

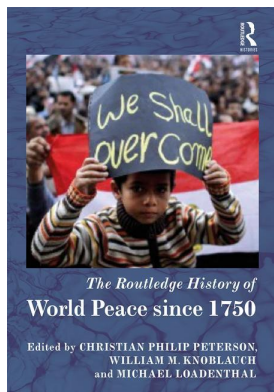
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### **Peace Process without the People**

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# PEACE PROCESS WITHOUT THE PEOPLE

## Sidelining popular struggle in Palestine

*Michael J. Carpenter*

### **Introduction**

Since coming under Israeli military occupation in 1967, Palestinians of the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem (the occupied territories) have been denied citizenship rights, subjected to martial law, and incrementally displaced as Jewish-only Israeli settlements have expanded across the territories. Palestinians have responded with armed attacks, diplomatic efforts, and popular struggle. The militant response has sometimes bolstered national morale and raised international awareness of the Palestinian plight, particularly during 1960s and 1970s; at other times, it has set back the cause, reinforcing destructive cycles of violence and repressive countermeasures by the Israeli military, especially during the suicide bombings of the 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>1</sup> The diplomatic track has gone through various phases and generated significant international legitimacy for the Palestinian struggle, especially through the Oslo Accords of the mid-1990s and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a semi-autonomous governance body in the occupied territories, but diplomacy has failed to leverage enough pressure to alter Israeli policy.<sup>2</sup> The third approach, unarmed popular struggle or grassroots civil resistance, has been the most prevalent and arguably the most effective over time. This chapter examines how this approach has been successful in terms of generating conditions for change, challenging Israeli policy, advancing Palestinian goals, and building global solidarity, even though it has been the least recognized and most misunderstood aspect of Palestinian struggle.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter argues that Palestinian people power has demonstrated the capacity to transform oppressive conditions, making it the best prospect for sustainable peace. Curiously, it continues to be neglected, repressed, and undermined, not only by occupation forces but also by the Palestinian Authority itself. This argument follows in three sections. The first depicts the mass uprising of the late 1980s, known as the first intifada, as the watermark of Palestinian struggle and a powerful case study of civil resistance, as well as a missed opportunity for peace. The second section shows the negative consequences of both the political centralization of the Oslo period and the escalation of violence in the second intifada. Finally, the third section highlights latent prospects for new transformative movements in the West Bank and globally. The chapter concludes that peace between Israel and the Palestinians has been elusive partly because the effort has been overbearingly top down, at the expense of large reservoirs of social power—the people.

The following analysis operates at the intersection of civil-resistance theory and peace research, with an emphasis on the idea of popular power, defined here as power of and among people. This conceptualization is rooted in an action framework that pivots around collective practices of cooperation and noncooperation, such as demonstrations, sit-ins, boycotts, and strikes.<sup>4</sup> According to this approach, states and diplomats are not the drivers of change, but must be driven to change, impelled by social pressures generated from below. This approach is also sensitive to the counterproductivity of violence, especially the tendency of armed force to backfire.<sup>5</sup> Both civil resistance scholarship and peace research emphasize nonviolent change and problematize violence.<sup>6</sup> Yet civil resistance can be more confrontational and disruptive than some conceptualizations of nonviolence and peacebuilding that emphasize dialogue and compromise. According to Gene Sharp, a pioneering theorist of strategic nonviolent action, “conflict in society and politics is inevitable and, in many cases, desirable.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, in the face of injustice, peace is not necessarily the highest virtue. Prisons can be peaceful, after all. This is why Johan Galtung and other peace theorists have distinguished between positive and negative peace, and between structural and direct violence.<sup>8</sup> From the Palestinian perspective, a cessation of all hostilities would not amount to positive peace unless it also included an end to the structural violence of the occupation. Hence, civil resistance is a vehicle for peace when it challenges injustice and generates conditions for change.

