnicity, and religion.¹⁰⁸ Beda Warwar, like Abdo, occupied a place within the Intifada narrative as an indirect and female political activist, while also having an educated perspective similar to the leaders of women's committees who attended Bir Zeit University. Warwar's perspective in "Beyond the Boundaries," another essay in *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation* (2002), poetically stated that her as well as other

¹⁰⁴ Lisa Hajjar, Mouin Rabbani and Joel Beinin, "Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict for Beginners," in *Intifada: the Palestinian Uprising against Israeli Occupation*, eds. Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 104/105.

¹⁰⁵ Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 179.

¹⁰⁶ Nahla Abdo, "Dislocating Self, Relocating 'Other': A Palestinian Experience," in *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation*, eds. Nahla Abdo and Ronit Lentin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 119.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 150.

Palestinians “knew about the past but lived as if the past [had] no presence” and that “in some ways, the Intifada of 1987 altered old perceptions of the pastness of the past,” because the Intifada made it difficult for Palestinians in Israel to carry on with their lives and have a sense of security due to the subordinate position that Israel had put Palestinians in became questionable.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

The women’s committees were affected by issues of class, politics and gender; after all, their creation was due to the charitable societies exclusivity to upper and upper-middle class women, while gendered differences in tactics of women and women’s committees during the Intifada in comparison to the Shabbiba (youth movement) was merely a construction of the PLO and other mainstream leadership of the Palestinians. Furthermore, the upper-class women were usually kinsmen of the prominent political personalities, and like the women’s committees it was overshadowed by the political struggle rather than reforms for women’s positions within society.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, the Palestinian Intifada led to the political “unification” of the women’s committees; however, the HWC was largely decentralized in order to setup regional women’s committees throughout the Occupied Territories in 1988.¹¹¹ On the other hand, the HWC, later known as the “Unified Women’s Council” became a branch of General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW, the women’s organization of the PLO) and internally

¹⁰⁹ Badea Warwar, “Beyond the Boundaries,” in *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation*, eds. Nahla Abdo and Ronit Lentin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 114.

¹¹⁰ Hilterman, *Behind the Intifada*, 128.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 198.

reflected the political alignments of the national movement, suggesting a lack of unity after all for the women's organizations.¹¹²

As far as being one mobilizing force, the women's movement has seemed to largely depend on the political developments of the national struggle. According to Sonja Karkar in "The First Intifada 20 Years Later" (2007), the Israeli Former Military Intelligence Chief General Shlomo Gazit said that the assaults on the Palestinian population as force against the uprising were measures intended so that Palestinians would "face unemployment and a shortage of land and water and thus we can create the necessary conditions for the departure of the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza."¹¹³ However, the Oslo peace process of 1993 took "the wind out of the intifada" by instituting the PLO into the Palestinian Authority (PA) that would police its own people.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the national struggle was deeply rooted despite the so-called peace process, culminating into the second Intifada of 2000.

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¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Sonjar Karkar, "The First Intifada 20 Years Later," *Electronic Intifada*, Accessed: November 1, 2013, URL: <http://electronicintifada.net/content/first-intifada-20-years-later/7251>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

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