Religious Fundamentalism and the Conflict Between Israel and Palestine: A Case Study of the Kahane and Hamas Organizations

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Abstract
This thesis will examine the polarization of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that continues to deepen and that makes peace extremely difficult to achieve. In order to navigate this extremely complex issue I have chosen to look at one extremist group from each side of the conflict. On the Palestinian side I have chosen the group Hamas. On the Israeli side I have chosen the group Kahane. Kahane and Hamas have effectively polarized their societies by pulling the mainstreams further away from an effective resolution. These groups prey upon the fears of their societies and perpetuate the conflict by continuing to pursue violence as a method for resolution. The mainstream, unable to make effective strides towards peace as a result of these violent actions, has increasingly come to accept violence as the only solution to end violence, thereby creating a vicious circle. It is this issue which is at the heart of the continued conflict over Israel and Palestine.

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Religious Fundamentalism and the Conflict Between Israel and Palestine:

A Case Study of the Kahane and Hamas Organizations

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This thesis will examine the polarization of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that continues to deepen and that makes peace extremely difficult to achieve. In order to navigate this extremely complex issue I have chosen to look at one extremist group from each side of the conflict. On the Palestinian side I have chosen the group Hamas. On the Israeli side I have chosen the group Kahane. Kahane and Hamas have effectively polarized their societies by pulling the mainstays further away from an effective resolution. These groups prey upon the fears of their societies and perpetuate the conflict by continuing to pursue violence as a method for resolution. The mainstream, unable to make effective strides towards peace as a result of these violent actions, has increasingly come to accept violence as the only solution to end violence, thereby creating a vicious circle. It is this issue which is at the heart of the continued conflict over Israel and Palestine.
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Introduction

As I am writing this, events in the Middle East continue to unfold. There are nearly daily changes that affect and perpetuate the continued unrest in Israel, Palestine and the entire Middle East. Despite recent developments, it is difficult to imagine that peace will ever come. Even with the death of Yasser Arafat we must remember that over the past decade Israeli’s and Palestinian’s have become increasingly polarized, pulled from both sides by the extremist factions within each side. In just a few short decades the mainstream beliefs of both Israeli’s and Palestinian’s have shifted from secular moralism to religious extremism. Arafat’s death has not changed this reality, so despite the increased optimism the past few months have brought towards the peace process, we must remember how truly polarized the two sides have become.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has always been a fascinating one to me. It is a story of modern versus ancient, western culture versus Eastern traditions, new religious fundamentalism versus traditional religious doctrine, and religious versus modern secularism. The struggle is both defined by and defines our modern world. It is complicated, duplicitous, and horrifying.

The modern conflict over the ancient holy land is a struggle, which can never fully be won by either side. Both sides have lost too much and struggled too long for there to ever be a resolution that would satisfy all factions on even one side of the conflict. There is no solution that would please all Israeli’s and there is none that would please every Palestinian. There is without question going to be a struggle against any resolution.
So that leaves one final question: can the conflict be resolved, or are the two sides locked in a deadly struggle that can only end with the annihilation of one or the other? This is a question that we cannot answer. It is one that may only be answered in retrospect, but it must be asked if there is ever going to be peace.

In this thesis I will explore the story of the Kahane movement in Israel and the story of the Hamas movement in Palestine, both of which are extreme religious groups. It is religious extremism, which is at the heart of the conflict. The radicals on either side steer the conflict from the outer edges of society. It is these groups and their members that make a resolution impossible. It appears that there can be no compromise in the minds of Hamas or Kahane followers. The only resolution each sees is that the other leave without leaving behind any trace of themselves, or that they are destroyed in the name of God. Both groups believe themselves to be right and just in the eyes of religion.

There are striking similarities between the two groups. First, both groups were born out of earlier movements. Hamas was a product of the Muslim Brotherhood, and Kahane’s group Kach was a product of the Jewish Defense League (JDL). Both were imported to Israel and Palestine from other countries. The Muslim Brotherhood began in Egypt while the Jewish Defense League was started in New York City. Both groups began operating under their current names in the 1980’s as a reaction to the intensifying conflict. Both the Hamas and the Kahane groups preach a blind religious fanaticism that has resulted from generations of oppression and victimization as both sides have been oppressed. It may be here that the similarities end.