### **The first intifada**

The first intifada began with an incident in December 1987, in which an Israeli military vehicle struck and killed four Palestinian commuters at a Gaza checkpoint. Thousands turned out for the funeral procession, prompting brazen clashes with Israeli troops, which led to more Palestinian fatalities, prompting larger funerals, and more and larger protests. Within a few days, the whole of the occupied people seemed to be in the streets, hurling stones and sometimes Molotov cocktails at occupation forces. The popular outburst caught all parties by surprise, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The Israeli military responded forcefully, but Palestinians were emboldened. The intifada could not be stopped. It continued for weeks, months, and years, despite intense repression, checkpoints, curfews, closures, sieges, arrests, beatings, and killings. The resistance only came to a formal end with the Oslo Accord of 1993. The agreement brought a triumphant Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, out of exile and back to the territories, ensconced in the newly minted and internationally recognized PA.<sup>9</sup>

The intifada was much more than just stone-throwing youth and barricades of burning tires. It was also collective nonviolent action, including peaceful demonstrations, work strikes, tax strikes, student strikes, hunger strikes, commercial boycotts, resignations from posts connected to the occupation, flying illegal flags, spreading political graffiti, defying school closures and education bans, building alternative institutions, reclaiming land through agricultural projects, and other classic methods of civil resistance.<sup>10</sup> The intifada was a mass movement, with a role to play for virtually every man, woman, and child, from the cities to the countryside, from the refugee camps to the universities, from volunteer relief committees to trade unions. This broad base of participation helps explain the power of the uprising, not military or state power, but people power.

Crucially, Palestinian society was highly organized on the eve of the revolt.<sup>11</sup> Networked and nested social committees managed life from the local level up, including sanitation,

health and medical services, labor and trade, agricultural production, education, charity, and more. Ranging from formal and institutionalized to informal and ad hoc, these civil society institutions had developed over two decades as a kind of counter-organization to the Israeli occupation, and for the most part they were voluntary, community-based, and democratic. Decentralization was a means of empowering communities and providing services in the absence of a central state; it was also a defense mechanism. Israel sought to repress Palestinian organizing, especially as it became increasingly nationalistic, so Palestinian leadership and decision making devolved to the grassroots, making organizations more difficult to isolate or decapitate. When mass protests erupted in December 1987, this participatory social fabric shifted into open revolt, repurposing to serve the needs of the uprising. Without these popular organizations, as Mary King concludes, “the *sustenance* of a popular uprising on the scale of the first intifada, with its breadth of popular participation, would have been impossible.”<sup>12</sup>

At the outset of the uprising, new popular resistance committees formed in virtually every neighborhood, village, and refugee camp.<sup>13</sup> Their task was to lead their communities through the intifada, and to coordinate strikes, boycotts, and protests. The new committees also ensured day-to-day needs were met, took charge of local defense, and coordinated with other committees. Like many of the social committees from which they emerged, the popular resistance committees were informal, community-based, voluntarist, and directly democratic. When committee members were arrested, they were readily replaced by peers from their respective communities. Israel outlawed the popular committees in the summer of 1988, under penalty of ten-year prison sentences; yet the committees remained the backbone and the spearhead of the uprising.

Civil resistance was coordinated nationally through a series of printed communiqués that began appearing in the streets less than a month into the revolt.<sup>14</sup> These were printed in the hundreds of thousands on underground presses, issued two or three times a month, and distributed through mosques and schools and broadcast from radio towers across the region. They were issued and signed by a new clandestine group called the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU), which was a small steering committee made up of four members, one from each of the four main secular political factions.<sup>15</sup> The directives specified timetables and social sectors for strikes, boycotts, protests, and “days of rage.” They did not call for armed attacks—although they routinely encouraged stone throwing and occasionally Molotov cocktails. The series of directives also articulated, along with statements issued through conventional media channels, the political message of the uprising: The call for an independent Palestinian state and for citizens to direct their ire not at Jews or even Israel but at the occupation, the policy, the army, and the settlers.<sup>16</sup> Across the territories, the popular resistance committees became the primary agents of the UNLU directives. Lacking a state or centralized command and control, Palestinian society was able to sustain and coordinate a mass uprising.

Along with underestimating the vitality of these grassroots activities, many also overlook that the first intifada was not an armed uprising. The armed operations of the PLO that took place from the 1960s to the 1980s were mostly planned and executed outside the territories, and when the mass uprising began inside the territories, the armed groups suspended their attacks.<sup>17</sup> Palestinians could not win a military confrontation with Israel. They understood that armed attacks and high Israeli casualties would diminish or negate international sympathy and legitimize far deadlier Israeli reprisals, which is exactly what happened during the second intifada.

Despite the almost daily street confrontations, a total of twelve Israelis were killed by Palestinians during the first year of the uprising.<sup>18</sup> This figure is lower than the total loss of Israeli lives taken by Palestinians in either 1985 or 1986, *before* the uprising began.<sup>19</sup> After three years, the Israeli death toll for the intifada reached 65. In striking contrast, more than 300 Palestinians were killed by Israelis in the first year, and close to 800 by the end of the third year.<sup>20</sup> The fact that Israeli fatalities declined or remained approximately level into and throughout most of the mass uprising speaks to the unarmed and largely nonviolent character of that uprising.

