Israeli Arabs and the 1987 Intifada: Citizenship vs. Nationality Dilemma

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CERTIFICATE

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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **"Israeli Arabs and the 1987 Intifada: Citizenship vs. Nationality Dilemma"** submitted by Niraj Kumar, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** is his original work and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or of any other university.

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Introduction

The Israeli Arabs: A Historical Analysis

On 14 May 1948, the members of the National Council representing the Jewish people in Palestine met in Tel Aviv and declared the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine, to be called *Medinath Yisrael* (the State of Israel) by virtue of the "natural and historic rights" of the Jewish people and the UN partition resolution. The establishment of Israel was the realisation of Zionist movement's demand for a territorial state for the Jewish people. In the words of Theodore Herzl, the Zionist leader who first conceptualised the framework of a Jewish state,

> "I think the Jewish question is no more a social than a religious one, notwithstanding that it sometimes takes these and other forms. It is a national question, which can only be solved by making it a political world-question to be discussed and settled by the civilised nations of the world in council."[1]

This demand for Jewish sovereignty and its realisation in 1948 led to the obvious question: what would happen to the Arabs, the people inhabiting the area, if an exclusively Jewish state is to be established in Palestine? While answering this question Herzl was convinced that the establishment of Jewish State would lead to the development of Palestine and in the process would benefit the Arabs living there. But it became clear to the Zionist thinkers like Grannot Granovsky quite early that a systematic dislocation (though not expulsion) was the *sine qua non* of the Zionist enterprise.[2]

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[1] Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, American Zionist Emergency Council, 1946, Chapter 1. p. 2

[2] Reinhard Wiemer, "Zionism and the Arabs after the establishment of the state of Israel: A study of Zionist conceptions for Arabs in the Jewish state", in Alexander Scholch, (Ed), *Palestinians over the Green Line: Studies on the relations between Palestinians on both sides of the 1949 Line since 1967*, (London, 1983) p. 26.

Towards achieving its end, the Zionist movement purchased lands form the local Arabs and populated it with the Jews immigrating from different parts of the world. This, it hoped, could be achieved without generating much enmity from the Arabs. In the mean time the British came out with the Balfour Declaration. The Arabs saw it as the British acceptance of the Zionist demands and undermining of their interests and existence. [3] It was after this declaration that the Zionist movement seriously thought about the 'Arab question'; the problem was how to reconcile the maximalist position of most of the Zionist groups with the demands of the Balfour Declaration which stated that the British support for the national home for Jews should not infringe upon the rights of the majority non-Jewish population in Palestine. The general agreement that the economic development of Palestine as a result of Jewish immigration would compensate for the Arabs frustration proved wrong by the bloody riots of 1929. This made Zionist leadership contemplate a possibility of establishing constitutional institutions accepting Arabs as equal partners in the construction of these bodies.[4]

The growing number of immigrants enabled the Zionist leadership to reverse its erstwhile position and seek communal parity with the Arabs. The continued Arab opposition to Jewish immigration (or *aliya*) and the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine essentially eliminated any scope for compromise. The Arabs rejection of the partition proposal of Peel Commission made Zionist leadership to abandon the idea of looking the majority Arabs as equal partners and emphasised on transfer of the Arabs from the proposed Jewish state. By mid 1940s, the 'Arab problem' was externalised within the Jewish thinking and the establishment of the Jewish State was to be the

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[3]   David McDowall, *Palestine and Israel: The Uprising and Beyond*, (London, 1989) p.19.

[4]   Ibid., p. 28.

starting point for any settlement with the Arabs.[5] The last attempt to solve the 'Arab question' peacefully failed when the UN partition plan for Palestine was rejected by the Arabs.

Four distinct stages constitute in the identity formation of the Israeli Arabs, namely, from the establishment of Israel to 1967 war; From June War to outbreak of *intifada* in 1987; the *intifada* in 1987-1993; and the *post-intifada* and Post Oslo period.

The First Phase: 1948-1967

The establishment of Israel was followed by the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. The Arab states viewed the creation of Israel in Palestine as illegal and declared war on Israel to liberate the 'Arab' Palestine from the Jews. The war ended with the defeat of the combined forces of the Arab states and consolidated Israel. The direct involvement and participation of the Arab residents of Palestine in the war were limited. However, the establishment of Israel and the war in its aftermath, affected those most. These two events had a two fold impact on the Arabs living in Palestine. One, a large majority of Arabs (about 90 percent of them) fled, left or expelled from their homes and became refugees in the neighbouring Arab states. And two, only about 120,000 stayed behind in Israel and overnight became as a minority dominated in the Jewish-dominated state.[6] The remaining portion of Palestine, that is, the land west of Jordan River and Gaza Strip were captured by Jordan and Egypt respectively.[7] Therefore it was evident that if the Jewish occupation of Palestine made Arabs of

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[5]   Wiemer, n. 2, p. 32.

[6]   Marwan Darweish, and Andrew Rigby, *Palestinians in Israel: Nationality and Citizenship,* (Bradford: 1995), p. 1.

[7]   McDowall, n. 3, p. 29.

Palestine minority in its own land and refugee elsewhere, the Egyptian and Jordanian action deprived them of whatever free country the Palestinians were left with.

The creation of Israel was unique because it was probably the first time in the world history that a state was created for a community which resulted in the displacement of another community from the same land in a remarkably short time frame. There have been different explanations for the displacement of a large number of Arabs from Mandate Palestine during this period. Some scholars argue that the migration of Arabs was not because of any Zionist strategy to terrorise Arabs to leave Palestine, but it was due to appeals made by various Arabs states to vacate the area for the benefit of the liberating Arab armies.[8]

Others, primarily Palestinians and Revisionist historians have argued that the Palestinians did not leave because their leaders told them to do so, but rather in most cases they were forced to leave.[9] The latter school consists of people like, Tom Segev, who in his book *1949: The First Israelis* blamed the Israeli army for the mass expulsion of Arabs.[10] He is supported by Michael Palumbo who, relying on UN and British archives, claims that the demolition of Arab villages and expulsion of Arabs were carried out on the orders of Army chief of staff in May 1948 as part of *Plan Dalet*.[11] In a situation like this, when both sides have enough evidence to prove their case, one tends to believe that a multiplicity of factors from both sides were responsible for the displacement of large number Arabs from Palestine.

The establishment of Israel proved worse for those Arabs who stayed behind in Israel. The 1948 war and the uncompromising attitude of Arab countries after it, led

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[8] Rashid Khalidi, "Revisionist views of the Modern history of Palestine: 1948,"*Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 10, no.4, Fall 1988, p.426.

[9] Ibid., p. 426.

[10] Tom Segev, cited in, Khalidi, n. 8, p. 427.

[11] Michael Palumbo, cited in, Khalidi, n. 8, p. 428.

Israel to perceive itself as an island surrounded by a sea of enemies. The impact and consequence of this Israeli policy were acute for the Israeli Arabs. They were cut off from the Palestinian Arabs living in West Bank and Gaza Strip. Segregated from the larger Palestinian Arabs, they stayed in Israel as a 'confused' and dependent minority; confused because on one hand they suddenly became minority from a majority and dependent because all the traditional Arab leaders had fled as refugees leaving them leaderless in a crisis situation. The absence of strong leadership during this crisis situation could be one of the reasons for the initial resignation of the Israeli Arabs towards the Jewish state.

The presence of a threatening and hostile neighbourhood had its bearing on the policies followed by Israel vis-à-vis its Arab citizens. The Israeli Arabs formed a part of the larger Arab population before the establishment of Israel and since 1948 their presence was seen as a security threat to Israel. To keep this security threat under check the Israeli Arabs were subjected to military rule during 1948-1966. One can understand the security concerns of an infant state surrounded by a hostile neighbourhood but the act of putting a section of its citizenry under military rule marginalised them within the Israeli society.[12] The Israeli Arabs were subjected to a host of restrictions and regular night curfews were imposed to curb their movement. If they wanted to go out of their area and visit their relatives in a neighbouring Arab village or town, they had to seek prior permission from the authorities and such permissions were granted after an extensive scrutiny and inspection. The process of marginalisation of Israeli Arabs within Israeli society proved to be an impediment in the normalisation of their status as a citizen of Israel.

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[12]   Darweish and Rigby, n. 6, p. 2.

Living inside Israel but separated form Palestinian Arabs by the Green Line (the armistice borders of 1949) and deserted by the established leaders, the Israeli Arabs had no other alternative but to accept the Israeli State and manoeuvre within the provisions of its institutions for their future. Marginalized and culturally distinct from the larger Israeli society, they became dependent on the state that they had opposed.

The issue regarding the status of Arabs in Israel was a contested terrain within the leadership of earliest Zionist labour movement.[13] David Ben-Gurion represented one approach to this issue and the other represented by the likes of Chaim Arlosoroff and later by Pinhas Lavon. Even before the independence, Ben-Gurion favoured the policy of maximum segregation while Arlosoroff wanted an integrative approach.[14] Lavon on the other hand rejected the idea of Arab autonomy given by Ben-Gurion arguing that it would lead to discrimination against them. After independence several leaders including Moshe Dayan and Ben-Gurion opposed granting citizenship to Arabs.[15] Ultimately *Mapai* decided against Ben-Gurion and voted to grant citizenship to all Arabs. Concerning the military government, Lavon recommended keeping the 1945 emergency regulations in force while the state of war continued to exist between Israel and its neighbours to enable army to take actions against the Arab population whenever necessary while the civilian affairs would be dealt with by a civilian distric: governor.[16] Others like M. Assaf, a well known *Mapai* 'Arabist', emphasised that the integration of Arabs into the Israeli society should be the primary motive of the state.

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[13] Eyal Kafakfi, "Segregation or Integration of the Israeli Arabs: Two Concepts in Mapai," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* vol. 30,1998, p. 347

[14] Ibid., p. 349, 350.

[15] Ibid., p. 353.

[16] Ibid., p. 355.

This would not only ensure their minimum loyalty to the state but also ensure their presence in the country.[17]

The right to vote granted to the Israeli Arabs in January 1949, started activities in the Arab sector by Zionist parties with the aim of manipulating the Arab clan structure in favour of hastily established Arab lists. *Mapai*, the dominating party in the government had no explicit program for the Arab minority and preferred to leave important matters regarding them to the military administration. In January 1952 after a prolonged debate, the *Mapai* leadership agreed that even if the security must take precedence over any other consideration, equal treatment must be assured for the Israeli Arabs in all sectors. Exception however was made for *Histadrut* (General Union of Hebrew Workers in Palestine), the first and foremost Zionist institution. They also agreed that the cultural and educational gaps between Jews and Arabs must be narrowed down and the Arabs should be allowed to have their own non-political organisational framework like clubs etc.[18]

Among the Zionist parties, *Mapam* was the only party that was seriously committed to the development and welfare of the Israeli Arabs. Even before 1948, *Mapam* leaders argued that the interests of Jews and Arabs in Palestine were not antagonistic and in 1954 it became the first party to admit Arab as full members.[19] A large section within *Mapam* believed that its attempt to combine progressive Zionism with Arab nationalism would help Jews and Arabs to overcome their national antagonism in Israel; but many believed that the effort to combine the two concepts was more of an illusion than a reality.[20] This thinking within *Mapam* is reflected in

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[17] Wiemer, n. 2, p. 35

[18] Ibid., p. 36.

[19] Ibid., p.40.

[20] Ibid.

the tension between Zionist and Socialist trends, both having conflicting views over the end of military government and Arab youth association with the *Mapam* affiliated Kibbutz. *Mapam* remained marginalised compared to *Mapai*, because *Mapam* attempted to sell the idea of Zionism to the Arabs that had already failed in twenties.

The attitude of Zionist parties towards Israeli Arabs played an important role in shaping their political orientation. In the absence of an exclusive Arab party, the Israeli Arabs tried to manoeuvre inside the political spectrum presented by the Zionist parties. In this regard three main political trends could be identified amongst the Arab population in the initial years: Nationalist, Establishment and Communist.[21]

The nationalist trend was dominant in the mid-1950s and witnessed cooperation between communists and the Pan-Arabists in the Arab world. This trend had its impact on the Arab population of Israel and they formed Arab Front to protest against the military government and the land confiscation.[22] The Arab Front changed its name to Popular Front due to the government repression, but in 1958 there was a split as a result of the larger split between communists and pro-Nasser nationalists in the Arab world. Nationalists formed the *Al-Ard* movement and in 1965 the members of the movement established the Arab Socialist List to run for the Knesset election but were banned by the Central Election Committee. *Al-Ard* movement saw itself as an integral part of the wider Palestinian problem and argued that Palestinian problem can only be solved with the establishment of Palestinian State.[23]

Arab lists formed by the Zionist parties represented the establishment trend. The Arab lists were merely an instrument to reward the notables who succeeded in

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[21]   Darweish and Rigby, n. 6, p. 3.

[22]   Ibid., p.3

[23]   Ibid.

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maintaining the loyalties of the Israeli Arabs. The maximum number of seats such Arab lists managed to win was five in the 1959 Knesset elections.

The Israeli Communist Party (ICP) was formed in 1948, after the unification of Jewish and the Arab communists in Israel. At this juncture, the ICP (*Maqi*) was the only non-Zionist party demanding full equality for the Arabs inside Israel. It also played a significant role in the protest against the military government and land confiscations. In 1965, the party split over the question of Palestinian national movement and its attitude towards the Soviet Union. The majority called themselves *Rakah*, the new communist list and the remainder kept its name *Maqi*. One important achievement of ICP was its role in the maintenance of Arab identity and therefore became the home of leading Arab intellectuals.

At the economic level, establishment of Israel had a significant impact on the traditional economic structure of the Israeli Arabs. Independence was followed by the increase in the immigration of Jews in Israel. The number of Jewish population in 1914 was estimated to be 85,000 that is, one out of every thirteen person in Palestine was a Jewish immigrant. On the eve of the 1948 war this ratio narrowed down to 2:1 and after the war the ratio dramatically changed to 7:1 in favour of the Jews.[24] This demographic transition was a result of the unrestricted immigration policy followed by the Israeli government and the mass exodus of the Palestinians to neighbouring Arab countries.

This overall increase in the population of Israel increased the pressure on land. During the first phase of the demographic transition, the state acquired the lands of absentee owners (Arabs who left the areas which became Israel during the 1948 war) to settle the immigrating population. But the ever-increasing immigrating population

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[24] Elia T. Zuriek, *Palestinians in Israel: A study in internal colonization*, (London, 1979), p.108.

made government to look for other source of land for their settlement. Since it was the Israeli Arabs who owned more than 40 percent of the land in Israel, the government followed a policy of acquiring land from the Israeli Arabs to settle the immigrating Jews.[25] Since, the Israeli Arabs were densely populated in the east and north near the borders, their lands were also confiscated for security reasons.

The traditional Israeli Arab economy was based on the land and the depletion of this resource forced Israeli Arabs to look for alternative sources of income. It led to the migration of large numbers of Arabs to the urban centres that emerged as the focus of new economic activities. Studies have shown that the proportion of urban Arabs increased from 20 per cent in 1931 (British census) to 25 per cent in 1963 and further to 56 per cent in 1973 (Israeli census).[26] This urbanisation of Israeli Arabs and their alienation from land made them heavily dependent upon and integrated with the Israeli economy.

In the urban job market, Israeli Arabs faced two different sets of problems: they faced fierce competition from immigrating Jewish population and the differential wage structure for them. In early 1950s, there was separate labour exchange for the Jews and the Arabs to help them find jobs in the labour market.[27] The reason given for the separate exchanges was to regulate the Arab share of market more evenly. Language barriers and the psychological difficulties made this existence unavoidable. The consequence of such a policy was the complete economic segregation between Jewish and Arab labour where were seen as a deliberate effort on the part of the government to safeguard the Jewish labour market against any Arab competition.[28]

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[25] Ibid., p.116.

[26] Ibid., p. 122.

[27] Wiemer, n. 2, p. 37

[28] Ibid., p. 38.

This character of Israeli labour market changed following the economic boom (1955-1964). The immigrants, mostly from African and Asian countries, moved upward in the occupational structure form unskilled to skilled jobs and the vacuum created by them in the labour market was filled by the Arabs.[29] In 1961, Arabs amounted for 12 per cent of the labour force that was four times higher than in 1950.

One of the most important issues of debate was whether Arabs should become members of the *Histadrut*. It was argued that the *Histadrut* should change its pre-statehood priorities and accept Israeli Arabs, having equal rights in the Knesset, as its member. The inclusion of Israeli Arabs in *Histadrut* could have influenced the *Mapai* domination in the *Histadrut* by increasing *Mapam* support base.[30] Therefore, the Political Committee of *Mapai* in January 1952 decided not to accept Israeli Arabs as members of *Histadrut*.

Further, the social and cultural interactions between Israeli Arabs and Jews were negligible. Ben-Gurion followed a policy of limited cultural autonomy for the Arabs aimed at reconciling the Arabs with the existence of their position within the Israeli State. This policy was criticised within the ruling *Mapai* by people like Pinhas Lavon, who argued that this policy of cultural autonomy was a mistake and would encourage the emergence of separate nationalist consciousness and advocated gradual 'Israelisation.' Khushi demanded the abolition of separate Arab schools, the symbol of cultural autonomy and their replacement by Arab-Jewish co-educational schools.[31]

One of the most important aspects of the inter-ethnic relation between Arabs and Jews in Israel was their perception about each other. Elia T. Zuriek argued that there was a high level of hostility exhibited by the Jewish population towards the

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[29]   Ibid., pp. 43, 44.

[30]   Ibid., p. 39.

[31]   Ibid., pp.45, 46.

Arabs and that Arabs were seen as irrational, unbending and only amenable to physical rather than intellectual discourse.[32] This work further contends that the situation is different among the Israeli Arab as most of them (90 per cent) are willing to befriend the Jews. A similar negative attitudinal pattern emerges on the issue of mixed marriages in Israel. In mixed marriages, the majorities of the brides come from Jewish community and complain that there was a feeling of rejection in the new environment that ultimately leads to the break down of marriages. Therefore one could argue that even though *Mapai* politically moved to the direction of alleviating the military government and there was some effort that went into economically integrating the Arabs, in the social and cultural sector the need for improvement was acute.