Perhaps the most striking difference is how the two groups are organized and mobilized. Kahane is perhaps more difficult to define. When I use the word Kahane
here I am not referring to the man, but to the philosophy of the man. There are two main Kahane groups, which I will explore in this paper: the first is Kach, and the second is Kahane Chai. Both will be explained later in this paper. It is the philosophy of Kahane that is dangerous. A young Yeshiva student who in many of the reports was said to have ties with members of Kahane, for example performed the assassination of Yitzak Rabin.

Hamas is much easier to blame because their need for publicity requires them to take responsibility. If a member of Hamas assassinates a political leader the group claims responsibility. This is not true of Kahane. Kahane’s do not operate on the same need for publicity, which is perhaps why so few people know much about them. In Kahane it is the individual that often takes the responsibility for his actions, not the group. It is these political and public differences which comprise the most definitive differences between the two groups.
A Brief History of Israel and Palestine

The history of the formation of Israel can be traced back to the modern Zionist movement, which was formed in the late eighteen hundreds. Leon Pinsker was the first to speak out, when in 1884, he wrote an essay entitled the “Lovers of Zion” (Hovevei Tsion).¹ In Eastern Europe during this time there were pogroms, or the systematic elimination of Jews throughout much of the countryside where Leon Pinsker lived in Russia. Pinsker’s goal in writing the essay was to promote immigration into Palestine. This was the first time anyone had expressed so clearly and passionately the plight of the Jewish people. Pinsker helped to form a new belief amongst the Jewish community: if the Jews did not help themselves then no one would.²

It was Theodore Herzl who in 1886 brought Zionism to the forefront of global politics. In 1896 he published a pamphlet titled the “Jewish State”.³ It was a history of anti-Semitism in Europe, as well as a plan for a new Jewish state. In later years Herzl gave credit to the Dreyfuss trials as his source of inspiration. Richard Dreyfuss was a Jewish officer in France who was tried and convicted on false charges of being a spy for Germany.⁴

In 1897 Herzl was responsible for two important things: the first was a Zionist newspaper called Die Wahl, the second was the meeting of the first Zionist congress. The Zionist Congress had as its main objective the formation of a Jewish State. The Zionist

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³ See Vidal, A to Z of the Middle East, pp. 220-221.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 220-221.
Congress met annually until 1901, then it came together bi-annually. In 1901 at the fourth meeting of the Zionist congress the JNF (Jewish National Fund) was established.\textsuperscript{5}

There were several locations suggested for a Zionist State. Herzl himself favored the Uganda project, which was a plan for a Zionist state in what was to later become Kenya.\textsuperscript{6} This project was rejected by the Zionist congress. The Russian delegates on the Zionist congress were especially set on a homeland in Palestine. Herzl died in 1903, his dream of a Zionist state still unfulfilled.

After Herzl's death the congress focused its efforts on establishing a homeland in Palestine. Slowly the JNF acquired donations from Jews all over the world and was able to buy land from the Ottoman Empire in order to begin settlement in Palestine. At this time absentee landlords, mainly from other parts of the Ottoman Empire, and small farmers owned much of the property of Palestine. The Jewish population in Palestine grew from 14,000 before the immigration began in the late 1800's to 80,000 by 1914.\textsuperscript{7} This amounted to nearly 9% of the population of Palestine.

There was a Jewish community in Jerusalem, which had lived there peacefully for hundreds of years under the Ottoman Empire. Over time, as the new Zionist settlers outnumbered the original religious community, which had always been present in Jerusalem, many of the Arab people who lived in Palestine grew uncomfortable. Though the Zionist Congress did not buy land in Palestine until the early nineteen hundreds, settlers had begun moving into Palestine in the early 1880's.\textsuperscript{8} In 1886 the first land

\textsuperscript{5} See Fromkin, A Peace to End All Peace, pp. 271-274.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 273.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Transformation of Palestine (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1987), pp. 139-164.
dispute occurred, and by 1891 many notables were writing to the Grand Vizier of Istanbul asking for a limitation or an end to the Jewish immigration. These letters were due, in part, to the fact that 10,000 Jewish settlers had moved into Jerusalem in the past ten years.

Many Orthodox Jews were against the creation of a homeland in Palestine because it went against their beliefs. The Orthodox believed that Palestine was supposed to be returned to the Jews upon the coming of the Messiah. Therefore, if the Zionists took over Palestine, or the biblical Judea and Samaria, they were going against religious doctrine, and attempting to hasten the Messianic era themselves instead of waiting for God’s hand.  