Stone throwing was pervasive—the uprising was known as the “intifada of the stones”—but did not negate the participatory or unarmed character of the revolt. Compared to the structural violence of the occupation and the direct violence of military and police repression, throwing stones at occupying forces was relatively minuscule, arguably more symbolic or a kind of defiant protest than harmful attack. Moreover, the practice seems to have raised few if any “barriers to participation,” as scholars have associated with other forms of violent struggle.<sup>21</sup> Nor did Palestinian stone throwing backfire, in terms of undermining or foreclosing support from neutral or third parties.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the very act helped to destabilize and even reverse conventional notions of David versus Goliath, traditionally associated with the Jewish underdog and little Israel in a hostile region; now Palestinians appeared the unlikely hero while Israel increasingly looked the villain.<sup>23</sup> The resonance of this dynamic, especially when captured in photography and film, helped put the Palestinian uprising at the top of daily news cycles around the world, and contributed to increased international sympathy for Palestinians.<sup>24</sup> For these reasons, Palestinian stone throwing at times functioned more dynamically *as* civil resistance, not as minor violence nor as an *exception* to civil resistance.<sup>25</sup>

Overall, the intifada presented a predominantly united front against the occupation, even though internally Palestinian society was stressed and sometimes riven with tactical and strategic disputes. Some groups refused to recognize Israel and called for militarizing resistance, most prominently the Islamist groups Islamic Jihad and Hamas. However, the political mainstream calculated that the time was ripe to recognize Israel formally and demand a Palestinian state based on the occupied territories. This proclamation was made to much international publicity in November and December 1988.<sup>26</sup> The radical rejectionists never concurred but in practice mostly adhered to the national consensus around unarmed popular struggle (with some militant exceptions, leading to the Israeli fatalities, mentioned above). As months became years, however, with no substantive concessions forthcoming from Israel, the intifada began to fray, and sporadic armed attacks became increasingly common.

The intifada did not end the Israeli occupation or stop the settlement enterprise, but its accomplishments are substantial. The uprising put the Palestinian struggle atop the international agenda for an extended period and generated unprecedented support for the Palestinian struggle.<sup>27</sup> The popular uprising also caused intense debates and exacerbated divisions within Israeli society, and many of Israel’s leading human rights groups were formed during this period.<sup>28</sup> And between the boycotts, work stoppages, and tax strikes, the intifada cost the Israeli economy an estimated billion dollars during the first year alone, before accounting for increased military expenditures.<sup>29</sup> Also, as Israeli journalists observed at the time:

Israel must take into account such intangibles as the harm done to its political standing, the setback in its struggle for support of public opinion, and the diminishment

of its moral stature, especially in the eyes of its friends and of diaspora Jewry. Viewed in these terms, Israel has suffered far more damage as a result of the Palestinian uprising than it did from the Yom Kippur War.<sup>30</sup>

Most importantly, the intifada cracked open the status quo, generating conditions for transformative change. Israel was finally compelled to negotiate directly with Palestinians, first in the Madrid talks of 1991, and then in Oslo 1993, leading to the first of the Oslo Accords. Ultimately, the intifada did not end the Israeli occupation, but according to many journalists and historians, it carried Palestinians closer to that goal than ever before.<sup>31</sup> Part of its incomplete success must be ascribed to Israel and the international community for not seizing upon the opportunity to demand a two-state resolution of the conflict.

### **The Palestinian Authority and the second intifada**

The driving force behind this unprecedented political opportunity, that is, the power of the people to generate conditions for change, was squandered in short order. Many Palestinians presumed that under Yasser Arafat's leadership, following his triumphant return from exile, the newly minted PA would administer the transition from occupation to independence. Under the perceived legitimacy of the new Oslo framework, the PA undertook strident centralization, gathering up governance functions and decision making into itself.<sup>32</sup> On the one hand, this behavior reflected widespread expectations, both domestic and international, that PA should play the part of political consolidator. On the other hand, the PA carried out a particularly autocratic and personalized brand of state building. Cronyism and paranoia were defining features of Arafat's presidency. The top PLO leadership had long feared that the intifada might produce domestic rivals, so once installed in the territories as the PA, it moved swiftly to ensure that it could not be challenged, including by dismantling and usurping the popular organizations.<sup>33</sup> By the mid 1990s, the community-based organizations that had sustained the mass uprising were neutralized, co-opted, or gone.