The second phase: 1967-1987

The June war of 1967 established the Israeli control over the Jordan-occupied West Bank and Egyptian-ruled Gaza Strip. This removal of the Green line (line separating pre-1967 Israel to West Bank) and the abolition of the military government inside Israel in 1966 had a twofold impact on the Arabs living inside Israel. Relieved from the imposed military government, a major factor for the alienation of Israeli Arabs within Israel, they started asserting themselves within the Israeli political process and participating in the economic activities. On the other hand, the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by Israel ended the 19-year-old separation between Israeli Arabs and the Arabs of West Bank and Gaza. This process of unification created an emotional and political relationship between the two Arab communities thereby encouraging the Israeli Arab in identifying themselves with the Palestinian struggle for independence from the Israeli occupation.

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[32] Zuriek, n. 24, p. 145.

The decisive Israeli victory in the war, made the Arabs states to accept the permanency of Israeli existence and at the same time, it exposed the Israeli Arabs to the Arab world. Though there were complex long-term consequences, Reinhard Wiemer points out its two immediate concerns of the war.

> One, Zionism had finally reached its aim of controlling the whole of Palestine, even though it was only the right wing parties within Israel that supported this idea.
>
> Two, the occupation has exposed Israel to the nightmare of the 'demographic danger'. The number of Arabs living under Israeli rule had tripled overnight and this would have implications for the Jewish character of the state.[33]

At the outbreak of the war, the Israeli government was extremely suspicious of the Israeli Arab attitude towards the war and therefore imposed the military rule that had been abolished seven months before. The first few weeks saw almost an absence of hostile expression or sabotage attempt on behalf of Israeli Arabs. This was seen by many in Israel as a loyalty test for the Israeli Arabs[34] and their success in it made left wing parties in Israel declare that now no ground existed for the discrimination against the Israeli Arabs. *Mapam* proclaimed that the majority of the Arab citizens of the state decided upon the complete identification with the Jewish people and a sense of loyalty to the state. It definitely was not the end of Arab problem but start of a new dimension to it.

The occupation of West Bank and Gaza presented a unique problem of how to control it without having to add more than a million Arab minorities under Israeli rule. First collection of ideas to deal with this issue appeared in 1967 under the title of *'Hakol'* (everything). They ranged from historical constructions- comparing

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[33] Wiemer, n. 2, p. 49.

[34] Ibid., p. 49.

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Palestinian Arabs with the crusaders whereby both lost their rights to the country because they neglected it to the population transfer of the Arabs into the neighbouring Arab states.[35] Further in 1977 arguments were made by neo-annexionists in favour of transferring the Arab population to other Arab countries and since that was not possible in normal circumstances therefore a period of war would be suitable.[36] The most important aspect of this idea is that it did not distinguish between Israeli Arabs and the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

In this regard it will be important to study the attitude of the political parties on the issue of controlling West Bank and Gaza after the 1967 war. The Mapai/Labour government took an ambivalent stand on this issue. While it did not advocate outright annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip, it encouraged and built Jewish settlements in areas conquered during the war. Its attitude towards Israeli Arabs became more accommodative as it found it necessary to commit substantial resources for the cooperation Israeli Arabs. In the post-1967 scenario, it was argued that after the integration of Arab labour force into the Israeli economy has been achieved, it is necessary to let Arabs participate in the political decision making process in the spheres that directly concerns them and in 1973, the *Mapai* admitted the non-Jews as members.[37] In continuation of this policy, on 19 June 1976 the Labour party held a seminar exclusively dealing with the problems of Arabs citizens of Israel.

Mapam on the other hand realised that its old formula of Zionism co-existing with progressive Arab nationalism had become irrelevant after the occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip. This conclusion divided *Mapam* into two groups; the majority

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[35]   Ibid., p. 50.

[36]   A. Ben-Ami, cited in, Ibid., p. 50.

[37]   Wiemer, n. 2, p. 52.

sought to abandon the idea of coming to terms with Palestinian nationalism, an influential minority concluded that problems of the Israeli Arabs could not be solved as long as the problems of Palestinian nationhood and nationalism has not found its solution.[38]

The June war, however, brought about far more serious changes among the Israeli Arabs. The erosion of pre-1967 border had profound impact on the relationship between Israeli Arabs and the Arabs living in the occupied territories. It ended the separation and united the two communities after two decades and enabled both the communities to visit relatives and friends, resume intermarriages between them, pilgrimages on the either side and to start commercial links. Such encounters exposed Israeli Arabs to the Palestinian independence movement. The Israeli Arabs could relate themselves to the discrimination faced by the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, that until recently was a part of their life inside Israel. The similarity between the nature of their struggle within Israel for equality and the struggle by the Arabs in the occupied territories for political liberation led to the establishment and consolidation of a political relationship between the two communities.

The political freedom acquired by the Israeli Arab after the end of the military rule and the new military control over the Occupied Territories encouraged them to assert their political and legal rights within Israel. The other factors that led to this politicisation of the Israeli Arabs were the birth of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 representing the nationalist aspirations of Palestinians and the Israeli debacle in the 1973 war.

The newfound freedom from the military government after 1966 encouraged the Israeli Arabs to struggle against the discrimination that they faced for 19 years.

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[38]   Ibid., p. 53.

This struggle was meant to end their status within Israel as a 'secondary citizen' and to secure equality with the Jews. In this effort they were helped by the situation created after the occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip, as Israeli was unable to control the Arab population on both sides of the border. This weakness was used by the Israeli Arabs to seek a common cause with the Palestinian Arabs.

This paradigm shift resulted in the vigorous politicisation of the Israeli Arabs. An example of the rise of political activities could be observed in the rise of political organisations within Israeli Arab community. The emergence of *Abna Al-Balad* (Sons of the village) in 1970 was a major turning point in the political history of the Israeli Arabs. It was the first national group within Israel to define the Palestinian identity of the Israeli Arabs. They saw themselves as an integral part of the Palestinian populace and their national liberation movement. In one of its publications, it has argued, "the Palestinians masses in Israel are the integral part of the Palestinian people and its general national struggle, and the establishment of Abna Al-Balad is the re-emergence of the independent national movement in this part of the homeland."[39] The formation of the National Committee for the Defence of Arab Land in Israel (NCDAL) was a manifestation of the remarkable growth in the political consciousness of the Israeli Arabs. The sole aim of this committee was to oppose the appropriation of the Arabs lands within Israel.

In 1975 the Democratic Front for the Peace and Equality (DFPE) was formed consisting of communists, nationalists and the academics. For the first time since 1948, it gained control of the municipal corporation of Nazareth in 1975 and three years later, it took control over the 19 Arab municipal councils. Until then all were

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[39]   Darweish, and Rigby, n. 6, p. 5.

under the control of the traditional *hamulahs* or those groups that associated with the Israeli establishment camp.

Besides political organisations, there were other efforts to establish community-based organisations in response to the demands of the different sectors of the Arab population in Israel. In general they also demanded equality for the Israeli Arabs in Israel and to show support for the Palestinian Arab struggle for self-determination and independence. The most important among them is National Committee of Heads of Arab Local Authorities (NCHALA) established in 1975 as a lobby to pressure the government departments to allocate more resources for the Arab sector. The other organisations formed during this phase were the Union of Arab High School Students (1974) and the Union of Arabs Students in Israeli Universities (1975).

Different explanations are forwarded to explain the 'Activation of a community in suspended animation', as Shmuel Sandler preferred to call it.[40] He argued that despite deep divisions between Jews and the Arabs, Israel enjoyed inter-communal tranquillity throughout the first phase of its independence. This however, changed with the eruption of violent demonstration on the event of Land Day. On this basis he is in agreement with the views of Jacob Landau, Elie Rekhess and Sammy Samooha, who argued that mid-1960s was a point of departure in the relationship between Israeli Arabs and the Israeli State.[41] Explaining this departure, Jacob Landau agued that this situation arose from gaps in the modernisation levels of Israeli Arabs and the Jews in Israel.[42] The other school believes this situation emanated from the

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[40] Shmuel Sandler, "Israeli Arabs and the Jewish state: The Activation of a Community in Suspended Animation," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 31, no. 4, October 1995, p. 932.

[41] Jacob M. Landau, Elia Rekhess, and Sammy Smooha, cited in, Ibid.

[42] Jacob M. Landau, *The Arab Minorities in Israel 1967-91: Political Aspects*, (Oxford, 1993), p. 64.

internal colonisation of Israeli Arabs similar to that of other white, European and Third World social structures. Sammy Samooha asserted that the Jewish state ruled over its Arab minority through a combination of devices such as, social separation, economic dependence and political separatism.[43] The wide range of institutional discrimination was an important factor for the activation of the community in suspended animation.

The Land Day was an event that clearly revealed the magnitude of political consolidation of the Israeli Arabs against the discrimination they were subjected to within Israel. In response to the government plans to expropriate lands held by Israeli Arabs, on 30 March 1976 the NCDAL called for a general strike but this ended in a violent clash with the Israeli police leading to the death of six Israeli Arabs. Use of violence was one of the striking features of this event and it was a departure from the non-violent and constitutional methods followed by Israeli Arabs to protest against the state. It has a symbolised of Israeli Arabs readiness to shed blood to make their voice heard. On the one hand, this changed character of Israeli Arabs protest and made them a liability for the Israeli State but at the same time, it increased their standing among the PLO.

Sam Lehman-Wilzig, who investigated the nationwide protest behaviour in Israel, has identified some important changes in the protest behaviour of Israeli Arabs. According to him, the mean of Arab protest activity increased from 1.7 events per year during 1950-66 and 1.8 events during 1967-1972 to 9.5 events per year during 1973-1979.[44] This finding strengthens the belief that the Israeli Arabs increasingly became politically active after the disappearance of the Green line and the situation

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[43] Sammy Smooha, cited in, Sandler, n.41, p.933)

[44] Sandler, n. 41, p. 945.

was accentuated with the success of strike on Land Day in 1976. From then on the Israeli Arabs have always observed Land Day every year which serves as a major rallying point.

The period between 1976 and the outbreak of 1987 *intifada* saw the rise of political organisations within the Arab population demanding their recognition as national minority, with political and cultural aspirations. The increasing confidence and pride among Israeli Arabs loosened the effectiveness of the government strategies to control them and they effectively used the cleavage in the Jewish society to garner the support for their cause. The organisation of the *Congress of the Arab Masses in Israel* is considered as an important event in the rise of Israeli Arabs political consciousness. It advocated equal rights of citizenship for the Israeli Arabs and their recognition as an integral part of the Palestinian community. Furthermore, to solve the larger Palestinian crisis it suggested for the mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO and the withdrawal from all the positions occupied during and after 1967 war.[45] The congress was banned even before it was to take place on 6 December 1980.

In 1984 the Progressive List for Peace (PLP) emerged drawing its legitimacy from its distinctive Palestinian roots, identity and aspirations. It was also called an identical copy of DFPE, having more or less the same political programme. The competition between these two parties sharpened and accelerated the political debate within the Israeli Arab society. The failure of *Abna Al-Balad* to emerge as an effective political force at the larger level helped these two parties to dominate the Israeli Arabs political space. However, the collapse of Soviet Union led to the decline of the Israeli Communist Party but it proved profitable for the Israeli Arabs as the Arabs members gradually took control of the communist party hitherto headed by Jews. Another

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[45]   Darweish, and Rigby, n. 6, p. 8-9.

significant event that happened around this period was the formation of the Democratic Arab Party (DAP) by Knesset member, Abed Al-Wahab Daraweshe who resigned from the Labour party in early 1988, protesting against the government's handling of the *intifada*.

In addition to political organisations there emerged, professional organisations to meet the specific needs of the various occupational groups within the Arab population such as social workers, medical practitioner, lawyers etc. The Supreme Committee to Follow-up the Concerns of Arab Citizens in Israel (SCFCAC) was one such organisation formed in 1987. It was one of the broadest and most powerful bodies to be established since 1948 and included the NCADL, Arab Knesset members, and Arab members of the *Histadrut* and all the other organisations. It was an attempt to create an umbrella organisation representing Israeli Arabs from all walks of life.[46]

As the name suggests, they are both Arabs and Israelis. The Israeli Arabs are those people who stayed back in Israel after its establishment and became Israeli citizens. A variety of terms are used to refer to these people, such as 'Arabs in Israel', 'Israeli Arabs', 'Palestinian citizens of Israel', 'Palestinian Israelis', 'Palestinians from inside', or Palestinians from the 1948 areas'.[47] They all refer to the same population, but reflect differing perspectives depending on the context within which they are used. This reflects the genuine complexities that prevail regarding the identity of this group. Here, in this study they will be referred as Israeli Arabs. The Arab residents of the West Bank and Gaza are referred as Palestinian Arabs. The use

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[46] Ibid., p.10.

[47] Darweish, and Rigby, n. 6, p. 6.

of the terms, Israeli and Palestinian Arabs will differentiate the two Arab communities living in Israel and rest of Palestine respectively.

The focus of this study is on this period, dealing with the status of the Israeli Arabs in Israel, their relationship with the State and with the Arabs of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Further it also deals with the Israeli Arabs response to the 1987 *intifada* and its impact on the Israeli Arabs' Nationality Vs Citizenship dilemma. The first chapter is an introduction to the topic. It has two basic objectives: first, to explain and forward the acceptable definitions of the terms used in the study; second, to construct a historical narration of the Israeli Arabs from 1948 to 1987. This historical narrative will help us situate their identity formation process during the two different phases of this period. The events narrated in this chapter is important for the analysis of their influence over the identity formation process of the Israeli Arabs and will also help in locating the sources of the contradiction that their identity carries.

The second chapter tries to study the evolution of Israeli Arab identity within the lager framework of the identity building post in the post-colonial world. It starts with analysing the impact of British policies on the identity formation of the people in the region, including Arabs and the Jews. After this it probes the impact of the Israeli identity construction process, which was an attempt to construct a Jewish identity, upon the identity formation of the Israeli Arabs. The varying degree with which the Israeli, Arab, Palestinian and Islamic identity affected the identity formation process of the Israeli Arabs and the trends that dominates the identity of the Israeli Arabs is studied in the second section of this chapter.

The PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) emerged as a Palestinian national organisation after 1964, the year it was created. Its emergence coincided with the rise of Palestinian trend among the Israeli Arabs and this trend was strengthened

21

by the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel after 1967 war. Keeping this in mind the third chapter tries to analyse the decisions and attitude of the PLO towards Israeli Arabs, as they had an important bearing upon their identity formation process.

The last chapter concentrates upon the 1987 *intifada* and its impact upon the Israeli Arabs identity dilemma. The turn of events during the uprising made Israeli identity take extreme positions, from being highly *Palestinised* to becoming *Israelised*. The causes and conditions that created this shift in few years, which took almost 40 years to go in reverse order, is the most interesting aspect of the fourth chapter.

Chapter-II

The Israeli Arabs: A Search for Identity

The expression *Israeli Arab* denotes the conflicting reality of the Arabs living in Israel; *Israeli* denotes their status as citizens of the State of Israel and, *Arab* signifies their nationality that they share with the Arabs who live outside Israel. This term 'Israeli Arabs' therefore, identifies those Arabs who remained inside Israel after its establishment in 1948 and who were conferred the Israeli citizenship. Since then, Arabs in Israel had to live with this dual identity.

In the post-colonial world, Israel is not the only state where different nationalities share same territory as citizens of a country. Majority of the states that were born after the World War-II carried the legacies of their colonial past in the form of 'multi-national' population. The most severe crisis the government of these newly independent states faced was, to reconcile the national aspiration of each community while at the same time preserving the unified state. Different strategies were adopted by these states to accommodate the national aspiration of the different nationalities. One of such strategy was the conference of equal citizenship rights to all sections of the population. This was followed by Israel to satisfy the national needs of the Arabs in the newly established state. But the contemporary history of Israel has highlighted the limitations of this policy and started a debate on how to satisfy the national ambition of the Israeli Arabs in a political system that is an ethnic democracy.

Why it is difficult to satisfy the national ambition of a minority within the broad framework of a pluralist state? Nationalism, as Nadim Rouhana has pointed out, is a subjective term, but could be formulated out of objective circumstances. According to

him, national identity denotes a set of people sharing some aspects of culture, language, political aspirations, common history, ethnicity, tradition, religion, and living within a given geographical location.[1] Going by this definition, the Israeli Arabs are more close to the Arab population on the other side of the Green Line than with the Jewish population of Israel.

From here it follows that Arabs on both sides of the Green Line should have the same national ambition. But there were exceptions to this rule. The Israeli Arabs have been living inside Israel that is dominated by Jewish community and they enjoy equal citizenship rights within an ethnic democratic state. The situation is further complicated by the fact that their country was at war with their 'nation' namely, neighbouring Arab countries.[2] In this context it is really difficult to locate the political agenda of Israeli Arabs in a space that is preoccupied by the struggle between their national aspirations and citizenship rights.

The fundamental problem that Israel faced in its 'nation building' process was the creation of a national identity for a diverse population of Jews coming from all over the world. Since it focused constructing a single national identity for the Jews, Israel deliberately discounted the inclusion of the symbols of Arab nationalism in it. The aim of this identity formation was to unify different Jewish population and to create their loyalty towards an essentially Jewish state. The Arabs figured as a minority that at best would be tolerated in a state that was basically ethnic in character. Any further discussion on the

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[1]   Nadim Rouhana, "The Civic and National sub-Identities of the Israeli Arabs in Israel: A Psychological Approach", in John Hoffman, (ed.), *Arab Jewish Relation in Israel: A Quest in human Understanding*, (Bristol, 1988), pp. 126,127.

[2]   Jacob M. Landau, *The Arab Minorities in Israel 1967-91: Political Aspects*, (Oxford, 1993), p. 162.

political character of Israel and its implication on the Israeli Arabs would require an analysis of Israeli nation building process.

British colonialism: Its impact on the identity formation in Palestine

On the surface, it would appear that the establishment of Israel in Palestine was responsible for the problems in Israeli Arabs identity. However, a close examination of Palestinian history could trace its origin to the ambivalent policies of the British towards Jews and Arabs in this region. The political exigency to weaken the Ottoman Empire made British to promise an independent Arab kingdom under the leadership of Sheriff Hussein. Immediately afterwards, Lord Balfour promised British support for 'a national home for the Jewish people' in Palestine.[3] The Balfour Declaration was further incorporated into the Mandate that Britain was given over Palestine by the League of Nations in 1922. This entire exercise was seen by the Arabs as the British approval for the Jewish desire for a homeland in Palestine and was in conflict with the British promise to Sheriff Hussein. This ambivalent British policy of trying to please both Jews and the Arabs sowed the seeds for an intense dispute between Jews and Arabs over the same territory, namely, Palestine.