At the end of WWI and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, European powers were left with control of the fallen empire. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 would have had the bulk of Palestine divided up between the European powers. Jerusalem and other holy sites would have been made into an international zone. This plan was eventually rejected.

In 1917 the British took control of Palestine. In November the Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, wrote Lord Rothschild saying: “His majesty’s government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being understood that nothing should be done which may prejudice the rights of the existing non Jewish community in Palestine, or the rights of political status enjoyed by Jews living in any

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9 Ibid., p. 373.
other country.”

This became the groundwork for the Balfour Declaration, which was an agreement between the British and Zionists about land in Palestine that was being obtained for use as a homeland for the Jewish people.

Chaim Weizmann played a key role in the Zionist movement after Herzl’s death. The British, and not the Zionists, had instigated the Balfour Declaration. The British believed that the land of Palestine was of utmost strategic importance and wanted to maintain some control over the area. Handing the land over to the Jews was the easiest way to do that without occupying the land themselves.

The Balfour Declaration was widely supported by the European and American governments. They believed it to be an important religious service to the Jewish race. It was biblical prophecy come to light in the re-emergence of the state of Israel.

As the Balfour Declaration came into effect immigration of the Jews into Palestine began to increase. With increased immigration tensions over ownership of Palestine were further inflamed. In 1907 Yitsakh Epstein had spoken at the seventh Zionist Congress saying, “There resides in our treasured land an entire people who have clung to it for hundreds of years and has never considered leaving it...we are making a flagrant psychological mistake with regard to a strong, resolute, and zealous people. While we harbor fierce sentiments toward the land of our fathers, we forget that the nation now living there is also endowed with a loving heartland and a sensitive soul. The

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11 See Fromkin, A Peace to End All Peace, p. 297.
12 Ibid., p. 297.
Arab, like other men is strongly attached to his homeland.” This statement shows that both Jews and Arabs were conscious of the impending battle over Palestine.

In 1921 riots at Jaffo led to the deaths of more than two hundred Jews and a hundred and twenty Arabs. The medical officer for Jaffo who examined the scene said that he was. Struck with the number of wounds on each body and the ferocity of the wounds…” The commission of inquiry ruled that it was a spontaneous outburst. The incident was not viewed the same by Zionist settlers who interpreted the outburst at Jaffo as a serious threat to their existence in Palestine. “Self defense” was soon organized in each settlement. They posted guards and sentries at all times and armed themselves to the best of their ability. This movement was organized in part by David Ben Gurion. 

In 1929 tension over the Jewish and Arab access to the Wailing Wall erupted into the bloodiest massacre Palestine had yet seen. There were three attacks carried out against Jewish settlements. These attacks were targeted not at the new Zionist settlers, but at the religious communities, which had been in existence since before the Ottoman Empire.

The attacks were carried out in three of the four sacred Jewish cities in Palestine: Jerusalem, Safed, and Hebron. There were over two hundred people massacred in these three events, one hundred and thirty in Jerusalem alone. The massacres started in Jerusalem on the 23 of August 1929. During the following weeks they spread all over Palestine.

15 See Sacher, A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time, p. 169.
16 Ibid., pp. 169-173.
17 Ibid., pp. 173-174.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
It was said afterwards by one of the associates of Hajj Amin Al Huessayni who was the grand mufti\textsuperscript{20} of Jerusalem that he had been inciting the masses to riot. He chose the issue of the Wailing Wall, turning the Al Aqsa mosque into a national symbol of the struggle in Palestine. Large sections of the Arab population came to believe that the issue of access was a Jewish conspiracy to take over the holy site.\textsuperscript{21} The Jews believed that the Western or Wailing Wall is all that is left of the second temple. The Muslims believe that Muhammad tied his horse in this same spot before he made his night journey into heaven.

Huessayni was able to create a national symbol of Palestinian identity in order to increase his own power. The land disputes had suddenly spilled into the realm of the religious, therefore blurring the distinction between the Zionist and religious communities amongst the Jews, and the nationalistic and religious communities amongst the Palestinian's. Bringing the Holy sites into the debate over land also did one other very important thing and that is to pull together the various Arab groups that had been forming in Palestine during this time.

In 1922 the British government tried to redefine, and make clear the limitations of the Balfour Declaration. In doing so they were hoping to calm the fears of both Jews and Arabs, and make clear that neither was in jeopardy of losing their position in Palestine. The Jews were reassured that they were in Israel as a "right of sufferance". The Palestinian's were assured that the British government had no intention of imposing a Jewish national state in Palestine, and that further development of a Jewish national home

\textsuperscript{20} A spiritual leader.
would not mean an imposition on the inhabitants of Palestine. The British government published a white paper to this effect.  