Top-down politics was not the only aspect of Palestinian governance that negated local popular power during the post-intifada period. Top-down approaches to civil society and economics played a similar role. Oslo ushered in billions of dollars, international development agencies, and professional organizations. The new programs were not based on Palestinian traditions or political concerns; instead, they were designed to foster technocratic management, aid distribution, and normalization of life under occupation. Grassroots priorities were edged out as local and international organizations adopted donor-driven agendas in competition for lucrative funding.<sup>34</sup> "This so-called peace dividend was originally intended to help bolster support for the Accords by providing tangible social and economic benefit for the Palestinians," writes Middle East analyst Ava Leone, "but instead has largely resulted in increased dependency on foreign aid."<sup>35</sup>

Between the Palestinian Authority and international development programs, the Oslo regime has been an exercise in so-called liberal peacebuilding.<sup>36</sup> On most counts, it has not been successful. It has imposed a holding pattern on the status quo without improving social or political conditions for Palestinians and without eliminating the root causes of the conflict (i.e., the occupation and the expansion of settlements). Rather, the means to generate pressure against Israel—organized civil resistance and the popular organizations—were undermined. For the remainder of the 1990s, subsequent diplomatic efforts fell apart.

The failure of moderates to deliver results empowered rejectionist militants such as Hamas.<sup>37</sup> The first suicide bombing in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict was in 1993; by the end of the decade, Hamas, along with Islamic Jihad, had carried out almost two dozen such attacks causing scores of fatalities.<sup>38</sup> The prospects for peace grew dimmer when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who had signed the Oslo Accords with the PLO, was assassinated in November 1995 by a right-wing Jewish Israeli extremist, signaling deep divides in Israeli society about the willingness to make territorial compromises with the Palestinians.

Pent-up despair and rage mounted until September 2000 when the second intifada erupted.<sup>39</sup> Triggers included the breakdown of the latest round of peace talks at Camp David in the summer of 2000 and a provocative visit by far-right Israeli politicians to the Al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem. For the first few months, the new intifada was broad based and mostly unarmed, resembling the first intifada, but lacking deep participatory structures to nurture it.<sup>40</sup> Within six months, shootings and suicide attacks became regular occurrences. Many armed Palestinian police in the service of the PA turned their guns on the occupation. Arafat claimed to be cracking down on militants but was accused of surreptitiously encouraging the attacks. Islamist suicide bombings reached unprecedented levels in 2001 and 2002, with scores of attacks and hundreds of fatalities, at checkpoints, in settlements, and against civilian targets across Israel.<sup>41</sup> Armed wings of Fatah and the PFLP also began carrying out suicide attacks, while the majority of the Palestinian public expressed support for the tactic.<sup>42</sup> The results were widespread destruction and casualties on both sides, though Palestinians bore the brunt of the violence. Between 2000 and 2005 almost 1,000 Israelis were killed by Palestinian compared to more than 3,000 Palestinians killed by Israeli assaults.<sup>43</sup> Military bombardments decimated Palestinian town centers. Citing security, the Israeli government began constructing a massive separation barrier in the West Bank, walling off and encircling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

Around the same time, armed resistance began to wane, and by 2005, the intifada had largely fizzled out. Palestinians were exhausted. Their fragile economy was decimated, and the occupation was more entrenched than ever. Unlike the first intifada, this time international sympathy declined or become silent in the wake of the suicide bombings.<sup>44</sup> While the Israelis suffered tremendously as well, with much of the population traumatized by the attacks, the country nevertheless emerged from the intifada free, secure, and prosperous. In sum, the powerful grassroots self-governance networks of the 1980s gave way to professional institutions of the mid-1990s, and widespread practices of popular struggle gave way to diplomatic channels and erratic militant attacks. Ten years after the Oslo Accords, Palestinians seemed further than ever from their goal of ending the occupation.

### **Contemporary popular struggle**

A new generation of popular resistance began in the villages after Israel began constructing its massive separation barrier. The barrier wove partially along Israel's internationally recognized border with the West Bank, but also deep inside the West Bank, dividing Israeli settlements from Palestinian communities, Palestinian communities from Palestinian communities, and Palestinians from their fields and livelihoods. Critics pointed out that the barrier did much more than defend Israeli settlements; it swallowed vast tracts of Palestinian land onto the Israeli side.<sup>45</sup> Palestinian residents issued desperate pleas to the international community and to the PA, but these were met with near-total silence. Much of the world's

attention was preoccupied with the militarized violence of the second intifada, and with the United States' recent war on Iraq. The barrier was mostly constructed in rural areas, or in and around East Jerusalem, beyond the PA's nominal jurisdiction. Their backs literally and figuratively against the wall, impacted communities began forming new popular committees in the tradition of the first intifada and launched campaigns of nonviolent civil resistance.