Secondly, the manner in which Britain withdrew form Palestine further complicated the situation. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) recommended the partition Palestine into two states, Jewish and Arab, and an international zone comprising of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.[4] Jews accepted this partition plan but even though it fell short of their dream while the Arabs rejected it in totality. The

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[3]   David McDowall, *Palestine and Israel: The Uprising and Beyond*, (London, 1989), p. 18.

[4]   Ibid., p. 26.

British authorities in Palestine were little interested in implementing the UNSCOP recommendations and withdrew in haste without a proper post-Mandate mechanism. This ensured a military confrontation between the two sides and when the armistice agreements were eventually signed in 1949, the newly-formed Israel controlled more than 73 percent of the territory of Mandate Palestine.[5] This war had two significant consequences, transformation of Arabs in Israel from a majority to minority and establishment of Israel surrounded by hostile countries, which were also Arab, perpetually threatening its existence. The annexation of West Bank by Jordan ensured that the Arab state of Palestine as envisaged by the partition plan could not be established.

National identity building in Israel: Constructing the deconstructed

The nation, as Benedict Anderson says, is an imagined political community. It is imagined because the members of the smallest of the nation would never known most of their fellow members, met them, or even heard of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.[6] The nation is imagined as limited geographical area because even the largest of them all has finite, if elastic, boundaries beyond which lays other nations. The imagination and construction of this political community are dependent on some identified variables and the study of national identity formation of a state revolves around these variables.

In the same fashion the Israeli nation has certain variables in the form of symbols of nationalism that combine to construct its national identity. The uniqueness with the

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[5] Ibid., p. 28.

[6] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origination and Spread of Nationalism*", (New York, 1991), p. 6.

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Israeli national identity building process is that the presence of plural Jewish population and also the Arabs, who shared their nationality with the neighbouring hostile states. It is this uniqueness of Israeli identity building process that made Israeli Arabs position problematic in the Israeli society. The Arabs had to accept the citizenship of a state that is at war with their nation on the other side of the border and yet search for their identity within the larger Israeli identity that does not carry any symbols of Arab nationalism.

The symbols that represents the Israeli state, like the name of the state, Israel, the flag and the choice of the Star of David along with the seven branched candelabra as national emblems, plus the national anthem which talks of the 'return of Zion', all of which give expression to the Jewish nature of the state of Israel.[7] These symbols proved essential to generate a sense of loyalty among the Jews of different origin but at the same time resulted in alienating the Israeli Arabs from the symbols of the state.

A community identifies itself with a particular identity only when it has a stake in the consolidation of that identity which in turn properly accommodates their aspirations of nationhood. The Israeli identity does not collectively represent the national aspirations of the Arabs, and therefore failed to bring Israeli Arabs inside its ambit voluntarily. Voluntarily because any attempt to coerce a particular community to identify it with an identity would lead to their assertion of independence after the initial period of coercion was over and the consolidation process was taking place. This is true particularly in the Israeli Arabs case, who after twenty years of economic and political consolidation started resisting against inadequacy of their representation in Israeli national and civic identity.

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[7]   Marwan Darweish, and Andrew Rigby, *Palestinians in Israel: Nationality and Citizenship*, (Bradford, 1995), p. 17.

The law of return:

The impact of the Jewishness of the Israeli state is most apparent in the law of return passed in 1950. It embodies the biblical claim that the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people and therefore they alone have the right to return to it.[8] Further elaborating on this law, Rebecca Kook says, the section 1 of the law states, "every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *oleh*" (immigrants). And section 4 describes the scope of the law as, "every Jew who has immigrated into this country before the coming into force the of this law, and every Jew who was born in this country, whether before or after the coming into force of this law, shall be deemed to be a person who has come to this country as an *oleh* under this law."[9] It is evident from these two sections of the law of return that it will be the fundamental factor while defining the citizenship of Israel and determining the discriminatory nature of rights distribution within Israel. It is important to note that the law was passed after Israel had granted the citizenship right to non- Jew, the former enemies of Jews, and therefore this attempt to allow only Jews to return to the country was definitely an act of denying the equality to the Israeli citizens of other community. This is true particularly in the caser of Israeli Arabs.

In the absence of any written constitution, laws like this are very important in defining the character of the state. As, Rebecca Kook says,

> "this law lacks the separation between religion and nationality...in essence corresponds to the ideological foundations of Israel's political existence as well as the primary goals of the Israeli and related Zionist institutions: the establishment of the state dedicated

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[8]   Ibid.

[9]   Rebecca Kook, "Dilemmas of Ethnic Minorities in Democracies: The Effect of Peace on the Palestinians in Israel," *Politics and Society*, vol. 23, no. 3, September 1995, p. 323.

to the 'engathering of the exiles' and not necessarily the well being of its citizen members."[10]

Therefore, in the presence of law of return that is instrumental in the definition of the Israeli national identity, it will indeed be difficult for the Israeli Arabs to identify with such a national identity.

Similarly, the discrimination against Israeli Arabs at the level of local government is highlighted by Majid al-Haj and Henry Rosenfeld in *Arab Local Government in Israel*. They argue that the governments discriminate in favour Jews in the funding of local development projects.[11] Education is another area of discrimination. First example of the discriminatory nature of education is the State Education Law of 1953, which aims at the use of education system to promote Jewish culture and to create loyalty for the Jewish state. For Arabs the educational system has always remained an encouragement towards passivity and cooperation.[12] There are also extensive claims of discrimination in the fields of educational facilities, technical education, higher education and appointments to the posts within the Arab section of education system.

Furthermore the exemption of the Israeli Arabs from joining compulsory military service manifests the conflicting identities. On the one hand, the Arabs were nc t eager to serve in the Israeli army that confronts their Arab brethren living in neighbouring Arab countries. At the same, the perceived loyalty of the Israeli Arabs towards its Arab enemies enables Israel to exclude the Arab citizens from serving in the military. Though

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[10] Ibid., p. 324.

[11] Elia Zuriek, "Prospects of Palestinians in Israel: 2," *Journal of Palestine Studies,* vol. 22, no.4 (Summer 1993) Pp. 74-75

[12] Ibid., p. 71.

the suspicions are mutual, the exclusion of Arabs from military service paves the way for various institutionalised discrimination.[13] Citizens who performed military service are eligible for different state benefits, including child allowances, housing grants, preferential treatment in employment and higher education. Even though religious reasons prevent the ultra-orthodox Jews from serving in the army, the conscription-related discriminations are heavily loaded against the Israeli areas.

Identity and Language

Language is an important factor in shaping the identity of a person or a community and also single handedly commands the loyalties of the entire population which speaks it. The place of Arabic in Israeli identity building process would reflect Israeli Arabs position regarding their loyalty to the Israeli identity. Arabic is the mother tongue and the main national language of Israeli Arabs and a certain percentage of Sephardic Jews. It has a religious significance for the Muslims as Quran is written in Arabic. Hence is considered as a sacred language by the followers of Islam.

The British mandate period saw the strengthening the Hebrew and establishment of English as official language, but by and large Arabic remained the language of the common. Hebrew became the dominant language after the establishment of Israel and Arabic remained important only for the Arab minority, hardly playing any central role in the national public sphere.[14] The reversal of role between Arabic and Hebrew was possible because of the change in the demography of Palestine after 1948, resulting in a Jewish majority and attempt to make Hebrew dominant if not the sole language of the

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[13] Zeev Rosenhek, "The Exclusionary Logic of the Welfare State: Palestinian Citizens in the Israeli Welfare state," *International Sociology*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 1999, p. 206.

[14] Muhammad Amara, "The Place of Arabic in Israel," *International Journal of the Sociology of the Language*, vol. 158, 2002, p. 58.

newly established state. The revival of Hebrew was connected with the consolidation of Jewish nationalism that sought to revive the Hebrew language and identity in the ancestral land. An important manifestation of this policy was the naming of geographical sites, new immigrants and streets in Hebrew to strengthen the identity of the residents with national symbols. Eliezer Ben-Rafeal has suggested that, in order to realize the Jewish dream and to strengthen Hebrew as Jewish language, the traditional Jewish multilingualism was ideologically replaced by Hebrew monolingualism.[15]

Further neglect of Arabic could be observed in the educational policies followed by the Ministry of Education towards the Arabs. One of the major goals of the Israeli education in the Arab sector, as Muhammad Amara argues, "is to empty Arab education of any national content."[16] The policy makers sought to introduce religious-cultural component and Israeli-citizenship component instead of Arab-nationalist component in the curricula. Another issue related to education in the Arab sector has been the qualification of the teachers teaching Arabic. Majority of them are graduates from the Israeli universities where Arabic is taught as a second language and hence are less competent to teach Arabic as mother tongue. By and large in Israel, Arabic is seen as a language of the enemy and anyone interested in it was looked upon suspiciously.

Israeli political system

The form of political structure of a country also conditions the formation of the identity of the communities living inside it. Democracy is unarguably the best suited for the plural societies, providing adequate space for all the communities within its

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[15] Ibid., p.59.

[16] Ibid., p.63.

framework. Democracy in deeply divided societies takes either a 'majoritarian' or 'consociational' form.[17] In majoritarian democracies ethnicity is privatised and state forges a common language, identity, nationalism and national institutions for its citizens. Consociational democracies, on the other hand, while accepting ethnicity as a principle for the organization of the state, never identified the state with any particular constituent group and try to reconcile the differences between them. Rejecting their application in the Israeli case, Sammy Smooha introduces a new form of democracy-ethnic democracy. By ethnic democracy, he means, a political system that combines the extension of political and civil rights to individuals and certain collective rights to minorities with institutional dominance over the state by one of the ethnic groups.[18]

Ethnic democracy, no matter how contradictory the two words sound, is the best expression available to conceptualise the political system of multi-ethnic states like Israel, which simultaneously claims to be a democratic as well as Jewish. It qualifies to be democratic state because it confers a range of individual civil rights upon its Arab minorities and extends certain collective (mainly religious and cultural) rights towards them.[19] At the same time Israel is an ethnic state because it claims to be the 'homeland' of the Jews only and Hebrew is the dominant language. The institutions, official holidays, symbols and heroes are exclusively Jewish. The major immigration law allows only Jews to return to Israel.[20]

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[17] Sammy Smooha, "Minority Status in an Ethnic Democracy: the status of the Arab Minority in Israel." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 13, no. 3, July 1990, p. 389.

[18] Ibid., p. 391.

[19] Oren Yiftachel, "The Concept of Ethnic Democracy and its Applicability in the Case of Israel," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1, January 1992, p. 126.

[20] Smooha, n. 17, p. 393.

Even though the term ethnic democracy is widely accepted, there still remain some problems with it. Oren Yiftachel has objection to this term on two counts.[21] Firstly, multi-ethnic states could be characterised by ethnicity of two kinds, homeland and immigrant. According to him, the ethnic identity is generally more intense and more explicitly expressed in states composed of homeland communities than in immigrant societies. In Israel both Jews and the Arabs consider themselves as homeland groups in a deeply divided society. From here continues his second argument. Israel has tried to preserve internal political stability by the use of majority domination policy. It has been generally observed that any policy of majoritarian domination over a homeland group have failed, but the Israeli experience shows that the minority has accepted the domination of the majority with little resistance. The Arabs as a homeland group accepting the domination of the majority actually problematises the concept of ethnic democracy.

Nadim Rouhana attempts to conceptualise the Israeli Arab problem in a different perspective. His conception of Israel is of a bi-national-Jewish and Arab state, dominated by the Jews. Although, he acknowledges the Israel's democratic norms and institutions, but does not fail to suggest that ethnic and democratic character of the state can not go together. Israel, he says, embodies ethnic exclusivity of the Jewish people only and not its Arab citizens. To support his arguments he cites the 1985 amendment of the Knesset Basic Law, which debars a person to context Knesset elections if his action in any way threatens the existence of Israel.[22]

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[21] Yiftachel, n. 19, pp. 127,130.

[22] Nadim Rouhana, "Israel and its Arab Citizens: Predicaments in the Relationship between Ethnic States and the Ethno national Minorities," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1998, pp. 280- 281.

The predicament faced by others to use the expression 'ethnic democracy' could be understood if one combines the ethnicity with the strict traditional democratic definition. The definitions of a political term itself changes according to the political needs of the existing society and Israel is one of such peculiar society that demand some modification to the term democracy. It was created to provide a nation for a community that had suffered for more than 2000 years and it also wished to accommodate the principles of democracy within the larger framework of the ethnically exclusive state. It was due to this reason that the Israeli Arabs, who were in the beginning an undesirable if not unwanted people, got the status of citizen in an ethnic state with a large amount of democratic rights (not all) that can only be enviable to the Arabs living in other countries of the region.

The Israeli Arab acceptance of this political system was by no means without any attempt to harmonise their interests with the existing democratic set up. Their demand for reforms includes, as Sammy Smooha points out, de-ethnicisation of the state, legitimisation of the Palestinian nationalism, equal individual rights, national collective rights and active participation in politics.[23] Israeli Arabs differentiate between the existence of the state and its Jewish-Zionist character. While they respect the Israeli right to territorial integrity within 1967 borders, they also want the rejection of the Israeli Law of Return, national anthem, flag, and the very aspect of a Jewish state, and calling for its transformation into a non-ethnic, Israeli state. The demand for a written constitution as a safeguard against unfair treatments has been a long standing demand of the Israeli Arabs.

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[23] Smooha, n. 17, pp. 397-408.

The Israeli Arabs demand for reforms is further strengthened by the presence of the discrepancy between their membership in the national identity and citizenship rights. The creation of 'corporate identity', as Rebecca Kook suggests, only included the Jews from all parts of the world and Arabs of Palestine were systematically left out of this national corporate identity.[24] This corporate identity was created to solicit the contribution of Jews from all parts of the world for the nation building process and the exclusion of the Israeli Arabs from this group signifies that in a democratic setup also groups of citizens can be treated differentially.

Trends in identity formation

Colonial past and the post-colonial nation building process are the two important factors that affect the relationship between the different sections of the society and their individual relationship with the state. This relationship has significant bearing on the individual community identity formation. Further any identity formation in a plural country like Israel also depends upon other factors like, political participation, economic integration, religious tolerance and cultural accommodation followed by the state. In the Israeli Arab case, these factors had an impact over their identity formation at two levels- emergences of the collective Arab identity within the Israeli identity and the consolidation of various sub-identities within this collective Israeli Arab identity. While analyzing the impact of above factors, four distinguished trends can be identified based upon the behavioural pattern of Israeli Arabs regarding their identity formation. These trends also coincide with the different periods of their history as citizens of Israel.

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[24] Kook, n. 9, p. 320.

The trends, as Jacob Landau points out are, Israeli, Palestinian, Arab and Islamic.[25] Even though it is difficult to tightly compartmentalise different trends due their overlapping nature of one upon the other, there was a predominance of one trend or other or even two of them, in every important phase.

Israelism vs. Arabism

The first phase began with the founding of the state and largely ended at the start of the 1967 war. This phase, according to Jacob Landau, was of a clash between 'Israelism' and 'Arabism'. Until the mid-1950s, the 'Israeliness' dominated the identity of the Israeli Arabs. The Arab sector was in shock, having almost overnight become a minority, following the defeat of the Arab armies and the migration of the large portion of their population to the neighbouring Arab countries.

Further, Israel was established only to provide a homeland to the Jews in the Diaspora and therefore followed policies to promote the Jewish interests. This explains the absence of a clear policy towards the Arabs, a cultural-religious minority within Israel. The Arabs were seen through the prism of security threat, not as a minority that should be integrated to the society. The Israeli Arabs were the citizens of Israel but because they were a part of the larger Arab population they were perceived as a security threat to Israel.[26] With no other option left, Arabs accepted the reality and tried to manoeuvre within the political space (the right to vote) provided to them by actively participating in all the elections in Israel. The loss of land made them equally helpless

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[25] Landau, n. 2, p. 163.

[26] Smooha, n. 17, p. 394.

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and dependent upon the Israeli economic system. Further, neither the Arabs nor the Israeli State were genuinely interested in the social and cultural integration (representation of Arab history, symbols, language etc.) of this community with the mainstream Israeli society.

Cut-off from their community outside and compelled to live within Israel after accepting the existence of Israeli state, they tend to accept the Israel identity in order to save themselves from state repression and to benefit from the allowances from the state. The desire to modernise and prosper like their Jewish neighbours also had an important role in the growing Israeliness of Israeli Arabs.[27] But, the surge in Arab nationalism due to the emergence of Gamal Abdul Nasser in Egypt also attracted many Israeli Arabs. The Arabic education system in Israel and the traditional *Hamula* loyalty served as a platform for the rise of local Arab sentiments within the Israeli identity. This local Arab sentiment was different from the larger Arabism associated Nasser.[28] While the extremists called for the annihilation of Israel at all costs, their firm integration with the Israel economic life and fear of state repression made Israeli Arabs to give priority to their Israeli identity.

In this phase Israeli Arabs have by and large tried to balance between the Israeli and Arab identities. They did this by maintaining Israeli identity in their individual behaviour and their relation with the state while the Arab identity was dominant in their personal and ideological level. Whenever, there was a conflict between the two they gave priority to Israeli identity, either due to fear or due to expected benefits from the state. However, the influence of Arabism was always present as attested by Rashid Khalidi,

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[27] Landau, n. 2, p. 163

[28] Ibid., p. 164.

who argued that the influence of pan-Arabism proved detrimental to the re-emergence of Palestinian identity before 1967.[29] According to him the Palestinian identity was not created after 1967 war but was there even before the establishment of Israel and was dormant due to the dispersion of the Palestinian population to other countries in the wake of the disaster of 1948. Arabs living in different Arab nations were especially influenced by the Arabism as it gave them a sense of larger Arab identity that could be used to protect themselves from the repressive measures of the respective Arab countries.

This logic could be extended to the Arabs in Israel, who in order to save themselves from state repression, gave preference to the Israeli identity in the initial period of Israeli state formation. Khalidi further believes that the strengthening of this pan-Arabism, which claimed Arabs as a single people and aimed to unite them under a single state, to an extent had a negative impact on the Palestinian claim over the Palestinian land both under Israel and Jordan.[30]

Israeliness vs. Palestinisation

It was only after the 1967 war that the pan-Arabism gave way to more localized Palestinian identity among the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Palestinian refugees. This in turn influenced the Israeli Arabs identity building process within Israel. After the end of this war, the territories east of the Green line, came under the control of the Israel and led to increased interactions between the Arabs living on both sides of the Green line. The Israeli Arabs interaction with the Arabs who until 1967 were under Jordanian control and the end of the military rule led to a significant decline

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[29] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness,* (Columbia, 1997), p.181.