The white paper laid down strict guidelines for immigration into Palestine. Immigration was not to exceed what was considered to be the "economic absorptive capacity" of Palestine. Immigrants would not be able to become a burden on the British taxpayers or deprive the Palestinian's of their jobs. These were the guiding rules under British rule until 1939.

The immigration law which was outlined in the white paper, led to a nationalistic movement amongst the Histadrut\textsuperscript{23} (labor union). The Histadrut argued with Jewish employers that hired cheaper, more efficient Arab labor. Their main argument was that every Jew given a job would allow one more Jewish immigrant family to help build up the Jewish national homeland.

The League of Nations did not endorse the white paper.\textsuperscript{24} In 1939 the British lost the allegiance of the Yishuv\textsuperscript{25} who said that Britain was limiting the progress of the Zionist State when they most needed it. In 1941 the Zionists broke completely with the British government after Winston Churchill rejected a proposal made by the Zionists to establish a Jewish division within the British army.\textsuperscript{26} Although Churchill initially agreed to the Jewish division because the establishment of a Jewish force in Palestine would mean he could send his own troops home, the protest from his cabinet was so strong, that

\textsuperscript{22} See Fromkin, \textit{A Peace to End All Peace}, p. 525.
\textsuperscript{23} The nationwide federation of labor unions in Israel.
\textsuperscript{24} See Sacher, \textit{A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time}, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{25} The name given to the Jewish community living in Palestine and the society it constructed there prior to the creation of the state of Israel.
\textsuperscript{26} See Fromkin, \textit{A Peace to End All Peace}, p. 279.
he was forced to reject the proposal. In October 1941 the Zionists gave up on this issue and broke away from the British government.

The Zionists were torn over the issue of a Jewish division. Weizmann had felt that their primary concern would be fighting the Nazi’s in Germany. Ben Gurion, on the other hand felt that their first concern should be the protection of their land in Palestine. For this reason, Ben Gurion became disenchanted with British rule and began to focus his attention on America. It also became very clear that Weizmann and Ben Gurion had radically different ideas about the new Zionist policy.27

On May 27, 1945, the Jewish agencies requested that Palestine be declared a Jewish State. They also submitted to the United Nations a petition calling for the State of Israel. Three years later on May 14, 1948, the Jewish State was declared in Palestine.28

After the State of Israel was declared in 1948 many of the Palestinian’s found themselves homeless, without a country and deprived of their ancestral lands. Much of the land in Palestine had been handed down through the generations for hundreds and sometimes thousands of years. Even the Bedouin who are traditionally nomadic would stay within their ancestral lands. Bedouin, who are seasonal migrators, often travel no further than twenty miles in their lifetime.

A common practice of removal carried out by the Israeli’s against the Palestinian’s29 was to round up an entire village in an afternoon, allowing the villagers time only to pack what they could carry. The villagers were then loaded into trucks and shipped out of town. They were brought to resettlement camps and their homes and villages were often burnt to make way for new developments. Sometimes Jewish

27 Ibid., p. 285.
29 Ibid., p. 239.
families occupied their homes. Every Palestinian family living in Israel and the occupied territories today has a story of removal.\textsuperscript{30} These are burning legacies passed down from one generation to the next.

When the Zionist settlers first started coming to Palestine there was much disorganization on the part of the Arab population. But they realized almost immediately the threat posed by the Zionists. There was an almost immediate reaction from the community living in Palestine. At this time there was not a strong sense of nationalism amongst Palestinian’s. Palestine was not necessarily seen as being separate from the rest of the Ottoman Empire, that is, not until the beginning of the British mandate in 1917.

By 1917 the Ottoman Empire had collapsed. Realizing that there was no one to protect them, it had become clear to the Palestinian’s that their homeland was under threat from Jewish immigration. Despite this they were unable to pull together a strong nationalist movement. During the rise of the Jewish State the Palestinian people were ethnically divided. There was also a strong sense of tribalism, and village unity, which caused the Palestinian people as a whole to remain disorganized and kept them, divided.

Within the village structure, power was divided according to wealth. Wealth was based for the most part on land holdings.\textsuperscript{31} The wealthier families decided what position the rest of the village would take on any given issue. This system worked mainly because the villagers, to a large extent, were illiterate and did not own a radio. They were politically uninformed. The villages were self-sufficient economically and otherwise, so there was no need for outside contact.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{30} I heard many of these stories first hand. It is also a matter of historical record. In touring Israel I learned that the site of the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem was once a Palestinian village.