Some of the new local movements managed to alter the course of the barrier, successfully defending or reclaiming land that had been, or would have been, swallowed behind it. The first major case was the village of Budrus, whose people formed a new popular committee in the fall of 2003 to resist the construction of the barrier on village land. Over several months, the villagers launched dozens of nonviolent direct interventions, physically disrupting the construction process. Their persistence and nonviolent message drew the support of many Jewish Israeli and international activists, who put their bodies beside the Palestinians confronting bulldozers and armed escorts. In the spring of 2004, the army balked and withdrew the barrier's planned route off village land and back to Israel's nearby internationally recognized border.<sup>46</sup>

The Budrus achievement set off a wave of new popular committees along the route of the barrier's construction; among the most famous is the village of Bil'in.<sup>47</sup> In February 2005, Bil'in formed a popular committee and launched its struggle against the barrier and the nearby expanding settlement of Mod'in Illit. The villagers did not succeed in stopping the barrier's construction, but they achieved a number of important results. First, they began a movement of weekly Friday protests that continues to this day and has spread to dozens of sites across the West Bank. From the beginning, Jewish Israeli activists have supported the village, often marching side-by-side, getting teargassed, injured, and arrested together, just as many more Jewish activists began supporting other popular committees across the West Bank. More than other villages, Bil'in incorporated festivities and theatrics into their weekly demonstrations, combined with shrewd media marketing, to draw and sustain global attention and support from activists, public figures, news media, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. Bil'in has been called "the Mecca of the nonviolent resistance, and people from all over the world come and visit there."<sup>48</sup> For example, US President Jimmy Carter, South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, many other Nobel Laureates, and several heads or former heads of state from Europe and South America have visited Bil'in to witness its struggle.

The village made a difference on the ground as well. In late 2005, highly publicized direct actions contributed to legal challenges (launched by Israeli supporters on the village's behalf) that won every villager access to the land on the far side of the barrier, requiring the military to provision a gate and to permit Bil'in residents 24-hour access. In early 2006, direct actions helped expose a criminal settlement enterprise (illegal even under Israeli law), thwarting the construction of a new settler block on Bil'in land. In 2007, the village seemed to achieve its primary objective, when the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the barrier's route had to be removed from the village's fields. The military delayed compliance, but finally, four years and hundreds of demonstrations later, in the summer of 2011 the people celebrated the restoral of hundreds of acres as the army dismantled three kilometers of the barrier (the barrier was reconstructed several hundred meters away, against the edge of Mod'in Illit). The activists of Bil'in continue to protest the barrier every Friday, although they now have a little further to march, or drive, to reach it, and supporters the world over continue to visit and participate in the village's weekly protests.



Though few popular committees can claim the level of success or media exposure of Budrus or Bil'in, many others have comparable stories to tell, including those of Beit Ummar, Biddu, Jayyous, Kufr Quddoum, Nabi Saleh, Ni'lin, Ma'sara, Sheikh Jarah, at-Tuwani, and al-Walaja.<sup>49</sup> The impact of new popular committees does not approach the impact of the first intifada, which was a mass national uprising; still, they re-signify the power of participatory movements outside of official power structures to effectively challenge oppressive regimes.

Many popular committees have diversified their targets from the separation barrier to other aspects of the occupation, with some protesting settlement expansions, settler violence, home evictions, road closures, confiscated property, or whatever hardships the occupation imposes on a given community.<sup>50</sup> Some of these committees have also coordinated other kinds of creative direct action, such as shutting down settler-only highways with human chains, knocking holes in the separation barrier around Jerusalem before international media, and building protest camps on land threatened by military closure or settlement expansion.<sup>51</sup> Since 2009, the committees have established a civil society and governmental coalition, including close cooperation with an independent youth movement based in Ramallah, formal support from the top echelons of Fatah and the PA, organizational ties and support from international and transnational organizations, and diplomatic support from politicians and governments around the world.<sup>52</sup> On the ground, however, the movement has failed to expand significantly beyond the villages; the villages themselves have experienced declining participation over the last several years. The reasons for the movement's domestic stagnation are complex, including severe restrictions on movement and activism, a precarious economy, debilitating political divisions, resistance exhaustion, strategic missteps, and public suspicion about the efficacy of nonviolent resistance.<sup>53</sup>