[30] Ibid., p.181.

in the Israeliness of the Israeli Arabs and rise of Palestinisation trends. Other than these two factors, increased political developments in the Palestinian sector and international recognition to Palestinian rights also had an impact on this shift in the identity formation of the Israeli Arabs.

The Israelisation process of the Israeli Arabs that was developed with the help of modern education, openness, secularism and certain democratic values came into conflict with the Palestinian trend after 1967. The Israeli Arabs were comfortably placed ahead of the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip economically but compared to the Jewish society in Israel they were lagging behind in overall development. No doubt the Jewish nature of the state was much to do about relative underdevelopment of the Israeli Arabs, but the traditional loyalties like, *Hamula* and other social and religious institutions, were also responsible for their backwardness. Better off than the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, the Israeli Arabs compared their progress with the more progressive Jews in relative terms. The frustration generated due to this feeling of deprivation was further increased by the preferential treatment given to the Jews by the Israeli state.

Before 1966 the military rule did not allow the Israeli Arabs to raise their voice against the favourable treatment of Jews or demand equality within the Israeli social and economic sphere. The end of the military rule removed all the hurdles to the constitutional methods of the protest that was restricted earlier and thus made Israeli Arabs assert their right to equality that was granted to them as a citizen of the country. Before they fully contemplate to use their new found freedom, Israel was at war with the neighbouring Arab countries. With the end of war resulted in the occupation of West

Bank by Israel. The Israeli Arabs faced a peculiar situation: their country was occupying

the area belonging to their nationality and coercing them to accept its occupation. Their

new found freedom to travel inside Israel and in occupied territories increased their

interaction with the Palestinians of the occupied territories, which had a profound impact

upon the identity formation of the Israeli Arabs after the 1967 war.

The above sentiment of the Israeli Arabs is reflected in the words of Samir

Darwish, head of the local council in Baqa al-Gharbiyya, who said, "some of the Jews do

not grasp-and perhaps find it difficult to believe – that they are in this state Arabs who are

proud of Arabism, culture, and heritage, and simultaneously wish to be the part of the

state.[31] This statement from an important personality in the Arab sector reflected the

general mood of the Israeli Arabs after they came in contact with the Palestinians of the

West Bank. The Israelised (politically and economically) yet frustrated by their

secondary status, Israeli Arabs encountered the Palestinians of West Bank and the Gaza

Strip educated in Arabic and Islamic studies. The Arabs from these two areas had a

sharper sense of Arab nationalism than the Israeli Arabs and were politically more active

than the Israeli Arabs. Their encounter with the Israeli Arabs, who were confused and

spilt in their identity, had a deep impact on the psychological and the behavioural pattern

of the Israeli Arabs. It could be argued that the ancient and time-honoured cultural ties

prevailed over the differences (for the Arabs in Israel are Israeli Arabs citizens, as well as

being bi-lingual and even bi-cultural).[32]

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[31]   Landau, n. 2, p. 165.

[32]   Ibid., p.166.

The Israeli Arabs and the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip interacted at different levels such as the Palestinians commuting to Israel for work, their encounters with Druze and Bedouin soldiers, family and business contacts between the two people and so forth. This kind of everyday encounter with the Palestinians from the occupied territories made Israeli Arabs realise something that they had not faced previously. They were regarded as a traitor to the Arab because they sold their loyalties to the Jewish state for material favours and accepted the citizenship of the Israeli state that was established on Arab land. The Israeli Arabs were treated with suspicion and ridiculed by the Arab nationalist elements in the occupied territories.[33] This kind of attitude by the Palestinians from the occupied territories created doubts in the minds of the Israeli Arabs and they could not avoid this question as they were subjected to these comments in everyday life. The frustration because of the unequal status within Israeli society and the desire to prove their Arab credentials, which was under suspicion, made Israeli Arabs constantly drift towards the Palestinisation process. This ultimately led to the weakening of the Israeliness and the rise of conflict between these two identities that Israeli Arab possessed since 1948.

Apart from these, there are other factors that were instrumental in the Palestinisation of the Israeli Arabs. The 1973 war was seen as an Israeli defeat in Palestinian circle and helped strengthen the Palestinianess among the Israeli Arabs. The establishment of Palestine liberation organisation (PLO) as a political front for the representation of the demands of the Palestinian population for a homeland was also responsible for the Palestinisation of Israeli Arabs. The international recognition to PLO

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[33] Ibid., p.166.

and the Yasser Arafat's appearance before the United Nations in 1974 improved PLO's image in the eyes of Israeli Arabs.

Further, the polarisation of Israeli Arabs was the violence of 1976 that marked the 'land day protest' and consolidated the rise of nationalist awareness among the Israeli Arabs.[34] This was due to their reaction against the violence committed against them but the state, and therefore, brought them close to the alternative identity, that is, Palestinian. The PLO's support to the Land Day acted as catalyst for the Palestinisation of the Israeli Arabs. Further a push to this process was given by the stories of the unprecedented Palestinian resistance to Israeli effort to liquidate the PLO in during 1982 Lebanese war. These instances of Israeli weakness were regularly highlighted, helping to destroy the myth of Israeli invincibility and made many Israeli Arabs to reprioritise their Israeli identity that they adopted due fear of state oppression. This attitude was reflected in a study carried out in 1985 among the Israeli Arabs. It found out that 68 percent of the Israeli Arabs defined themselves as Palestinians as against 46 percent barely nine years before.[35]

Besides these, other forms of contacts also emerged between the Arabs of the two sides. The increase in the interaction between the elites, intellectuals, journalists, politicians, religious leaders and businessmen had an overwhelming influence over the relationship of both the community. The emergence of radical groups like 'Sons of Village' in Israel is the proof of the Palestinisation process of the Israeli Arabs and the position of Israeli Arabs was very beautifully described by Lutfi Mashur, who observed:

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[34] Ibid., p. 167.

[35] Ibid.

"... the Arabs in Israel have completed their search for identity, describing that they are Palestinians (by people-hood), Arabs (by nation), and Israelis (by citizenship), in this order."[36]

One interesting factor for the Palestinisation of the entire Arab population from Israelisation and Arabisation was forwarded by Rashid Khalidi. According to him, "The repeated failure of the Arabs living in Palestine has been surmounted and survived, and in some sense has been incorporated into the narrative of identity as triumph."[37] The Palestinian narration of the events of struggle with Israel, even though Palestinians suffered in all of them, is full of their heroic deeds and glorification of the martyrdom to fight against the powerful Israeli army. These narrations generally overlooked the heavy losses suffered by the Palestinians in their struggle against Israel. One of such narratives was the 'foundation myth' of the modern Palestinian commando movement, the battle of al-Karame on March 21, 1968, during which Israeli army crossed Jordan river to destroy some Palestinian military bases. The Palestinian suffered heavily but was able to stall the Israeli army. The name *al-Karame* (meaning dignity) became a symbol intensely exploited by Palestinian nationalist groups by narrating the resistance while playing down the losses they suffered.

The consolidation of Palestinian identity, through glorification of a certain aspect of failure, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip could have been effective in the Israeli Arab sector too that had its own share of failure to acquire equality inside Israel. Both the Arab communities had the same culprit for their failure, namely, Israel. Therefore they looked

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[36] Ibid., p.168.

[37] Khalidi, n. 29, p. 194.

back towards their historic identity they shared. One may argue about the difference in the degree of the impact of this Palestinisation process on both the Arab communities, but it is undeniable that there was an inclination of Israeli Arabs towards the Palestinian identity in this phase of their history in Israel.

The Palestinisation of Israeli Arabs also had an influence over their view on the Palestinian question. Now the Israeli Arabs came forward more frequently in support of the Palestinian state alongside of Israel. Writing in 1977, Mark Tessler argued that, there was no difference in the support of the Palestinian state between those who consider themselves as Palestinians and those who identified themselves as Israelis.[38] It suggests that even though Israeli Arabs as a group had a subjective political identification, they view the Palestinian problems in similar terms. Although they felt that the problem does not involve them directly, but solution to it will have an influence upon their future relationship with Israel. Tessler's findings has shown that those who considered themselves as Palestinians strongly identified with the Palestinian state and said that hey would send their children to study in the schools of Palestinian state. There was also a difference on whether they considered themselves represented by Arab political leaders outside Israel. Those identifying as Palestinians answer in affirmative to this question, but the ones considering themselves as Israelis rarely consider this option.

Islam and the post-1967 Israeli Arab identity

Religion, for centuries, has been an important rallying point and has commanded loyalty and allegiance from its followers. Therefore, it remained a key factor in the identity formation of the community. Islam, from its very inception, has been very

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[38] Mark A. Tessler, "Israeli Arabs and the Palestinian problem" *Middle East Journal,* vol. 31, Winter 1977, p.326.

constituent of identity of the population inhabiting West Asia. It not only served the spiritual needs of these people, but also had an overarching effect upon their social, cultural, economic and political orientations. After the establishment of the Israel, Islam continued to influence the daily life of the Israeli Arabs, even though Jewish state over-interfered with their religious institutions. Because of the quest for survival in a state where the identity of the dominant is defined by their religion, Israeli Arabs adopted the secular attitude as far as economic and political sphere was concerned, but Islam still played a dominant role in social and cultural life. However, the occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel in 1967 war and the decline of Arab Nationalism after this war greatly influenced the resurgence of Islam in the Arab world. This revivalism of Islam was also evident not only in their social and cultural life but also in their political orientations.[39]

The delimitation of the Green Line facilitated the establishment of a close relation between the Muslim religious leaders of Israel and the Occupied Territories and affected the politicisation of the former. Apart from these the emergence of radical Islamic groups which competed with mainstream the PLO also influenced the Islamisation trend of the Israeli Arab identity. The different denomination of the legal system and a separate education system for the Israeli Arabs further helped in this process. Elia Rekhess points out several other reasons for the Islamisation of Israeli Arab identity.[40] They are: the Israeli Arabs regained access to Muslim holy place of Jerusalem and Hebron, the Muslim High Council's appointment of the West Bankers and the Gazans in the mosques within

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[39] Elia Rekhess, "Resurgent Islam in Israel," *Asian and African Studies*, vol.27, no.1-2, 1993, p. 189.
[40] Ibid., pp. 189-193.

Israel and the permission granted to Israeli Arabs to perform Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in 1978.

The main demand of the Islamic Movement in Israel was struggle directed at the over intervention of the state in the affairs of Muslim institutions.[41] In order to strengthen their struggle, Muslim leaders called for return to Islam for political activation, increased awareness of the significance of Islam and for the preservation of its innate rights. All of them worked towards the consolidation of the Islamic identity among the Israeli Arabs. Jacob Landau agreeing with Lufti Mashur identifies two trends within the Muslims in Israel as far as their Islamic identity was concerned;[42] first, holds that the innermost circle of their identity is Palestinian that again is surrounded by an Arab one, which again is surrounded by the larger Islamic circle. For the second trend, Islam is the core issue and decisive identity circle in any case. Explaining the shift, Sheikh Abdallah Namir Darwish, prominent Islamic leader in Israel, maintained that once upon a time he would have defined himself as Arab-Israeli-Palestinian in that order, but now he prefers to be Muslim-Palestinian-Israeli.[43] This Islamic trend also influenced the Bedouins, who even though were apart of Muslim Arab community, were more close to the Israeli identity than others among Israeli Arabs. Their closeness to the Israeli identity is proved by the fact that a number of them serve in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). Their loyalty to the Israel and integration to the Islamic identity is also attested by Jacob Landau. For him this

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[41]   Landau, n. 2, p. 174.

[42]   Ibid., p.175.

[43]   Ibid.

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happened primarily due the change in their life pattern from nomadism to sedentarisation.[44]

Arab Sub-identities

Arabs within Israel were not a monolithic community but were further divided into three basic groups namely, Muslim, Christian, and Druze. Muslims, the largest group, followed broadly the trends mentioned above, but the less dominant groups had their own trajectory of identity building which was distinct from the path taken by the dominant Muslim group. This process led to the consolidation of sub-identities within the larger framework of the Israeli Arab identity. One of such sub-identity was that of the Arab Christians. The Christians were not as assertive as Muslim Arabs regarding the definition of their separate identity from that of the Israeli identity. Their relationship with Israeli state was also very different to that of the Muslim Arabs.

As majority of Muslims started to perceive themselves as Palestinians, but the Christians always seen themselves as an Arab. Their assertion of Arab identity could have been due to the rise of Islamic trend, and one can observe a difference in the assertion of the Arab identity among the Christians in relation to their spatial location. The Christians living in areas permeated by strong Arab nationalism showed a favourable trend towards it. This is evident by the emotions of a Christian Israeli Arab Fauzi El-Asmar in his book *To be an Arab in Israel*.[45]

The third sub-identity that appears apart from Muslims and Christians is Druze. The Druze community is considered to be nearest to the Israeli identity compared to any

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Fauzi El-Asmar, *To be an Arab in Israel*, Institute of Palestinian Studies, 1978.

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other groups among the Arabs in Israel. Their contribution in the IDF has been widely recognised by Israel which has taken special care to prepare a curriculum for Druze schools, largely oriented towards their own heritage. It has encouraged the separate identity formation of Druze, distinct from Israeli Arabs. Even though they were economically better off and politically more close to the Israeli establishment, they remained close to the Arab minority in Israel and by and large formed a part of it. There was an identity crisis within the Druze community, with Druzism, Arabism, and Israelism sharply competing with one another.[46]

Therefore, the identity building process of Israeli Arabs, as one understands was a very complicated process stretched over a period of time and involving varieties of factors. The colonial period of Palestine is no less important than the post-colonial period and the sequence of events in the post-colonial period further complicated this process of identity building process. The establishment of Israel state made them adopt the Israeli identity as the land they were living came under the administration of the newly established state, otherwise they would have to leave their land or fight against the new regime, which was impossible considering their population and the coercive nature of Israel. The events after the 1967 war seem to relax the Israeli identity and saw the internalisation of Palestinian identity within Israeli Arab community. Though the Palestinisation process was strengthened, but the Israeli identity was not completely discarded by the Israeli Arabs.

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[46] Landau, n. 2, p. 177,178.

Different scholars have tried to explain this identity building process of the Israeli Arabs. Largely, three models have come up covering the range of their arguments.[47] Firstly, the *conflict model* represented by the likes of Yohanan Peres, Nira Youval-Davis and Jacob Landau[48], who collectively see a conflict between the two identities Israeli Arabs carry and suggests that Israeli Arabs have off late started to prioritise their Palestinian/Arab identity. Secondly, *accommodation model* represented by Sammy Smooha, argued that there is no conflict between the two identities of Israeli Arabs, but on the contrary they co-exist and develop on two parallel lines. Thirdly, Collective identity model was introduced by Khalil Nakhleh[49] and developed by Nadim Rouhana[50] suggest that even though Israeli Arabs have become more conscious about their Palestinian/Arab identity after 1967, majority of them refused to be called less of Israeli and they prescribe equal rights to Israeli Arabs within their current identity.

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[47] Darweish and Rigby, n. 7, pp. 12-16.
[48] Ibid., pp.12,13.
[49] Ibid., p. 14.
[50] Ibid. p. 15.

Chapter-III

The PLO and the Israeli Arabs

The end of 1948 war led to the establishment of armistice line as the de facto boundary between Israel and Jordan-occupied Palestinian territories. This physical boundary separating Israeli Arabs from their Palestinian counterparts was firmly ingrained in the minds of the two communities. The first two decades saw a complete disjuncture in the agendas pursued by them and more importantly there was an absence of any defined policy towards each other. Israeli Arabs were under the military rule and hence were unable to formulate a friendly policy towards Palestinian Arabs, who were regarded as enemy by Israel. In this situation, they preferred assimilation with the Israeli society for economic benefits and to prevent themselves from state repression, rather than seeking a constructive relationship with the Palestinian Arabs.

The Palestinian Arabs, namely the Arabs in rest of Palestine and refugees in other Arab states, also failed to come up with a definite policy towards the Palestinians problem in general and the Israeli Arabs in particular. The failure of Palestinian Arabs to come up with an initiative for the solution of Palestinian problem made them dependent on Arab world on this issue. The Arabisation of the Palestinian issue and the political and geographical isolation of Israeli Arabs limited their capacity to influence the turn of events and thereby making them less relevant as far as Palestinian/Arab scheme for the solution of Palestinian problem was concerned. The absence of a Palestinian national organisation was also partially responsible for the Arabisation of the Palestinian issue and also for the marginalisation of the Israeli Arabs.

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At the same time, the failure of Arab states to realize the dream of a Palestinian state necessitated the formation of a Palestinian national organisation to voice the concerns of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (the PLO) emerged to plug this vacuum in the Palestinian struggle. Although it was the brainchild of Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser, who wanted to use it as a platform to unify the Arab states against Israel, the PLO gradually became an exclusive Palestinian organisation having an independent programme for the establishment of Palestinian state. A less spectacular but significant event, at least from the Palestinian point of view occurred in January 1964. As the Arab states were unable to respond to the Israeli plan of diverting the Jordan River, *Al-Fatah* launched its first operation against an Israeli irrigation installation. It was considered to be an act of defiance of the Arab leaders by a Palestinian organisation.[1]

The PLO was formally established on 1 June 1964 in the founding conference of the Palestinian National Council in Jerusalem.[2] Ahmad Shuqairy, who was later instrumental in drafting its National Charter and Fundamental law, was appointed the chairman of the executive committee of the PLO. The Palestinian National Council (PNC) was to be the sovereign body and would meet regularly. The National Charter (or Covenant) adopted during fourth PNC meeting in July 1968, defined the PLO's official ideology, its aims and also the methods, strategy and tactics to achieve it.[3] It was to serve as the guiding principle for the future PNC meetings and the resolution adopted in them.

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[1] Kemal Kirisci, *The PLO and the World Politics: A Study of Mobilization of Support for the Palestinian Cause,* (London, 1986), p. 40.

[2] Jillian Becker, *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Organization,* (London 1984), p. 39.

[3] Aryeh Y. Yodfat, and Yuval Arnon, *The PLO: Strategy and Politics,* (London 1981), p. 48

The resolutions in turn were binding on the PLO executive committee. Therefore, any analysis of the PLO's policy towards Israeli Arabs involves a close analysis of the resolutions of the PNC, the National Charter and the other relevant the PLO documents.