\textsuperscript{31} See Abu-Lughod, \textit{Transformation of Palestine}, pp. 139-164.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
Each village operated as a unit. There was no internal structure or government within Palestine to bring the various different villages together. Oftentimes neighboring villages would not come together due to feuding between families or arguments over land. In 1948 the villages fought and fell alone. This village mentality was basically defensive, not offensive.\(^{33}\) They were able to ward off attacks for a short time and possibly to make short raids on Jewish settlements. There was no means or mentality for war or continued conflict.

The Palestinian community was not only divided by wealth, they were also divided by religion. The Christians in Palestine were resented for their wealth and success under the British mandate. Very few Palestinian Christians participated in any of the rebellions, which took place against British occupation and rule. The Christians were concentrated mainly in cities and towns and were better educated on the whole than the Muslim population at this time.\(^{34}\) The Muslim community lived in constant fear that they would be sold out to the British, or worse yet to the Jews, by their Christian cousins.

On November 29, 1947 the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into three allotments. The Palestinian’s were given three areas known today as the West Bank, the Gaza strip and the Golan Heights. There was to be an International zone, which included Jerusalem and the surrounding area. The rest would be given to the Jews; this included the Negev desert and a large portion of the coastline along the Mediterranean Sea.\(^{35}\) (See Map 1) It soon became clear that neither the Palestinian’s nor the Jews were completely satisfied with this arrangement.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., pp. 162-163.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., pp. 292-293.
On March 15, 1948 David Ben Gurion wrote, "it is now clear, without the slightest doubt, that were we to face the Palestinian’s alone everything would be all right. They, the decisive majority of them, do not want to fight us, and all of them together are unable to stand up to us, even at our present stage of our organization and equipment." Many Palestinian villages had, by this time, made pacts ensuring non-violence with the local Jewish settlements.

In April of 1948 Ben Gurion gave the first explicit orders to drive the Palestinian’s out of the whole area of Palestine. By May 14, 1948 there were two to three hundred thousand refugees, most of which had fled as a direct result of Jewish military activity. Most Arab inhabitants fled because they were terrified. On April 9, 1948 in Deir Yassin, just outside Jerusalem, two hundred and fifty four villagers were killed. Some of the villagers had been forced to parade through Jerusalem before members of the IZL murdered them.

Even before the declaration of the Independent Jewish State the policy of Israel was not to allow Palestinian’s to return once they had fled. As Benny Morris put it “it was a coalition government whose policy albeit undeclared and indirect, was to reduce as much as possible the Arab minority which would be left in the country and to make sure that as few refugees as possible would return.”

On May 15, 1948 war broke out in the newly formed Israel. Israel was invaded by Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Transjordan, and Egypt, who were attempting to come to the aid of the Palestinian’s, the majority of whom were now refugees. The Arab armies entered

36 See Fromkin, A Peace to End All Peace, p. 527.
37 IZL is the Israeli Zionist League.
Israel on multiple fronts. Although they initially managed to capture much of the country, by fall of 1948 Israel had recaptured most of its territory. When the war ended in early 1949, Israel occupied more territory than had been part of the original UN agreement\(^39\) (see Map 2).

In March of 1949 the Palestinian identity was completely erased as the area now known as the West Bank was renamed the Heshamite Kingdom of Jordan. A Palestinian delegation asked if they could participate in the armistice negotiations but they were refused. In March of 1950 King Abdallah of Jordan ruled that the word Palestine be removed from all maps and official statements. This is how the Palestinian’s first lost their identity.

The Jordanian government felt threatened by the number of Palestinian’s living within the kingdom of Jordan; they were worried about a shift in power due to the huge Palestinian population. The population of Jordan prior to 1948 was 430,000. After the acquisition of the West Bank the population more than doubled to 1,280,000; that translates into roughly 66% of the population being Palestinian.\(^40\) As a reaction the Jordanian government formed repressive policies against the West Bank. These policies were designed to stunt economic growth. From 1949 to 1967 industry fell from twelve to nine percent of the Gross National Product in the West Bank.\(^41\)

In July 1951 a Palestinian assassinated King Abdullah of Jordan.\(^42\) This act of violence signified the unrest of the Palestinian people, and was a warning of things to come. When Abdullah’s son came to power he set up a mass genocide pogrom against

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\(^41\) Ibid.

the Palestinian people. Two years later he resigned due to mental instability and in 1953 King Huessein came to power. Soon after this, anti-Heshmite riots broke out in the Kingdom of Jordan. In October of that same year Israeli soldiers invaded the village of Qibya, on the West Bank, and killed 66 villagers.\footnote{Ibid., p. 444.} Jordan had failed to protect them. This proved for many Palestinian's that Jordan had failed in its attempt to champion the Palestinian cause.