Yet the popular struggle continues to offer a model for a new mass movement, one inspired by the first intifada but adapted to a globalized world. According to an activist from Nabi Saleh:

The human rights believers and freedom fighters must make a globalization [sic] for their beliefs and their moral issues, and their thought. Because of that, we said that, you see that South Africa solution come from the pressure, outside pressure. This means, for me, the third intifada must be global. And we choose the popular struggle as a strategy to give an opportunity for everyone in the world to do his duty and his responsibility.<sup>54</sup>

While the movement's direct impact remains limited, it continues to generate conditions that are subversive to the conflict itself. By not resorting to arms, the movement halts the cycle of violence; also, it is participatory rather than top down or statist, which threatens to bypass old institutions invested in the status quo. Also, the movement appeals to human rights, and its transnational coalition transgresses exclusionary identities of nation and religion. Pluralizing parties to the conflict rather than polarizing them, as Johan Galtung has theorized, and transgressing "othering" discourses, as Maia Carter Hallward has detailed, increases the potential for radical transformation.<sup>55</sup> Simultaneously, the movement produces news and social media content that expands the global reservoir of Palestinian solidarity.

Near the top of the popular committees' public messaging for over a decade has been advocacy for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign (BDS). Launched by a large

Palestinian civil-society coalition in 2005, BDS calls for isolating Israel, along the lines of the international movement that helped end South African apartheid a generation earlier.<sup>56</sup> BDS is controversial in many countries, partly because some critics have dubiously labeled it anti-Semitic, partly because it targets Israel as a whole and not just the occupation and settlements, and partly because it calls for cultural as well as economic and political boycotts. Many other groups around the world—from student unions to academic associations to churches—have adopted measures to boycott or divest from Israeli institutions, often focusing on the occupation and settlements rather than formally adopting the BDS call. An increase in these kinds of global actions, mutually reinforced by an increase in disruptive protest on the ground, could potentially generate enough pressure to transform the conflict and impel recalcitrant parties and institutions to change.

One of the major obstacles is the Palestinian Authority itself. The PA provides a façade of self-governance for the Palestinians under occupation, but its actual authority is minimal. The president of the PA cannot travel from town to town without first seeking authorization from Israel, and Israel routinely raids communities under the PA's jurisdiction. Meanwhile, Israel continues to control the resources, the economy, the airspace, and the population registries. The PA has become a bureaucratic infrastructure of aid-dependency and demobilization. Rather than advancing Palestinian struggle, many Palestinians and analysts view the PA as an extension of occupation. The PA has paid lip service and cash to the popular resistance over the last decade, but in practice it has repressed the movement and confined it to rural areas. The PA's limited jurisdiction includes police powers over major towns and cities in the West Bank; however, when village activists try to expand into these areas, or to lead demonstrations in these areas, they are met with Palestinian riot police.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, PA leadership has publicly renounced BDS on the grounds that the PA exists to negotiate and cooperate with Israel (though the PA has endorsed boycotts targeted at the occupation and settlements).

In some ways, the PA is an example of a “hybrid form of peace.” This refers to a complex interface of local and international interests presiding over a fragile peace or post-conflict situation.<sup>58</sup> However, in the Palestinian case, the local–global nexus disproportionately favors external interests. While hybrid forms of peace are sometimes understood to benefit or assert local interests against international liberal forces, in this case Israel has been the main beneficiary.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, it has become increasingly clear that new forms of “everyday” resistance are emerging not within or as part of this hybrid space, but below and outside of it, and, increasingly, *against* it. Significantly, the popular committees only exist where the PA does not.

Outside of narrow circles of specialists and practitioners, the lesson of Palestinian popular struggle over many years remains unrecognized. The lesson is that popular power has the capacity to generate transformational change, to challenge oppression and structural violence, all without resorting to force of arms or command-and-control leadership. The old ways and institutions—statist, elitist, top-down, centralized—have failed in this struggle, despite the benefit of massive investment over a quarter century. In contrast, and despite major structural obstacles and statist presuppositions, grassroots activism boasts a more impressive record, from the mass movement of the late 1980s to the village struggles of the 2000s. In theory and practice, popular resistance defies conventional wisdom and continues to point the way to a third, and this time global, intifada.

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