The study of PLO policy towards Israeli Arabs could be divided into two phases. The first phase starts from its inception in 1964 to 11th PNC meeting in 1973 and the second from 1973 onwards. Soon after its establishment, the PLO was more rhetoric regarding its stand on the Israeli Arabs. The national covenant and the resolutions of the meetings indicate that Israeli Arabs were considered part of the Palestinian population, but in practice it virtually did nothing for the Israeli Arabs and even failed to come up with a definite policy on the conditions under which Israeli Arabs lived. The 11th PNC (1973) meeting's resolution broke this by agreeing to the rights of Jew to stay in Palestine along with the Arabs. Further, in 1974, agreeing for a more viable solution- establishment of the Palestinian state in the area vacated by Israel, PLO more or less accepted the fact that Israel was here to stay and the Israeli Arabs would be its citizen, even if they belonged to Palestinian nation.

The Rhetoric Phase: 1964-mid 1970's

The first phase of the relationship refers to the period from the formation of the PLO in 1964 to mid 1970s. During this phase, the PNC resolutions on the Palestinian issue were more rhetorical and less pragmatic. This was not the case in the post-1972 era. People like Marwan Darweish and Andrew Rigby prefer to call this period a 'Total Liberation Phase.'[4] However, this total liberation concept is true only for the rhetoric in

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[4]   Marwan Darweish, and Andrew Rigby, *Palestinians in Israel: Nationality and Citizenship*, (University of Bradford, Department of Peace Studies, 1995), p. 31.

the National covenant. In practice, the PLO largely failed to understand the condition in which Israeli Arabs lived and did little to integrate them with the Palestinian struggle.

The Palestinian National Covenant demanded the total liberation of the whole of historic Palestine, the land between the Mediterranean Sea and River Jordan. The Article 21 of the National Covenant rejected any solution that was a substitute for a complete liberation of Palestine and stated that the "Liberation" has to be "complete." Rejection of any territorial compromise or division of Palestine between Jews and Arabs appear again and again in the Covenant.[5] Article 19 says: "... the partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel is fundamentally null a void, whatever time has elapsed."[6] In other words, there were no justifications for the existence of Israeli/Jewish state or for Jews to come to Palestine and those who did come, have to go back to the places to which they belonged or emigrated from. This attitude of the PLO is further vindicated by the article 2 of the National Covenant, which states that, "the boundaries of Palestine are those which existed at the time of the 'British Mandate', and sees them as comprising an integral regional unit."

The Covenant further identifies the 'actual' inheritor of this undivided land of Palestine and defines the constitution of people who will inherit it. Article 1 of the National Covenant states that Palestine is the homeland of the Palestinian Arab people and an integral part of the Great Arab Homeland, and that people of Palestine are the part of the Arab nation. Subsequently, Article 5 defines Palestinians as those "Arab citizens who were living permanently in Palestine until 1947, whether they were expelled from

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[5] http://www.middleeastweb.org/plocha.htm.

[6] Yodfat and Arnon, n. 3, p. 49.

there or remained. Whoever is born to a Palestinian Arab father after this date, within Palestine or outside it, is a Palestinian."[7]

The Articles concerning the definition of Palestinian state and Palestinian people is important as it also presented the position of the PLO vis-à-vis the Israeli Arabs. Articles 2, 19 and 21 categorically deny the division of Palestine into Arab and Jewish half and reiterate its position that the Palestinian state will be established on the undivided Palestinian land. For the Israeli Arab front such a position essentially meant that the establishment of any future Palestinian state would also include them and the territories on which they live. Articles 1 and 5 define the people who have the right to inhabit in Palestine and the inclusion of Israeli Arabs in the definition of Palestinian people indicated that the PLO considered them a part of the Palestinian population who had a stake in the future Palestinian state.

However, apart from the Covenant there is little evidence to show that the PLO was concerned about the entire Palestinian population, including Israeli Arabs in this phase. There was a visible lack of understanding inside the PLO about the differences between different Palestinian communities. There was total ignorance of the hardship that Israeli Arabs faced inside Israel and the course of action Israeli Arab took to fight for equality inside Israel. One reason forwarded for this lack of understanding about the Israeli Arabs was the dispersion of the Palestinian community as a result of the 1948 Arab- Israeli war.[8] This dispersion caused the alienation of Israeli Arabs from the larger Palestinian society.

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[7] Ibid, p.51

[8] Kirisci, N. 1, p. 35.

Cut off from other Palestinians, the Israeli Arabs remained inside the closely guarded boundaries of Israel that made any kind of interaction between them and Palestinian Arabs impossible. In this situation, it was impossible for Israeli Arabs to play a substantial role in the Palestinian resistance movement. It is further elaborated by the statement by Kemal Kirisci, who said, "...while the initiatives in the form of the elite as well as the rank and file of the resistant movement tended to come from Palestinian in refugee camps and those living in the Arab world. The Arabs living in Israel and outside the Arab world had a very passive role in this movement." [9] The Palestinians living in refugee camps were more easily available to Palestinian resistance movements than Arabs living in Israel. This could be one of the reasons for the marginalisation and alienation of the Israeli Arabs that often led to their neglect by the PLO.

The neglect of Israeli Arabs by the PLO was expressed in the frustrated statements by their leaders like Mahmoud Darwish- who left Israel to join the PLO, and Samih Al-Kasem- another poet form the Galilee. Kasem, in particular, complained about absence of external recognition of Israeli Arab's struggle under the military authorities and their fight against land confiscation. The lack of support went so far that the PLO failed even to issue a statement about the circumstances and the conditions under which the Palestinians in the Israel were forced to live. [10] Abu-Lughod, a former member of the PNC, explained that the PLO in the diaspora "did not know the hardship they (that is, Arabs in Israel) suffered in order to stay on the land, simply out of its own ignorance". [11] The level of ignorance of Israeli Arabs by the PLO in 1960s provoked Ze'ev Schiff and

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[9]   Ibid.

[10]   Darweish and Rigby, n. 4, p. 33.

[11]   Ibid.

Ehud Ya'ari to remark: "Yasser Arafat and his colleagues had ridiculed Israeli Arabs as a weak and listless minority incapable of contributing any thing for the Palestinian cause."[12]

However, the 1967 war brought a paradigmatic shift in this Palestinian issue. The defeat of the Arab regimes laid to rest the pan-Arab military solution to the Palestinian question and paved the way for the rise of Palestinian resistance movement. The first changes in the state of affairs became evident soon after the war when *Al- Fatah*, the dominating group within the PLO, stressed the primacy of Palestinian interests and the role for a national armed struggle. The influence of *Al- Fatah's* view was reflected in the adoption of new Palestinian National Covenant at the fourth PNC in July 1968. This new Covenant and the *Al- Fatah* seven point policy outlines adopted by its central committee in January 1969, expressed a much stronger Palestinian identity and referred to 'Palestinian people' and 'its liberation struggle'.[13]

With the occupation of West Bank and Gaza by Israel and the PLO's domination of the commando groups, liberation became the prerogative of the Palestinians living in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Therefore, deriving its strength form Palestinians living in these countries, the PLO choose to ignore the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the Arabs in Israel. For the PLO they were the part of the larger Palestinian population who would be united someday with the 'outside' Palestinians. However, this was an important period in the crystallisation of Palestinian nationalism among the Israeli Arabs, which the PLO could not neglect. This new trend among the Israeli Arabs did not result

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[12] Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Israel's Third Front*, (New York, 1989), p.173.

[13] Kirisci, n. 1, p. 44.

from the active the PLO political mobilisation but was an outcome of several internal and external factors.[14]

Emile Sahliyeh outlines five factors for the crystallisation of Palestinian nationalism among the Israeli Arabs. First was the transformation of Israeli- Arab conflict into an Israeli-Palestinian dispute.[15] The opening of border between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza ended the Israeli Arabs' geographic and political isolation and accentuated the growth of Palestinian national consciousness and a sense of common identity. Further, the shifting of the PLO headquarters from Jordan to Lebanon gave the Arabs in northern Israel a new strategic importance. Due to the proximity of Galilee and sizeable presence of Arabs in that region, they were seen as potential recruit for the military struggle. Second, the Israeli government neglected Arab affairs as Israel shifted towards ethnocentrism, as reflected in the rise of Gush Emunim, of Jewish right and coming to the power of the Likud bloc in the 1970s.

Third, the Palestinian national awareness among them was also facilitated by the increase in their population, higher level of education and emergence of a new leadership. Fourth, existence of political structures and parties with nationalist orientations among the Israeli Arabs was responsible for the strengthening Palestinian nationalism. Lastly, the lobbying activities of some prominent Israeli Arabs influenced the attitudes of the PLO towards the Israeli Arabs. People like Sabri Jiryis and Mahmoud Darwish lobbied with the leadership of the PLO to take the interests of the Israeli Arabs and their potential

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[14] Emile Sahliyeh, "The PLO and the Israeli Arabs," *Asian and African Studies*, vol. 27, no. 1-2, 1993, p. 86.

[15] Ibid.

influence on Israeli politics into consideration.[16] All of them, to an extent, made the PLO interested in the developments among the Israeli Arabs and recognise their role in the larger Palestinian struggle.

The Pragmatic Phase: 1973 onwards.

This phase saw the PLO's willingness to accommodate the Israeli Arabs within the larger Palestinian fold. The 11th PNC, which met at Cairo on 12 January 1973, adopted a proposal calling for the establishment of a democratic state of Palestine in which all citizens would live equally without any ethnic, racial, or religious discrimination.[17] This could be regarded as a departure from the earlier stand from an exclusive Arab state to an Arab-Jewish entity. Earlier the Arabs of Israel were simply regarded by the PLO as an extension of the larger Palestinian population sharing a common future with them, but resolutions of 11th PNC saw a noticeable change in this view. It referred unequivocally to the Israeli Arabs for the first time and appealed for their political co-operation and called for the strengthening of the links between them and those of occupied territories and outside. Further it supported their struggle to maintain their Arab national identity, along with the promise to take up their problem and to assist them in joining the struggle for freedom.

They were referred to as "our countryman in the occupied homeland" after the 11th PNC. This reference was vague and created confusion about which segment of the occupied homeland it is referring to, occupied in 1948 or 1967. If latter, then it only referred to the Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza. Consecutively, 11th PNC also called for

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[16]   Ibid., p. 89.

[17]   Darweish and Rigby, N.4, p.34,

the Israeli Arab to actively participate in the armed struggle against Israel. This could be a strategic move on the part of the PLO, considering the prevailing circumstances. The headquarters of the PLO had shifted to Lebanon in the early 1970s making the Israeli Arab dominated region of the little triangle strategically important for the PLO and success of its guerrilla attacks deep inside Israel. Therefore, it appears that the PLO main objective here was to recruit individual Israeli Arabs for military objective and not to prepare a wider political policy towards them as a whole.

The period after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war was instrumental in the major policy shift on Palestinian question by the PLO, which also had direct influence over the PLO agenda towards the Israeli Arabs. As early as the January 1974, a section within the PLO openly called for the establishment of Palestinian National Authority on any part of the Palestinian land vacated by Israel. Despite staunch opposition from the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), this was adopted by the 12th PNC and became an official position of the PLO. It was regarded as the first the PLO move to accept the recognition of Israel right to 'co-exist' in the region. This PNC resolution was in stark contrast to the objectives of the PLO defined on the Palestinian National Covenant, which was supposed to be a guiding principle for future policy decisions by the PLO. The acceptance of the existence of Israel by the PLO was totally against articles 2, 19 and 21- that categorically rejected any solution to the Palestinian issue based upon the compromise or the division of historic Palestine.

The Palestinian National Covenant became more of a liability after 1967 and 1973 wars that made the PLO to accept the permanency of Israeli existence. The principles of the Covenant acted as an impediment for the PLO in entering into negotiations with Israel

and recognising its existence.[18] Recognition to Israel would go against the Covenant's ideology and the central principle that Palestine is 'an indivisible unit'. In such case, even if Israel agrees to accept the PLO as the partner for negotiations, the PLO would be prevented from entering into any kind of negotiations. Strangely, the very Covenant that formulated the path for Palestinian statehood became an obstacle in the path of the realisation of the Palestinian state in the territories that could be gained by the PLO. It also meant that even if Israel was to unilaterally withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, the PLO in accordance with the Covenant would be prevented from accepting this transfer of land. Therefore, Yasser Arafat himself attempted to belittle the significance of the Covenant in his UN address of 1974. He said that 'the Palestine of tomorrow would include al Jews living there without discrimination, who choose to remain to live in peace". Thus the PLO was no longer demanding that the Jews who came to Palestine after the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to leave.[19]

Similarly, the resolution of the 1974 PNC also redefined the status of the Israeli Arabs. Article 1 and 5 of national covenant defined the Palestinians as those "Arab citizens who were living permanently in Palestine until 1947, whether they were expelled from there or remained." The recognition to the existence of Israel went against this definition as it recognises the establishment of the Palestinian state alongside Israel implying that the Arabs, who live in Israel, though Palestinian, would have to live in Israel and that the future Palestinian state would only belong to the Palestinians in occupied territories and to Diaspora Palestinians. This was the first formal recognition by

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[18]   Yodfat and Arnon, n. 3, p. 53.
[19]   Ibid., p. 55.

the PLO that the Israeli Arab's struggle within Israel was no longer on the PLO agenda. It was transformed into one which was concerned with their rights and aspirations as Israeli citizens.[20] Thus the PLO, which claimed to have emerged as the organisation representing the aspirations of the entire Palestinian population, doctored its division by relinquishing its duties towards the Israeli Arabs- once called by the PLO an indivisible section of Palestinian society.

However, the PLO was made to change its opinion about the Israeli Arabs after the success of Land Day in 1976. Israeli Arabs observed 'Day of the Land', to protest against the seizure of their land by the Israeli authorities.[21] The first Land Day called by NCDAL on 30 March 1976 saw a complete strike in the Arab sector, but unfortunately resulted in the death of six Israeli Arabs. These deaths further infuriated the Arab masses in Israel, who in large numbers joined the mainstream of the Palestinian national movement.[22] The magnitude of protest was so huge that the PLO, which recently abandoned Israeli Arabs were forced to support the strike and to ask the Palestinian Arabs in the occupied territories and in Diaspora to demonstrate their solidarity with the Israeli Arabs. The unfolding of events on the first Land day intensified the debate inside the PLO over its policy of 'stages solution', which prescribed for the establishment of Palestinian authority on any part of land freed by Israel and then fight for the total liberation of Palestine. The section opposing this stages solution argued that it was a farce and the Land Day demonstrated that it needs a serious revision.[23] They also believed that

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[20] Darweish and Rigby, n. 4, p. 37.

[21] Helena Cobban, *The Palestine Liberation Organization*, (Cambridge, 1984), p. 190.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Yodfat and Arnon, n. 3, p. 64.

the situation should be exploited to encourage the armed struggle among the Arab dominated area of Galilee.

The kind of attention Israeli Arabs received during the Land Day might give an impression that it lead to a close co-operation between the Israeli Arabs and the PLO. The co-operation and support that the PLO solicited for the Israeli Arabs was temporary and limited. Only a year after this event the political declaration of the 13th PNC convened in Cairo in March, stated that "the PLO declared its rights to participate in independent manner and on equal footing in all international forums concerned with Palestinian issue".[24] It could be considered a major moderation in the PLO attitude after its total support for Israeli Arabs during the Land Day demonstrations. The readiness to negotiate, "independently" with Israel could be regarded as a readiness to recognise its existence, which automatically meant the Arabs of Israel have no other option but to live as an Israeli citizen. Similarly, in the period between 1967-79, several the PLO spokesmen were asserting that if only Israel would consent to the founding of the Palestinian state in West Bank and Gaza, for their part they would be prepared to undertake to end the armed struggle against Israel. Some went on to state that peace would prevail between the two states.[25] Even though, according to Faruq Al-Qadumi, who was in charge of the PLO foreign relations, it was an interim peace, for Israeli Arabs it was a clear indication that they did not figure prominently in the list of the PLO objectives.[26]

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982, once again was opposed by the Israeli Arabs. They demonstrated their unhappiness to this event by organising

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[24] Yodfat and Arnon, n. 3, p. 59.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., pp. 63, 64.

demonstrations, distributing leaflets, and forming of the national committee against the war that included the Israeli peace movement. Nevertheless, the event that caught the maximum attention of the Israeli Arabs was the massacre of Palestinians in two refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla. A powerful demonstration was organised by the Israeli Arabs to condemn the killings, which was seen as the revival of Palestinian national sentiment among the Israeli Arabs. A general strike was called on 22 September 1982 in Nazareth, but the strike was observed in every Arab locality all over Israel. Clashes between police and the residents of the Arab localities in Israel broke out which left 42 residents wounded and 60 arrested.[27] The expression of support and allegiance to the PLO pointed out the future role this community would play in the Palestinian struggle.

Recognising their potential, the PLO yet again crafted a less ambivalent policy towards Israeli Arabs. Supporting this *Fatah* sponsored a report that was presented in the 16th PNC in February. It read:

> How much longer shall we continue to ignore the struggle of the Palestinians who had Israeli nationality imposed upon them? They are capable of playing an effective political role in the service of their Palestinian cause.[28]

In continuation of the above change, the final draft of the 16th PNC resolutions hailed the struggle of the Arabs in Israel and expressed pride in their struggle against 'Zionism', which was viewed as a manifestation of their national identity as a part of the Palestinian people. The shift in the PLO policy was not only visible in the resolutions of the 16th PNC but also apparent in its published literature such as *Palestine Affairs*. In 1987- 88 a

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[27] Cobban, n. 21, p. 190.

[28] Ibid., p.191.

series of articles were devoted to the Israeli Arabs covering the issues which have never been touched before.[29]

The 1984 PNC meeting in Amman reverted back to the traditional extreme positions. Its political resolutions referred to Israel as the "1948 occupied territories" and "occupied homeland" and called Israeli Arabs "an integral element of Palestinian people".[30] The PLO did not come out with a substantial set of policies after that regarding Israeli Arabs. The years between 1984- 87 was considered of low importance as far as Palestinian issue was concerned and was also years of fermenting discord between Yasser Arafat and King Hussein of Jordan. The rift between the two leaders was visible during the 1987 Arab summit in Amman which focused in the Iraq-Iran war, largely ignoring the Palestinian question. Isolated and battered Arafat moved towards a militant direction by patching up relations with the radical DFLP (Democratic Front for the Freedom of Palestine), who demanded full integration of the Israeli Arabs within the Palestinian framework.