The Six-Day War began on June 6, 1967 and ended six days later. Although Israel was attacked on multiple fronts by different Arab armies, the Israeli army managed to conquer more territory than they had begun with. Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights (see Map 3). Although Israel offered to negotiate a peace agreement the Arab countries refused.\footnote{See Oren, Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East, pp. 307-309.} This has resulted in the longest occupation in the history of the modern world.

The idea of Palestine as a separate state emerged as a negative reaction to Zionism and Jordanian rule. After years of mistreatment by the Israeli government, as a result of Zionist goals, and a sense that their Arab brothers had abandoned them, the Palestinian people formed an alliance calling for an end to mistreatment.

Fatah\footnote{An Arabic word meaning victory.} held its first meeting in 1959. Abu lyyad wrote of the first meetings of Fatah in Kuwait: “On October 10, 1959, a small group of us met in a discreet house in Kuwait to hammer out the organizational structures of Fatah. More meetings with other participants took place over the following days, always in the greatest secrecy. There were fewer than twenty of us in all, representatives of underground groups from various Arab countries and beyond, coming together to centralize activities for the first time.
This limited congress marked the formal creation of what was to become the most powerful national liberation movement Palestine had ever known.\(^{46}\)

The first meeting of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) did not take place until 1964, five years after Fatah. The PLO was founded during the first meeting of the Palestinian National Council (PNC),\(^ {47}\) which took place over several days May 28 – June 2 at the Hotel Ambassador in East Jerusalem.\(^ {48}\) During this same conference 388 Palestinian delegates from all of the Arab countries, except for Saudi Arabia, voted to create the Palestinian National Fund (PNF) to help finance the PLO. The PNC also established the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA), in order to give young Palestinian’s military training.\(^ {49}\) They were sent to friendly Arab countries to be “organized into an army capable of defeating Israel”.

There was a strong Pan-Islam influence in the original covenant that was written at the 1964 meeting of the PNC. In Article one, it states “Palestine is the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people. It is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland and the Palestinian people are an integral part of the Arab nation.”\(^ {50}\) The Pan-Islamic ideals were due in part to a large number of representatives from other Arab countries present at the PNC meeting in East Jerusalem. These were forces that were looking to control and manipulate the movement to suit the purpose of the larger Arab world.

According to Arafat’s biographer, Alan Hart, the PNC is “more or less the Palestinian parliament in exile. It is the highest decision making body and the PLO is


\(^{48}\) See Livingston and Halevy, *Inside The PLO*, pp. 68-70.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., pp. 78-79.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., p. 69.
answerable to it." However the PNC meets too rarely to be effective and is mainly a propaganda base, as well as a democratic front for the PLO.

The Palestinian resistance movement became strong in Jordan. The Palestinian's made clear that they thought the overthrow of the Jordanian government was necessary for the recovery of Palestine. The PLO was established in 1964 in order to offer a tool that would address the 'Israel problem' without involving Egypt in a major war with Israel. The original charter calls for boundaries consistent with those during the British mandate, and for the overthrow of the Jordanian government. Jordan was seen as a product of European rule in the Middle East, the idea and boundaries of that are artificial.

King Husseinebicted the liberation movement from Jordan in 1971. They then moved their operations from Amman to Beirut. The name Lebanon soon became synonymous with terrorism. According to Israel's former director of military intelligence Aharon Nevling, Gamel Abdel Nasser initiated the creation of the PLO and the organization was established with the blessing of Nasser.

In the late 1970's Lebanon was entrenched in a civil war. The Lebanese government acted in support of the PLO and provided them with weapons. This allowed the PLO to attack Northern Israel. Israel was unable to stop them so in 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon. On June 6, 1982 Israeli troops moved across the Lebanon border pushing their way towards Beirut. As a result of the Israeli invasion Yasser Arafat was expelled from Lebanon in August of 1982. It was Arafat's expulsion from Lebanon that made him appear weak in the eyes of many PLO members as well as many others.