Issues in Debate

The analysis of the Palestinian National Covenant and its comparison with the various PNC resolutions gave a fundamental insight into the relationship between the PLO and the Israeli Arabs. However, this study would be incomplete without a discussion on three basic issues: first, PLO's attitude towards Israeli Arab participation in Israeli elections; second, the PLO and the identity of Israeli Arabs; last, the PLO policy towards the discrimination against Israeli Arabs in Israel. The most important issue to be

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[29] Darweish and Rigby, n. 4, p. 44.

[30] Barry Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO*, (Cambridge, 1994) p. 69.

raised regarding the PLO's attitude towards Israeli Arabs is the latter's participation in the Israeli political process. Since the PLO considered Israel as an enemy state and the Arabs in it to be a part of larger Palestinian identity, how did it react to the participation of Israeli Arabs in the political process of an imposed state?

Israeli Arab Participation in Israeli Political Process

The Israeli Arabs were granted the right to vote in January 1949 and they have been using this right in all the elections ever since. Completely neglected by the non-existent Palestinian leadership and subsequently by the PLO, the Israeli Arabs participated in elections and voted for MAPAM, MAPAI and later Israel Communist Party (ICP), who were relatively sympathetic to Arab cause of equality within Israel. But later on two events namely, 11th PNC meet in Cairo, which referred unequivocally to the Israeli Arabs and appealed for their political co-operation for the first time and the successful nation wide strike by Israeli Arabs on Land Day in 1976, changed the erstwhile indifference of the PLO towards the Israeli Arabs.

From mid-70s the PLO became more sophisticated in its understanding of Israeli politics and started taking interest in the Arab politics in Israel. It tried to influence the voting pattern of the Israeli Arabs to affect the out come of the Israeli parliamentary elections that it thought could bring a change in the Israeli public opinion. In th s connection Yasser Arafat believed that the Arab vote would bring about a moderate Israeli government and contain the extreme trends inside Israel. The PLO publications urged the Israeli Arabs to exercise their right to vote for their representation in the Knesset proportional to their population. It was believed that increase in the number of

Arab Knesset members would affect Israel policy towards the occupied territories and enhance the prospect of complete equality for Arabs in Israel.[31]

In 1975 municipal elections, the PLO urged the Arabs of Nazareth to vote for DFPE, which won 11 of the 17 council seats. This victory of DFPE (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) was termed as a victory of the PLO in Israel.[32] In October 1981 it urged the Israeli Arab community to vote for ICP/DFPE combine. The same demand was repeated when the local elections were held later that year. The PLO was also in contact with some political parties in Israel sympathetic to Arab cause. The meetings between the PLO and ICP in May 1977 and in October 1981 in Prague and in the US respectively indicate a new trend in the PLO's policies towards pro-Arab segment of Israeli populations. Furthermore, the Palestine National Front (PNF), an integral part of the PLO, worked in close co-operation with ICP. In the 1984 elections, the PLO endorsed Hadash and the ICP and tried to convince the Israeli Arabs not to vote for the Progressive List for Peace as it would weaken the chances of Hadash.[33] It claimed to support Hadash and ICP on the grounds that Hadash was more experienced and forceful in its demands for equality and ICP over the years was instrumental in the preservation of Arabic language and culture, and helped shape the Israeli Arabs' political entity.

Identity Question

Secondly, the PLO's attitude towards Israeli Arab's identity as a citizen of Israel was ambivalent. Israeli Arabs became the Israeli citizens as the state granted the citizenship to all regardless of their nationality. On the one hand the PLO Covenant in its

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[31] Sahliyeh, n. 14, p. 92.

[32] Darweish and Rigby, n. 4, p. 38.

[33] Sahliyeh, n. 14, p. 93.

article 1 combined with article 19, rejects the partition of Palestine in 1947 and stated that Palestine as the homeland of all the Palestinian people including Israeli Arabs. But, on the other in the initial years, the PLO purely catered to the needs of Palestinian refugees and Arab world and ignored Israeli Arabs. In this period the Israeli Arabs were accused of treason and being a traitor to the Arab cause, and were also referred as "the Jews' Arabs" by many the PLO officials.[34] The Israel Arab struggle for equality in Israel was not recognized by the PLO and it even failed to consider the plight of the Israeli Arabs.

There was a dramatic shift in the PLO policy on this issue after the 11th PNC meet in Cairo when the PNC called upon Israeli Arabs to "strengthen the links of national unity between (Palestinians) in the territory occupied in 1948 and those in West Bank and Gaza Strip and outside". It also called Israeli Arabs for the opposition and violent resistance against the '*Judaisation*' of Palestinian homeland. It is clear that the PLO intention was more inclined towards the organisation of individuals for armed struggle than to formulate a common national identity. Lack of a strategy to promote the crystallisation of Palestinian identity indicated the PLO's ambivalent attitude on this issue. Further, the 12th PNC meet in 1974 adopted a policy to establish a Palestinian National Authority on any part of the land liberated. This constituted a shift from earlier Palestinian policy of rejecting the establishment of the Israel to the policy of co-existence with it. The implication of this policy shift for Israeli Arabs was that their problem was no longer important on the PLO agenda and it seems to have maintained the same policy on this issue with little modifications in the years to come.

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[34] Darweish and Rigby, n. 4, p. 33.

This attitude of the PLO reflected its bias for the Palestinian refugees while ignoring Israeli Arabs in the process. The notion of Israeli Arabs being agent of Israel and the possibility that Palestinians in Diaspora needed to justify that they had left Palestine by condemning those remaining on the land, further gives credence to the biased policy followed by PLO towards Israel Arabs.[35] Even though there were people within the PLO, who talked about the severity of discrimination against Israeli Arabs, but it could never become an agenda to be followed by the PLO leadership until the success of 'Land Day'.

To this a critique of the PLO policy towards Israeli Arabs reacted, "it is inconceivable that the PLO guerrilla groups will organise hundreds of Arab youths from Israel in a military capacity without investing their effort or care in their unique problems, circumstances and their future."[36] It was the nation wide strike by Israeli Arabs in 1976 that compelled the PLO to issue an appeal to the Arabs of the occupied territories to support the Israeli Arabs. It was the first time the PLO realised the potential of Israeli Arabs and supported them. In continuation the 13th PNC held in Cairo in 1977 praised the firm stand of Palestinians throughout Palestine in their resistance to further expropriation of their land. The council recognised the Land Day as a national day of solidarity for the Palestinians and it was one of the first and the most important stand of the PLO regarding the discrimination against Israeli Arabs in Israel.

The PLO and the discrimination against Arabs in Israel

Since the PLO accepted the 'two state' solution in 1974 that invariably meant Israeli Arabs continuance as the citizen of Israel, it is of extreme importance to analyse its

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[35]   Ibid.

[36]   Ibid,, p. 38.

policies vis-à-vis discriminations perpetuated against the Israeli Arabs. The PLO realised

the imperative to formulate a policy towards the discrimination against the Israeli Arabs

inside after the massive success of the Land Day. The magnitude of protests by Israeli

Arabs during the Land Day made the PLO realise their potential to resist Israeli

authorities from within Israel. Since the Arab community inside Israel was largely

agrarian, the PLO understood the importance of land for them and therefore its policy

towards the discrimination against Israeli Arabs apparently revolved around the land

issue. The importance of this issue can be gauged from the speeches dedicated to it by

Yasser Arafat on different occasions. In his 1984 Land Day message he said, "The Israeli

Arabs provided the torch of freedom at a time of intense Arab darkness."[37] Apart from

designating Land Day as a national Palestinian day, the land issue was widely reported in

the PLO's official media statements and publications. The Palestinian press including,

Filastan al-Thawra, al-Hadaf, al-Hurriya, Dirasat Filastiniya and *Shu'un Filastiniya*

published details of the activities of the Israeli Arabs.[38] The reason for the appropriation

of the Israeli Arab land they believed was the massive immigration of the Soviet Jews

which resulted in the massive unemployment in the Arab sector of the Israeli society.

The Palestinian press also reported about the lack of educational facilities

including the shortage of teachers and classrooms. Israel's alleged violation of the human

right and police harassment of the Israeli Arabs found widespread space in the Palestinian

newspapers. The anti-Arab activities of the Jewish extremist groups were also reported

freely inside Palestinian press. Often the Israeli Arab personalities were interviewed on

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[37]   Sahliyeh, n. 14, p. 91.

[38]   Ibid., p. 89.

above issues of discrimination in Israel in these publications.[39] Other items of publication were the Israeli Arab support of the PLO, the establishment of the Palestinian state, and their achievement of equality and full civil rights within Israel.

Therefore, the policy of the PLO towards the Israeli Arabs was guided/ conditioned by rhetoric, ideological commitments, pragmatism and most importantly its desire to dominate the Palestinian freedom movement. In its formative years, the PLO attitude toward the Israeli Arabs was shaped by its ideological orientations and rhetoric. In this period the PLO was interested in creating maximum mass base and maintained that all sections of the Palestinian population were one and the freedom struggle was for all of them, including the Israeli Arabs. The entire effort was to legitimise itself as the only organisation representing the Palestinian people. Apart from the rhetoric, there was hardly a separate programme for the Israeli Arabs as they were the only Palestinians under the Israeli rule. It was only after the 1967 war and the resultant Palestinisation of Israeli Arabs that the PLO began formulating a definite policy to include the Israeli Arabs as a partner in Palestinian freedom movement. Now the Israeli Arabs were more often mentioned in the resolutions of the PLO and many of these resolutions called Israeli Arabs to participate in the Palestinian freedom struggle. Similarly, the PLO was forced to support the Land Day of the Israeli Arabs considering the amount of resentment it created and showed the usefulness of Israeli Arabs for the future strategies formulated by the PLO.

However, the 1967 and 1973 wars proved that it was impossible to liberate entire Palestine. The PLO policy from here on shifted to the pragmatic solution of accepting the

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[39] Ibid., p. 91.

existence of Israel inside the pre-1967 borders and concentrate on the more viable demand for the establishment of Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. For Israeli Arabs in a subtle way it meant that in future they would continue to remain citizen of Israel even though they belonged to the larger Palestinian population. In other words, the PLO compromised its position regarding the Israeli Arabs in its effort to find an early solution to the Palestinian problem, which otherwise was threatening the PLO hegemony over the Palestinian freedom movement.

Chapter-IV

The 1987 Intifada and the Israeli Arabs: An Analysis

The *intifada* or the Palestinian uprising erupted on 8 December 1987. It started after the funeral of four Palestinian workers who were killed by an Israeli army truck turned violent and a Palestinian youth was killed in Israeli gunfire in Jebaliya. The death of this young man further instigated the protesters and the violence spread like wildfire and within no time engulfed the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip. On 17 December Yasser Arafat announced his rejection a request from Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin for a cessation of the *intifada* on grounds that Israel has violated the 1982 ceasefire agreement.[1] The *intifada* not only caught the Israeli government off guard but also came as a total surprise to the PLO. The uprising virtually ended any kind of relationship that existed between Israelis and the Palestinians and led to the acute polarisation of the two communities. Israelis saw the Palestinian struggle as a challenge to the existence of their state and for Palestinians every Israeli was an oppressor, whose only objective was to deny Palestinian right to a nation.

In this charged atmosphere there started a definite trend of inward consolidation of the identities and the stricter definition of the loyalties. This kind of identity alignment in favour of one or the other left almost no space for the section of the population, who preferred identifying with both the identities. The increasing limitation of this space with the strengthening of *intifada* brought Israeli Arabs to the crossroads in terms of their identity definition, as they shared both the Israeli and the Palestinian identity. The Israeli Arabs faced with irreconcilable dilemma; on one hand their Israeli identity demanded the

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[1] Edgar O'Ballance, *The Palestinian Intifada*, (New York, 1998), p.26.

opposition of the Palestinian identity and their Palestinian identity, on the other, expected them to defy their Israeli identity and give more importance to their Palestinian identity. It seems that Israeli Arabs themselves had no say regarding their identity. It appeared that ultimately the two outside parties would decide their future identity. But the Israeli Arabs proved it wrong and took a realistic stand on *intifada*, as well as on the future of their identity. However, the intense desire of Israeli Arabs to develop an identity that was independent of any outside influence (Israeli and Palestinian) and that suited their interests best as a citizen of Israel reflected their disappointment with both Israeli and Palestinian policies of treating them a marginalised section of their respective communities.

The Dynamics of the1987 Intifada

The 1987 *intifada* was not the first time that saw an identity crisis among the Israeli Arabs. The nationality vs. citizenship dilemma started soon after the Israeli occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip and the origination of the Palestinian resistance against it. Ever since 1967, each event symbolising the Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation added to this dilemma of Israeli Arabs and the 1987 *intifada* saw the culmination of this process. In the beginning, the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation manifested in two forms: paramilitary and civil.[2] Israeli government had little difficulty in ending the paramilitary activities and other forms of armed resistance carried out by various Palestinian guerrilla organizations affiliated with the PLO. These organisations were more of nuisance than a serious military threat to Israel and were at best useful in raising Palestinian consciousness and propaganda.

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[2] Don Peretz, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*, (Boulder, San Francisco, London, 1990), p. 6.

This civil resistance, conversely, was far more serious for Israel to suppress because of its unique persistent nature. It started within weeks after the 1967 war with people led by the Palestinian notables went on to protest against the Israeli occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip.[3] Fearing an increase in the intensity of protest, Israel deported large number of Palestinian leaders. The first few, who were deported soon after these protests against, included Sheikh Abd al-Hamid al- Saiyh, president of the Jerusalem Sharia court and Ruhi al-khatib, former mayor of East Jerusalem.[4] Originating after the annexation eastern part of city and the unification of Jerusalem, this Palestinian civil resistance not only persisted but was also joined by merchants, businesses, students, schools: Demonstrations were accompanied by the displaying Palestinian flags and chanting of slogans calling for the independence of Palestine.[5]

The occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip was followed by the economic integration of the occupied territories with the Israeli economy.[6] It was aimed at the improvement of the quality of lives of the Palestinians. The Palestinian economy, indeed, saw an impressive growth after the integration with the Israeli economy as visible by a very substantial increase in the living standards of Palestinians with the annual increase in the agricultural production. Since majority of the Palestinians were engaged in agriculture, the better agricultural techniques from Israel proved extremely beneficial for them. Further, integration with Israeli economy provided Palestinian agricultural products an established market in the west. In the social sector also there was a marked

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[3]   Ibid.

[4]   Ibid.

[5]   Ibid., p. 7.

[6]   Ibid., p. 9.

improvement. The decreased infant mortality rates, decline of infectious diseases, larger percent of girl students attending the schools demonstrated the overall increase in the living standards of the Palestinians.[7]

The integration process also had a negative impact on the Palestinians and was responsible for the strengthening of anti-Israel sentiments among them. The Israeli acquisition of land in the occupied territories was fiercely resented by majority of the Palestinians because their economy largely depended on agriculture. Depleting agricultural land and the nature of the parental Israeli economy left Palestinians with no alternatives but to take up mostly unskilled jobs at the bottom of the wage scale in Israel. The availability of abundant cheap labour made Palestinians vulnerable to exploitation within Israeli economy.[8] Further, unable to find a job for themselves a large number of Palestinians migrated to neighbouring Arab countries.[9] The frustration of the Palestinians increased due to their inability to control and influence over their own economic fate. The Palestinian labour was exploited in the urban Israeli market and all Palestinian agricultural produce for Europe had to be channelled through Israeli Agricultural export company (AGREXCO), which heavily favoured Israeli than the Palestinian farmers.[10]

The Palestinian opposition to the occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip that started as early as July 1967 has continued ever since. The year of 1976 has a very important place in this struggle as this year saw a municipal election in West Bank, which went largely in favour of Palestinians who rejected any compromise with Israel. It was in

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[7]   Ibid., p. 6.

[8]   Ibid, p. 10.

[9]   Ibid.

[10]   Ibid., p.11.

this year that the Israeli Arabs called for first general strike to protest against the confiscation of their land by the authorities in Israel. The strike was supported by the Palestinians people, who themselves radically opposed the Palestinian notables advocating for compromise with Israel in the municipal elections in April 1976. In the election for Mayors of twenty four towns and nearly two hundred municipal council representatives, "notables" who represented established families and "moderates" were defeated.[11]

Many of the newly elected officials were supporters of PLO and rejected the proposal of Israeli Defence Minister Shimon Peres for Palestinian "Self Rule" under Israeli control. Similarly, another attempt by the Israeli government to establish a civil administration was resented by the Palestinians. Its implementation of order 947 in 1981 sparked off a popular opposition in West Bank and Gaza Strip and the opposition was joined by many of the elected members of the municipal councils. Israeli authorities reacted by dismissing the Palestinian officials who failed to implement or denounced the Israeli order. Following the dismissal of Palestinian officials, the army used harsh methods to control the Palestinian resistance that earned them public criticism even inside Israel.[12]

The Lebanese war of 1982 that was intended to end the PLO presence in Lebanon did not succeed and the PLO withstood the siege of Beirut for seventy days. This resilience shown by the PLO impressed the inhabitants of West bank and Gaza Strip, while the Israeli role in the Sabra/Shatilla massacre of Palestinians evoked bitterness

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[11]   Ibid., p.15.
[12]   Ibid.

among them against Israel occupation.[13] As pointed by the Jacob Landau that the 1982 war was seen by the Israeli Arabs as an Israeli failure to liquidate the Palestinians in Lebanon resulting in the strengthening of the Palestinisation of their identity.[14]

The National Unity Government (NUG) formed after the 1984 elections, adopted a two-pronged strategy to counter the Palestinian resistance in the occupied territories. It embarked upon a good will gesture to improve the quality of life in the territories and other confidence building measures to entice the local Palestinians (excluding the Palestinian refugees in neighbouring Arab countries) into political compromise. Steps like reopening of Najah University in Nablus, relaxing press censorship and other military regulations, and the replacement of military officials with Palestinian civilian officials were taken. These steps made moderates like Zafir al-Masri, who became the Mayor of Nablus, to argue that an Arab Mayor was better than an Israeli officer and it would marginally improve the Palestinian lives. Two and a half months after taking the office he was assassinated allegedly by the Palestinians rejectionists. The failure of above strategy made Israeli Prime Minster Yitzhak Shamir to introduce 'iron fist' policy in 1986.[15] This policy included the establishment of more Jewish settlement in the occupied territories and re-imposing press censorship.[16]

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[13] Sayigh Yezid, "The Intifada Continues: Legacy, Dynamics and challenges," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 11, no.3, July 1989, p. 23.

[14] Jacob M. Landau, *The Arab Minorities in Israel 1967-91: Political Aspects*, (Oxford, 1993) p.167.

[15] Peretz, n. 2, p. 32.

[16] The situation was further worsened by the controversy on Temple Mount between Islamic clergy and the Jewish radicals. The Jewish section brought a suit against the Israeli government authorities charging them with permitting the Muslims to undertake illegal construction in the Mount complex. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem enraged by this insisted that Temple Mount comes under the sovereignty of the Muslim Wakf establishment. This incident further ignited the hatred between the two communities and gave it a religious flavour. The prevailing situation only helped in the consolidation of the Islamic militant organizations like Islamic Jihad preaching violence sanctified by religion for achieving independence.

The twenty years of accumulated frustration and anger of Palestinian Arabs against Israeli occupation needed a spark to covert the situation into a full blown crisis and this spark was provided by the death of four Palestinians on 8 December 1987. By this time there was a paradigm shift in the character of the Palestinian struggle for freedom from Israeli control. It increasingly became, as political scientists of the region prefers to call it, a "new *sumud*" or steadfastness against the occupation.[17] The entire struggle was acquiring a new meaning as a more indigenous Palestinian struggled to stay on the land.

The 1987 *intifada*, from the beginning was a symbol of spontaneity spreading faster than an epidemic in West bank and Gaza Strip with violent incidents against the Israeli occupation. Within days it developed into an organised movement, within weeks a coherent set of objectives were articulated and in a very short period made a deep impact on the social and political lives of the Palestinians. All of this was possible because of the effective leadership provided initially by the local leaders of West Bank and Gaza Strip, and later by the PLO. In contrast to the traditional leadership, which at times accommodated with Israeli position, the new leadership was younger and represented Palestinians of the refugee camps and the urban working class. It was a change of guard from older and more traditional notables to the student leaders, workers, and young professionals recruited into various Palestinian groups.[18] The United National Leadership Uprising (UNLU) emerged with the beginning of *intifada* and became responsible for making major national decisions and producing and distributing leaflets (*bayanat*) that

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[17]   Peretz, n. 2, p. 33.

[18]   Rashid I. Khalidi, "The Uprising and The Palestinian Question." *World Policy Journal*, vol.5, no. 3, Summer 1988, p. 501.

directed the uprising. During the first few weeks the *intifada* was led by individuals inside the territories without any consultation from the PLO leadership based in Tunis and it was only later on that the communication lines between the two were set up.

The increasing control of the PLO over the uprising in the later phase no way made UNLU an agent of PLO and subservient to the outside leadership, but a partnership between the two evolved and UNLU maintained its prominent role in the decision making. Since PLO was based in Tunis and cannot afford to marginalise the UNLU, the accommodative approach adopted by it towards UNLU was a strategic move to establish its control over the uprising. It provided PLO with a flexible and highly decentralised form of community organisation that eventually emerged to conduct the uprising. The local popular committees were loosely hierarchical, but commanded a powerful local support, which was essential for a prolonged defiance of the occupation authorities.

The PLO's effort to control these local committees was not limited to its understanding with the UNLU, but an equally important role was played by its underground local structures. These includes the political networks of the four main PLO groups- *Fatah*, The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Palestinian Communist Party. Developed basically in Israeli prisons, universities and other spaces of Palestinian-Israeli confrontations, they provided a backbone for much of the organisational works of the uprising.[19]

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[19]   Ibid., p. 502.

One of the key achievements of 1987 *intifada* was that it confirmed the centrality of the Palestinian people in the conflict with Israel.[20] Prior to this uprising, the Palestinian issue was considered to be more of an issue of discord between Israel and the Arab states than between Palestinians and the Israeli state. The origins of this notion can be traced back to the events that followed the establishment of Israel in Palestine. The 1948 war was not an Israeli-Palestinian war, but the Arab countries took upon the Palestinian cause as an Arab cause and fought to liberate Palestine from Israel. Even though Arabs failed to liberate Palestine, this issue became the top Arab agenda in the following decades. Divided by the creation of Israel and forced to take refuge in neighbouring Arab states, the Palestinians were in no position to resist the Israeli state and therefore welcomed the Arabisation of the Palestinian issue. Since, under Jordan and Egypt until 1967, they hoped to realise the dream of a Palestinian state with the Arab help.

The Arab defeat in 1967 war evaporated this Palestinian illusion and under the Israeli rule they started building their own political organisations. The increasing popularity of PLO in the occupied territories was a testimony to this fact. The defeat in 1967 war is also regarded as the defeat of Nasser's Arabism vis-à-vis Israel. The Arab states now realised that Israel was there to stay and Egypt, one of the most powerful Arab countries signed a peace treaty with Israel after the 1973 war. For countries like Jordan and Lebanon the Palestinians were perceived as a threat to their national integrity and therefore they tried to limit the freedom and functioning of Palestinian political parties within their territories. The Palestinians were more and more marginalised in the West Asian politics and it became fashionable to discuss about the imminent demise of the

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[20] Ibid., p.505.

PLO.[21] The Arab summit in Amman in 1987, which was one of the least friendly summits for PLO, has a particular significance regarding the Arab mood towards the Palestinian issue. This negative Arab attitude towards the Palestinian problem and the frustration generated out of it helped in the localisation and Palestinisation of the issue.

One of the first steps that the UNLU took was to pronounce the objectives of the 1987 uprising at a press conference held at Jerusalem. A list of fourteen demands were put forward, which asserted that the end of the uprising was unattainable without the Israeli recognition of Palestinian national rights, including the right of self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.[22] Both the local leadership and the PLO leadership made it clear that they sought negotiations based on the above demands at an international conference. In a period of one and a half years these fourteen points became the charter of the uprising and were periodically reiterated in the leaflets issued by the UNLU. The first and the most favourable response to the political objectives of the *intifada* came from the Jordan's King Hussein of Jordan. On 31 July 1988 the King abandoned his entire claim over the West Bank proclaiming that "Jordan is not Palestine and the independent Palestine state will be established on the occupied land of Palestine, after it was liberated."[23] This automatically made PLO sole authority responsible for the occupied territories and in this manner the struggle for Palestinian issue for the first time was fully Palestinised with symbolic help from the neighbouring Arab countries.

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[21] Ibid., p. 505.

[22] Peretz, n. 2, p. 107.

[23] Ibid.

Despite the fact that the fourteen points were regarded as the charter for the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation, there were pockets of dissent to these set of demands from organisations such as Hamas. Surprisingly, even though they did not recognise the unified leadership and its goals or method, they participated in the uprising. Contrary to UNLU attempts to negotiate a peace deal with Israel, the adherent of this section called for unlimited use of violence against Israelis and established establishment of Islamic Palestinian state.

Impact of the 1987 Intifada on the Israeli Arabs Identity

The twenty years of Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip made it economically dependent on Israel and politically isolated from rest of the Arab world. It made people speculate that ultimately the Arabs of the occupied territories would share the position and destiny of the Israeli Arabs. The increasing apathy of the Arab world towards Palestinian issue and the decreasing influence of PLO further gave credence to this viewpoint. This sentiment was evident in Israel also, where the multiplication of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories was perceived by the right wing hardliners as a realisation of dream of the establishment of Israel in the entire Promised Land.

The Israeli occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip also had a profound impact upon the relationship between Arabs of the occupied territories and the Israeli Arabs. Both of them were a part of same community, but were divided after the formation of Israel. The Arabs living inside Israel and their identity went through a severe Israelisation process that alienated them from the rest of the Arab world. The occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip brought them in contact with the Arabs living there. As result of the increased interaction between the communities, the Israelisation process of Israeli Arabs

was taken over by the Palestinisation of their identity. Common nationality, language, religion and history proved helpful in further strengthening this process in the ensuing twenty years. Even though Israeli Arabs enjoyed certain fundamental and democratic right as citizens of Israel, which the Arabs in the occupied territories did not enjoy, it did not act as an impediment in the development of a sense of camaraderie between the two. This was not to remain the same as proved after of 8 December 1987.

The start of 1987 *intifada* brought a paradigmatic shift in the Palestinian crisis. All of the above assertions that looked so formative and substantiated before this event, now crumbled like a pack of cards. It is also true for the relationship between the two Arab communities. The Arabs of the occupied territories chose the path of independence, which Israeli Arabs could not afford. The propagators of 1987 *intifada* defined Israel as their enemy and Israeli Arabs were the citizens of Israel. Therefore, any Palestinian involvement in *intifada* could have been an act of treason against its own country. The dilemma for Israeli Arab in this situation was to choose between their country and their nation. Choosing one would definitely spell the end of the other. What would be interesting to study is: how in the first instance they reacted in this situation; what impact *intifada* had on their identity formation process, their relationship with Israel and also with Arabs of the occupied territories.

Taken unawares like every one else, the first organised public demonstration by Israeli Arabs began within two weeks of the uprising. On 21 December 1987, a general strike was called by Israeli Arab leaders to convey their solidarity with the *intifada* and to mourn for those killed in the territories. Although the initiators of the strike called it 'Peace Day', it turned into a day of disorder and violence as the demonstrators blocked

the *Wadi Ara* highway, flattered the Palestinian flag, broke the windshield of the passing cars and shouting slogans in support of PLO.[24] In the leaflets Follow up Committee on the Concerns of Arab Citizens (FCCAC) called for a country wide general strike to express the concern of the Arab population in Israel towards *intifada*. It read, "Tne events in the occupied territories directly concerns the Arabs in Israel as an inseparable part of the Palestinian people and as citizens of Israel. We proclaim our full solidarity with the struggle of this people, our people, against the Israeli occupation."[25] This had two interesting significance; on one hand it was the first display of Israeli Arab solidarity with the *intifada* and on the other hand it also specified the differences between Arabs in Israel and in the occupied territories by acknowledging that the Arabs of Israel were the citizens of Israel.

The first general strike was followed by several other demonstrations by the Israeli Arabs of differing intensity. The two subsequent demonstrations organised by FCCAC on 23 January and 13 February 1988 were effective in Nazareth and Haifa respectively. Even though the first demonstration was only for Nazareth it witnessed the largest ever participation of Israeli Arabs during *intifada*. They were followed by another national strike on Land Day (30 March), an annual event dedicated to protest against the confiscation of Arab land since 1976. In 1988 the Land Day was different as it not only commemorated the seizure of land but also showed Israeli Arab support to *intifada* with slogans for the independence of Palestine and equality for themselves within Israel. Here again the slogans accept the fact that Israeli Arabs were the citizens of Israel and

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[24] Elie Rekhess, "The Arabs in Israel and the Intifada", in Robert O. Freedman, (Ed.), *The Intifada: Its Impact on Israel, the Arab World, and the Superpowers,* (Miami, 1991), p. 345.

[25] *Al-Ittihad,* 20 December 1987, Cited in Darweish and Rigby, n. 6, p.47.

demanded equality inside Israel. The advocacy for independence was limited to the Palestinians alone. The next major Israeli Arab strike was organised in November 1988 to protest against the demolition of 'illegal' Arab houses but the protests passed off peacefully.

The support for the uprising was not only limited to the Israeli Arab masses but it also had support among their representatives in Knesset. Perhaps the most evident was the resignation of two Israeli Arab Knesset members in support of the uprising. Abd al-Wahab Darawshe left the Labour Party to found an independent list (the Democratic Arab Party), and Mohammed Watad left Mapam to join Rakah-led Democratic Front for Peace.[26] This was regarded as the Israeli Arab disillusionment and abandonment of earlier premise that it was possible 'to influence policy from within' – meaning within the Israeli establishment.

The resignation of the two Knesset members and at least thirty five strikes and demonstrations organised mostly by FCCAC and DFPE (as found in the *Al-Ittihad* survey) alarmed the Israeli governments and the Jewish community. It was interpreted that *intifada* was only a catalyst in the ongoing process of Palestinianisation process, pressure for autonomy, dissociation from Israel, a new dangerous problem.[27] This generated a backlash of anti- Israeli Arab sentiments among the Jewish section of the Israeli population and there was a genuine fear among that the *intifada* would creep into Galilee in northern Israel. The Israeli cabinet reportedly discussed the assessment of specialists that the *intifada* might expand to the Arabs in Israel and the possibility that the

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[26] Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Israel's Third Front*, (New York, 1989), p.177.

[27] Peretz, n. 2, p. 147.

security system might lose control over them.[28] This situation gave rise to a debate regarding the nature and extent of Israeli Arab's participation in the 1987 *intifada.*

The discussion on this issue is important not only because Israeli media, security agencies and political circles were convinced that Israeli Arabs were on the verge of joining the uprising, but also because the entire political spectrum of Arab political thinking believed that Israeli Arabs were not demonstrating enough support for the uprising. The claims and counter claims by both the parties against the Israeli Arabs put them in a dicey situation, making them politically untouchable for both sides. The two components of its identity (Israeli and Arab) that the Israeli Arabs so long tried to maintain raised doubts about their stand towards the uprising and their loyalty towards Israel. The problem with the positions taken by both the sides is that their conclusions were based upon their observation of the events in a limited time frame, while issues like these need a more substantiated analysis.

An attempt in this direction is made by Nadim Rouhana, who tried to analyse the Israeli Arab stand during *intifada* under two different perspectives- *Sentimental Identification and Behavioural Involvement.* According to him, one of the reasons for the diverging views about Israeli Arab role in the uprising could be the lack of understanding between the two.[29] Sentimental support is limited to verbal or artistic expression of identification, while behavioural involvement includes overt and publicly observable manifestations, such as material support or organised political acts.[30]

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[28]   Ibid.

[29]   Rouhana, Nadim, "The Intifada and the Palestinians of Israel: Resurrecting the Green Line," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol.19, no.3, Spring 1990, p.61.

[30]   Ibid., p. 61.

Sentimental identification with 1987 *intifada* was visibly present among the Israeli Arabs during its entire course. Ever since the outbreak of *intifada*, the maximum space in Arabic newspapers like *Al- Ittihad* was monopolized by its news headlines. The terminologies used in the articles- "Heroism," "Martyrdom," "Soldiers of occupation" and so on- were virtually indistinguishable from the terms used in any other parts of the Arab world. The Israeli countermeasures were frequently criticised and Palestinian victory against them was professed. In addition to news items and the editorials, an abundance of literature focusing on uprising was available among Israeli Arabs printed in occupied territories and in diaspora. Interestingly, the social and cultural space of Israeli Arabs came to be increasingly dominated by the moods of uprising like, glorification of *intifada*, embracement of Palestinian literature, singing of *intifada* songs and recitation of its poetry.[31] All this indicate the evaporation of line differentiating sentimental identification from behavioural involvement. However, one needs to place the forms of support in their context to grasp their actual sense as they were not strong enough to change patterns of Israeli Arab's social behaviour.

Behavioural involvement, on the other hand, was characterised by sending material assistance and by organising support demonstrations and strikes. The FCCAC, which included heads of the local Arab councils, Arab Knesset members, Arab members of Histadrut and representatives of most organizations of Arab society, was the first to organise such demonstrations and strikes. After the initial outburst, the Israeli Arabs concentrated more on material support to the Arabs in the occupied territories. The emergence of popular relief committees indicated a widespread form of co-operation and

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[31]   Ibid., p. 63.

expression of solidarity. The function of these committees was to organise the provision of direct material support to the Arabs of the occupied territories. They were mostly involved in the channelling of food, clothing, medical supplies and money from triangle area to the West Bank, which are only few miles away. During January 1988 it was estimated that more than 100,000 tons of food was sent to the occupied territories.[32] This form of material support was of a humanitarian nature extended to the Palestinians under siege for many days without any means of survival. Therefore it will be erroneous to agree with the hardliners within Israel that Israeli Arabs were on the verge of joining *intifada* or the Arabs who claimed Israeli Arabs were not showing sufficient support for the uprising. It would be appropriate to suggest that Israeli Arabs were successful in walking on a tight rope that separated the support to their nation and loyalty to their country.

The uprising also had a substantial influence on the political parties and the ideological trends of Israeli Arabs. As *intifada* became a central ideological platform, the nationalist- Palestinian component was forcefully projected in the behavioural pattern of all the political parties. Ultranationalist organisations, like the "Sons of the Village," were especially inspired by the national reawakening and called for the establishment of a secular democratic Palestine state over all of British mandatory Palestine by uniting sons of *al- Jilal* (the Galilee in Israel) and sons of *al- Khalil* (Hebron in West Bank).[33] Their methods of protest was very aggressive and when the level of radical involvement in subversive activities reached a critical point, Israeli authorities responded by pre-emptive

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[32] Marwan Darweish, and Andrew Rigby, *Palestinians in Israel: Nationality and Citizenship*, (University of Bradford, Department of Peace Studies, 1995), p. 50.

[33] Rekhess, n. 24, p. 346.

steps, mostly administrative detentions. The Israeli Communist Party (ICP) also made every effort to demonstrate its identification with the uprising and virtually became its mouthpiece in Israel. Its press gave extensive coverage to *intifada* and criticised Israeli countermeasures inside the occupied territories.[34] In its election campaign, the ICP made great play of *intifada* regarding it as an opportunity to realise the aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security. However, the ICP did not support the idea of displaying Palestinian- PLO flag or burning of Israeli flag in Israel. The communist mayor of Nazareth as once said, "We are the citizens of the state of Israel."[35] This statement virtually sums up the ICP position regarding *intifada*. On one hand it supported *intifada*, but on the other it also accepted the fact that Israel Arabs should not cross the limits of being a citizen of Israel when expressing solidarity with *intifada*.

The Progressive List of Peace (PLP) had adopted a strategy similar to that of ICP and at times even competed with it. Its Arabic organ, *al-Watan*, reported about *intifada* events in great detail and its Knesset members frequently visited the territories to demonstrate their support for the uprising.[36] However, PLP contribution remained minimal in practical terms. Like the ICP it also advocated the need for Israeli Arabs to act within the parameters of Israeli law. Similarly, *intifada* affected the Arab members of the Labour Party and ultimately led to the formation of Democratic Arab Party (DAP) by Abd al- Wahhab Darwasha. After splitting form Labour Party, Darwasha dedicated his effort to the promotion of a dual goal: the achievement of civil equality for Israeli Arabs

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[34]   Ibid., p. 348.

[35]   Ibid., p. 349.

[36]   Ibid., p. 350.

[37]   Ibid., p. 353

and solution to the Palestinian problem. He militantly raised questions in Knesset of the territories and denounced the IDF measures to quell *intifada*.[37] His departure from Labour Party led many Arab activists to reassess their position within the party and also vindicated the Labour Party position on *intifada* that was contrary to the interest of Israeli Arabs. It also had an impact on the fabric of relationship between Arabs and the Jews in the Israeli society.