51 Ibid., p. 70.
53 Ibid., p. 51.
54 Ibid., p. 64.
Arafat returned to Lebanon after his expulsion. He set up headquarters in Tripoli, Lebanon where there were several nearby refugee camps whose inhabitants were mostly supporters of Arafat’s. Dissidents of the PLO challenged Arafat and invaded the refugee camps, as well as the town which held Arafat’s headquarters. As a result Arafat was forced to leave Lebanon for a second time. Arafat left with only four thousand loyal supporters. It was now clear that Arafat had lost his title as the undisputed leader of the Palestinian resistance movement.\textsuperscript{55}

In December of 1987 there was a traffic accident in Gaza involving an Israeli soldier and the deaths of a number of Palestinian’s. There were many who felt the soldier had acted intentionally. Overnight Palestinian’s rose up in what was to become the first Intifada or uprising.\textsuperscript{56} The Intifada was not only a political uprising; it was also a spiritual uprising, as well as a social phenomenon. It has served to empower the Palestinian people who, before this, were in a state of despondence. It could be said that the Intifada gave birth to, or at least new life to several Palestinian movements; among them was Hamas. The Intifada was the climax of Palestinian nationalism. The word Intifada in Arabic is defined as (1) to shudder, shiver; (2) to shake off, shake out; (3) to recover, recuperate. The root n\textsuperscript{f}ada means (1) to break with someone; (2) to refuse to have anything to do with; (3) to shed ones anxiety, to shake off ones sorrow, to shake off ones laziness.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., pp. 64-65.
\textsuperscript{56} Intifada is an Arabic word-meaning uprising.
The Kahane Movement

"For it is only vengeance that proves that there is a God in the world, there is Good and Evil and punishment for that evil. When the wicked kill and injustice reigns, surely the wicked cry out, "There is no God, for if there was, He would punish me." And the victim, in his agony, agrees. When there is no vengeance and punishment and the wicked reign, God is pushed from His throne; it is the greatest Hilul Hashem extant, it is "proof" that there is no God. And that is why the chapter of Psalms concludes, following the cry for rejoicing over vengeance: "And men shall say: 'Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, there is a God that judges in the earth.'" 57

-Rabbi Meir Kahane

Kahane is unlike any other figure in the Religious Zionist movement. His followers who are mainly located in Israel and America are sometimes referred to as Kahanists or Kahane's. Kahane himself was involved in and founded many right wing militant Zionist groups. The first group that Kahane founded was the JDL or Jewish Defense League. Long before the JDL, however Kahane was involved in militant activism. Perhaps the root of Kahane's interest in militant Zionism can be found in his childhood.

Kahane was born Martin David Kahane. He was delivered by c-section, on August 1, 1932 to Charles and Sonia Kahane. His family lived in a two family brick home in Brooklyn, where his father was a respected Rabbi in a large and influential synagogue. 58 His family was touched by tragedy when Kahane was still young. In March of 1938 several members of the Kahane family were traveling together by taxi in Jerusalem. They were on their way to a wedding when a Palestinian gunman opened fire. Five members of the Kahane family were killed including Charles Kahane's sister-in-law

Zipora, her mother and her one-year-old daughter, Rebecca, who was found suffocated to death underneath her mother’s dead body. There were six people killed in what is referred to as the taxi massacre, five of them were Kahane family members.\(^{59}\)

Moshe Kahane, whose mother was one of the victims of the taxi massacre, joined the Irgun\(^{60}\) and became a high-ranking intelligence officer. Moshe Kahane helped to plan the 1946 bombing of the British headquarters at the King David Hotel in which 91 people died and 45 were injured. The taxi massacre also affected the Kahane’s of Brooklyn. According to Robert I. Friedman; “There is no question that the massacre in Palestine traumatized the Kahane family in Brooklyn. ‘I think this is the time Meir developed a hatred of the Arabs,’ Sonia told me. That is hardly surprising since Mordechai and Charles talked about it frequently at the Sabbath table.”\(^{61}\)

Charles Kahane invited many militant Zionists to his Sabbath table, among them Yosef Burg who became the head of the National Religious Party in Israel. Manachem Begin was also a dinner guest at the Kahane family Sabbath table. Begin eventually became Prime Minister of Israel, but in the 1930’s and 40’s Begin directed Irgun’s terrorist war against the British. Ze’ev Vladimir Jabotinsky was another frequent guest at the Kahane’s Brooklyn home.\(^{62}\) Jabotinsky was leader of the Revisionist Zionist movement.\(^{63}\) Revisionist Zionism refers to a movement that radicalized traditional Zionism.\(^{64}\)

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\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 21.