The issues that Israeli Arabs raised during the 1987 *intifada* were not new, but were long standing demands forwarded by them prior to the uprising. The political consensus that emerged in the Arab sector comprised of three elements:

a) The unequivocal support for the establishment of Palestine state in the West Bank and Gaza under the leadership of PLO.

b) Demand for the full equality as citizens of Israel.

c) The agreement on all forms of political activities be conducted within the limits allowed by Israeli laws.[38]

A close analysis of the three demands indicates an intricate linkage between them as far as Israeli Arab's perspective on this issue is concerned. The fulfilment of first demand would automatically make conditions favourable for the realisation of the second demand. The establishment of Palestine in West Bank and Gaza Strip would eventually end the Israeli security concerns in the region and it in turn would leave Israeli authorities without any excuse to discriminate against the Israeli Arabs based on security. Likewise the third element of the consensus indicates Israeli Arabs stand that they did not want an independent state but would protest against issues that concerns them within the

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[38] Rouhana, N.29, p.59.

limitations sanctioned by Israeli law. Consistent with this argument, Israeli Arabs always obtained official permission before planning any strikes and demonstrations in Israel and their leadership had condemned any illegal activity during *intifada*.

The Israeli Arab support to *intifada* had important political implications for Israel. It intensified the debate between Israelis advocating *territorial maximalism* and those favouring *territorial compromise*.[39] The maximalists advocated for the use of greater force to contain the Palestinian uprising and if needed for the deportation of Arabs from West Bank and Gaza Strip. This view coincided with the Likud position regarding *intifada*. It was further encouraged by the political right wing Jewish organisation, who believed that Palestinians were content to live under Israeli hegemony as it provides improved facilities and better living condition and would willingly accept autonomy under permanent Israeli rule. But it was the uprising that forced them to change their attitude and communicated that Palestinians were unwilling to accept anything less than independence. The maximalists linked 1987 *intifada* with the existence of Israel. They argued that the *intifada* was not for West Bank and Gaza Strip rather it was against the existence of Jewish state in any part of Palestine and the uprising was an expression of Palestinian 'ungratefulness' to the improved living condition provided by Israel. Therefore harsh measures were advocated by the political right to deal with the uprising in order to safeguard the existence of Israel.[40]

The other group advocating territorial compromise included Labour Party and Israeli Arabs. Labour and left within Israel advocated territorial compromise due change

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[39] Mark Tessler, "Intifada and Political Discourse in Israel", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol.19, No.2, Winter 1990, p. 43.

[40] Ibid., p. 51.

in demographic pattern of Israel.[41] According to them, in the absence of peace agreement, the Arabs would outnumber Jews by the turn of the century threatening the two basic characters (Democratic and Jewish) of Israel. Therefore Israel interest would be best served by relinquishing the occupied territories. Further, a section of Israelis acknowledged that occupation was an unnatural state of affairs and therefore was reasonable for Palestinians to seek its end and uprising was no way directed at the end cf Israel.[42]

Israeli Arabs on the other hand argued that the creation of Palestinian state in the occupied territories would mitigate Israeli security concern, which in turn would improve their position in Israel. Majid Al- Haj, Elihu Katz and Samuel Shye, have demonstrated the overwhelming support for Palestinian state among Israeli Arabs compared to Jews. They conclude that even though one third of the total Israelis support Palestinian state, a wide gap exists between Jews and Arabs on this issue. Contrary to a high percentage of Arabs supporting the Palestinian state, only twenty to twenty two percent Jews were in support of it.[43]

Thus it seems justifiable to conclude that the uprising resurrected the Green Line in the minds of people in Israel and also reinforced and deepened the political divisions based on territorial maximalisation and territorial compromise. However, Asher Arian, Michal Shamir and Raphael Ventura after analysing the data from respondents regarding Israeli public opinion on *intifada*, argued that the Jewish public favoured a short-term

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[41] Ibid., p.51.

[42] Ibid., p.54.

[43] Mazid Al-Haz; Elihu Katz; Samuel Shye, "Arab and Jewish Attitudes: Towards a Palestinian State", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol.37, no.4, December1993, p, 621.

hawkish policy to deal with *intifada* and a long term policy of moderation and compromise to deal with the larger Arab problem.[44] This could be true particularly for that section of Israeli society which realises the necessity for an early end to the Palestinian problem, but at the same time did not want *intifada* to succeed as it would amount to defeat of Israel by Arabs, something that was bound to accentuate the Israeli security concern in future.

The resurrection of Green Line in the minds of Israelis during *intifada* proved that Israelis and Palestinians could not live inside a single country. Palestinians regarded Israelis as their enemy because it had denied them right to a state by occupying the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while Israelis were of the same view of the Palestinians as Palestinians became a security threat to entire Israel during *intifada*.

In this situation when the other (enemy) is so distinctly defined, it would be interesting to define the position of those who belong to either side of the fence. The uprising and Israeli Arab position on it had an immense impact upon their identity. In this regard Nadim Rouhana believed that *intifada* was not able to mitigate the Green Line between Arabs living in Israel and Palestine.[45] Though not completely rejecting the above argument, Jacob M. Landau, assert that even though Israeli Arabs have not massively joined *intifada*, there was an increase in hostile activities among them.[46] Citing a report presented by Ehud Olmert, the Minister responsible for Arab affairs, on 6th December 1989, which accepts the increase in violence among Israeli Arabs, Landau concluded that

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[44] Asher Arian; Michal Shamir; Raphael Ventura, "Public Opinion and Political Change: Israel and the Intifada", *Comparative Politics*, vol.24, no.3, April 1992, p, 319.

[45] Rouhana, n. 29, p. 72.

[46] Landau, n. 14, p. 169.

intifada must have hastened the process of the Palestinisation of Israeli Arabs.[47] It was true particularly in the first stage of *intifada*, when Israeli Arabs showed great interest in the *intifada*, felt pride in its development, raised PLO flags, demonstrated and went on strike- apparently within the parameters of the Israeli law. However, the incidents of violence during the strike on 21 December 1987 and after 21 May 1990, where seven Arabs had been shot by a mentally retarded Jew in Rishon le-Zion (in Israel),[48] were on the *intifada* pattern and certainly not sanctioned under the law. The younger generation and the extremists increasingly opted for Palestinisation and perceived PLO as their leader.

This kind of Israeli Arab identification with *intifada* was certainly influenced by the events in the territories. In this situation, even though their pragmatic sentimental identification with the uprising was more visible than their behavioural involvement, it definitely heightens the tensions in their own identity. This dilemma of Israeli Arabs is best articulated in the article by Faruq Muwasi, who observed:

> We have been called, crazily, 'Israeli Arabs'. We have named ourselves 'Arabs in Israel' and, later, 'Palestinians in Israel'. Most Israelis oppose our self-rooting in Palestinianism, just as most of the Arabs we meet abroad refuse to let us mention Israel's name. When we say, 'We are Palestinians', they ask us, 'Why do we not start your own *intifada*?' And when we say, 'We are Israeli citizens', they enquire, 'What do you care about what happens in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?'[49]

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., p. 170.

[49] Ibid., p.171.

Another example of the vigorous process of Palestinianisation of Israeli Arab and its clash with their status as Israeli citizen was evident in the words of Atallah Mansour. He said, "We began to call ourselves Palestinians though our identity document says *leum*, nationality, Arab, we insisted that our nationality was Palestinian, and our citizenship Israeli. This put us in bind as Israel and the PLO were at war then."[50] Statements like this one reflect the frustration of Israeli Arabs of not living up to the expectations of both the loyalty to their country and the solidarity with their nation, while on the other hand it demonstrate their desire to support the *intifada* even if it meant their segregation inside Israeli society.

The Palestinian circle of the Israeli Arab identity was strengthened by various other means. Now they learnt their history from other sources: political parties, parents, books at home, leaflets in support of *intifada*, folklores etc. This historiography was different from the history taught in the school. A plethora of published materials on Palestine and Palestinian written by Arab were freely available during *intifada* to Israeli Arabs. These materials frequently compared the 1987 *intifada* with 1936 uprising further strengthening their Palestinianisation process.

However, the consolidation of Palestinian circle of Israeli Arab identity had its own limitations. The three political consensuses that Israeli Arabs came up regarding *intifada* demonstrate this fact. The first consensus advocated for the establishment of Palestinian state alongside Israel can be seen as strengthening of their Palestinian identity, but when it is in conjunction with the second consensus, it projects a different picture. The demand for the Palestinian state, according to Israeli Arabs, would further

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[50] Dilip Hiro, *Sharing the Promised Land: An Interwoven State of Israeli's and Palestinians* (London 1996), pp. 247, 248.

strengthen their Israeli identity as it would lead to the end of institutional discrimination against them within Israel. The third consensus of adhering to the limits prescribed by the Israeli law during demonstrations and strikes and the also need for prior permission from Israeli authorities for strikes showed their reluctance to do away with their Israeli identity. Therefore, even tough it is accepted that *intifada* strengthened Israeli Arab solidarity with Palestinian Arabs, it cannot be denied that it also heightened their sense of separateness between the two.

A major difference between the Israeli and Palestinian Arabs is that the Arabs in occupied territories were engaged in the struggle for independence from Israel rule but the Israeli Arabs, no matter how disadvantaged, were undeniably a part of political and economic life of Israel. Or as Nadim Rouhana liked to put it,

> The fact that Israel did not extend citizenship to the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, as it had to those who remained in the territories it conquered in 1948 war, created as of 1967 a dividing line between the Palestinians under control- Israeli citizen verses non citizens- that was of particular significance for the political future of the country.[51]

In addition to this, Israeli Arabs were deeply involved in the Israeli system on an instrumental level. They are educated in Israeli system- schools, colleges and universities; they are fluent in Hebrew; they know intricacies of Israeli political system and feel more comfortable manoeuvring within it. They also participate in Israeli elections and exercise their voting right and get elected to the Knesset. All this was absent in the case of Palestinian Arabs, who were themselves more interested in their independence than gaining these rights from Israeli government. These differences,

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[51] Rouhana, n. 29, p. 68.

believes Rouhana, were always present since 1967, but it took a concrete shape after the start of *intifada* and once again resurrected the Green Line that had faded after the 1967 war.[52] The permanency of this line was further consolidated in November 1988, when PLO's declaration of independence accepted the existence of Israel along side Palestine.[53] The PLO's formal adoption of the two states solution brought into sharp focus the differences between the two communities in terms of status, collective goals and collective future. In that sense the *intifada* resurrected the Green Line in the consciousness of both the communities. For the Israeli Arabs this new PLO policy meant that no matter how much they share the insecurities of their brethren beyond the Green Line, they were basically Israeli citizens.

By and large the twin track nature of Israeli Arab political programme reflected the position they seems to take towards their identity during *intifada*. On one hand they desire to support the *intifada* for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, on the other hand, they could not afford to further risk their already unstable position inside Israel. The presence of the two contradictory discourses regarding Israeli Arab stand during *intifada* affected them at two levels. Firstly, it exposed the divisions present inside the Israeli Arab community- where majority of the population advocated for the middle path, but it also had significant section of population supporting the two extreme positions. Secondly, the stand Israeli Arabs took as a unit during *intifada* increased their sense and experience of 'double marginality'. On one hand, Israeli Arabs unwillingness to identify in totality with *intifada* further strengthened the line that divided the two Arab

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[52] Ibid., p.69

[53] Ibid., p.72

communities and the 1987 *intifada* mainly became a struggle of the Palestinian Arabs and not that of Israeli Arabs. Similarly on the other hand, the heightening tensions between Jews and Palestinian Arabs in the occupied territories and the relatively open support for the *intifada* amongst the Israeli Arabs lead to the marginality of Israeli Arabs inside the Israeli society.

V

Conclusion

The trajectory of the Israeli Arab identity building process is both unique and complicated. Unique because, even though they share their identity with both Israelis and the Palestinian Arabs, there is reluctance on the part of these two communities to accept the Israeli Arabs as their integral part. The complication is due to the regular shift in Israeli Arabs identity formation process, namely, Israelisation, Arabisation, Palestinisation and Islamisation. Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Israeli Arab identity was dominated by two trends, namely, Israeli and Arab. Israeli identity was bestowed upon them by Israel after they were given the Israeli citizenship and the Arab factor was present in their identity as they were the part of the Arab population that was present in Palestine before the establishment of Israel. These two positions were in opposition to and competed with each other, which one hand was marked by increasing Israeli Arabs political and economic integration with Israel and on the other hand, prevailing wave of Arabism in the West Asia.

The Israeli- Arab was of 1967 added another dimension to the identity of the Israeli Arabs. The Arab defeat in this war led to the decline of Arab nationalism and the rise and consolidation of more localised Palestinian identity. The Palestinisation of the Palestinian Arabs coincided with the increased interaction between them and the Israeli Arabs due to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel. These two processes, coupled with the presence of PLO proved instrumental for the rise of Palestinian sentiment among the Israeli Arabs. An indication of the increasing Palestinisation of the Israeli Arabs identity, and their relationship with the Palestinian Arabs was evident

during the 'Land Day' of 1976. Another event that saw an increased Israeli Arab's identification with the Palestinian identity was their opposition to Israeli war in Lebanon and their demonstration against the killing of Palestinians in the two refugee camps.

The ultimate test of the Israeli Arab identity came in the form of 1987 *intifada*. The enemy was clearly defined here with Israelis and the Palestinians on the either side of the fence. This clear cut definition of the identities made conditions precarious for the Israeli Arabs who identified themselves with both. Their identity as an Israeli citizen demanded an unquestioned loyalty to Israel; while their natural identity as Arab made the Palestinian Arabs expected an all out Israeli Arab support for their struggle for independence against Israeli occupation.

The expectation that Israeli Arabs will join hands with the Palestinian Arabs during 1987 *intifada* to defeat Israel and to create a Palestinian state because of the discrimination they faced inside Israel and the increasing Palestinisation of their identity had its own limitations. The fact hat the Israeli Arabs were subjected to discrimination inside Israel can not be denied, but the political rights and the economic progress that they acquired as citizens of Israel also need to be considered. The condition of the Israeli Arabs actually improved after the 1967 war, within Israel. It started with the abolition of military rule and meant greater freedom for the Israeli Arabs to move inside Israel. The unrestricted movement of the Israel Arab labour led to their improved economic conditions. Moreover the establishment of Arab political groups and political parties reflected the willingness of the Israeli Arabs to utilise the Israeli democratic polity to increase their representation in the Knesset.

In this situation, is it to expect that Israeli Arabs would align themselves with the Palestinians of the occupied territories to fight against their own country? In other words can one envisage them aligning with Palestinian Arabs –people of common nationality, to fight against Israel. This is only possible in a situation when their interests are in total opposition to the interests of the Jews and that they could afford to form a new state with the Palestinian Arabs. But, *intifada* was about the liberation of the West Bank and Gaza from Israeli occupation and not the liberation of the entire Arabs in erstwhile Palestine. The gradual acceptance of the bi-state solution by the PLO diminished the possibility of the Israeli Arabs being citizens of a future Palestinian state.

Further the assertion that Israeli Arabs having a different nationality form the majority Jews will aspire for a separate state and it is this aspiration that will encourage them to join Palestinian Arabs for the establishment of a Palestinian nation state is teasing. First of all, the usage of term Palestinian national with Israeli Arabs is highly problematic. As it has been shown earlier that the Palestinian identity emerged after 1967 and Israeli Arabs were only influenced by this Palestinisation process as the way it was influenced by the Israelisation process at the same time. Influenced by these two processes, the Israeli Arabs identity took a shape that was different from that of Palestinian Arabs.

Similarly there are differences on the opinion that a particular nation aspires for statehood in a heterogeneous country. Contradicting this T.K OOmmen opines: "nations do not always seek their state; some nations may renounce states. Therefore state renouncing nationalism is a fact and a conceptual possibility.... The nations want identity and the equality, but they seem to think that for the preservation of identity one need not

have an exclusive sovereign state, as it can be maintained within a multinational polity."[1] He further adds, "the dissociation between a people (or a segment of that people) and their homeland denationlises them: they become an ethnie....the ethnie may or may not retain its original culture. But what is important is whether an ethnie identifies with the new territory, that is whether it adopts the territory as the new homeland; if it does it becomes a nation.... Identities will not wither away; if old ones disappear or recede the new ones will be invented and constructed."[2]

This will probably help to explain the dilemma generated during 1987 *intifada* among the Israeli Arabs, where they wanted to help the Palestinians Arabs, but at the same time do not want to relinquish their duties towards the country as its citizens. Since the Israeli Arabs were dissociated from larger Arab population, their de-Arabisation process started in 1948. However this process did not complete as this dissociation was forced one and also due to the discrimination that they were subjected to within Israel. Thus a new identity was invented or constructed, which contained both Arab and the Israeli trends in it. Israeli trend was present due to Israeli Arab participation in political activities, economic integration, social and cultural interaction with the Israeli identity.

This dilemma of Israeli Arabs ended after PLO accepted the existence of Israel alongside of Israel formally in its declaration of independence on November 1988. The PLO's acceptance of Israel that contained areas inhabited by Israeli Arabs stopped further Palestinisation process of the Israeli Arab identity. Abandoned by the PLO, there was no

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[1]   T. K. Oommen, "Introduction: Conceptualizing the Linkage between Citizenship and National Identity," in T.K. Oommen (ed.), *Citizenship and National Identity: From Colonialism to Globalisation*, (New Delhi; Thousand Oaks; London, 1997), p. 16.

[2]   Ibid., pp. 34 & 35.

option left for the Israeli Arabs but to concentrate upon their Israeli identity. It was evident from the decrease in the number of protests demonstration organised after November 1988 and whatever demonstrations took place, they were more related to the demand for equality for Israeli Arabs within Israel than the establishment of the Palestinian state[3].

The two demands that Israeli Arabs forwarded during *intifada* also reflects the tensions between the two dimensions of their identity. First, the advocacy for a separate Palestinian state and secondly, the demand for the equal rights within Israel show their intention to maintain both the identities, which became increasingly difficult given the conflict between the two. Therefore, while they could not fully integrate with the struggle of Palestinian Arabs, nor were they fully able to integrate as citizens of Israel. Apparently, it is this position of being on the 'double periphery' could make them untouchable for both the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews or conversely might make them a bridge between the two societies in future.

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[3]   Nadim Rouhana, "The Intifada and the Palestinians of Israel: Resurrecting the Green Line", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol.19, No.3, Spring 1990, p.69.

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