\(^{60}\) Irgun is short for Irgun Z’vai Le’umi or the National Military Organization. Irgun was formed by groups of Revisionist Youth (revisionist refers to revisionist zionism). It was dedicated to active reprisals against Arab marauders.

\(^{61}\) See Friedman, The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane from FBI informant to Knesset member, p. 23.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., p. 25.


\(^{64}\) See Sacher, A History of Israel From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time, pp. 186-187.
Charles' younger brother Nachman said of his father, “Our father had a great connection to the underground in Palestine that dominated the spirit of our house.”65 By the mid 1930's Charles Kahane had become one of Irgun's key United States operatives. Charles Kahane raised money for Irgun, he also purchased and smuggled weapons for the Irgun.66

According to Meir Kahane's uncle “Meir was a revolutionary from a young age. Even as a child he had a messianic complex, he had a sense that he was destined to play a historical role in the revival of the Jewish people.”67 In 1946 after his Bar Mitzvah at the encouragement of his father, Kahane joined Betar. Betar was a youth movement that prepared its members for life in Palestine. In 1938 Betar had 78,000 members in 26 countries. Betar put an emphasis on paramilitary training and education. Betar became Kahane's eventual model for the JDL.

Betar considered Jabotinsky as their leader.68 “While its leadership revered Jabotinsky as man and leader, the movement veered further to the right than he himself would have preferred and at times came dangerously close to emulating the Giavanni Fascisti of Italy.”69 Meir Kahane was first arrested at the age of fifteen when he led an attack against Ernest Bevin the British Foreign Minister.70 Kahane was charged with assault and given a suspended sentence. After the creation of Israel on May 15, 1948 the American Betar movement became a “right wing, pro Israel activist youth group”71

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65 See Freidman, The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane from FBI informant to Knesset member, p. 24.
66 Ibid., p. 24.
67 Ibid., p. 35.
68 See Sacher, A History of Israel From The Rise of Zionism to Our Time, p. 187.
69 Ibid., p. 187.
70 See Freidman, The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane from FBI informant to Knesset member, p. 9.
71 Ibid., p. 37.
One of Kahane’s associates from Betar spoke about him to Robert Friedman: “In Betar we talked about going to Israel to fight with Irgun. I can’t remember Kahane ever saying he was going to go. I think it’s important that though Kahane fantasized about fighting for the Jewish State. He stayed in America, went to college and Law School. It’s ironic how the people he attacks in Israel today are the people who created the State, fought for and defended the State. He claims he is the embodiment of Israel, yet he has never done anything positive for it.”

Kahane graduated in 1954 with a BA in Political Science from Brooklyn College. In 1957 Kahane received a Law degree from the New York Law School. That same year he also received an MA in International Affairs from New York University. In 1957 Kahane was also ordained as a Rabbi from the Orthodox Yeshiva Mirrer in Brooklyn. Kahane met his wife Libby in 1955. They were married just one year later in 1956. Libby was only eighteen when they were married. Kahane’s mother Sonia tried to warn Libby that she was marrying a revolutionary and advised her to try and steer her son away from a life of militancy. Libby and Meir eventually had four children together.

In 1958 Kahane was hired to work at the Howard Beach Jewish Community Center synagogue. He was soon asked to leave for preaching a strict hard-line religious doctrine to the community’s youth. The Brooklyn Daily Newspaper asked to interview Kahane about the Howard Beach Synagogue. The publisher was sympathetic to Kahane. He also happened to own a paper called the Jewish Press. The publisher asked Kahane to write an article. “The article called the ‘Miracle of Howard Beach’, about how a young

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72 Ibid., p. 44.
73 Ibid., p. 45.
74 Ibid., p. 47.
rabbibroughtreligiontoignorantassimilatedJews,turndKahaneintosomethingofafolkheroinNewYork’slargeOrthodoxJewishCommunity.”

Kahane asked the publisher for a job; he was made a sports writer for the Jewish Press. Kahane soon began writing feature articles and a column called ‘small voice’. The Jewish Press allowed Kahane a voice that reached into thousands of Jewish households. “The Jewish Press gave him entrée into tens of thousands of Jewish living rooms every week, where he played on the fears that Jews have carried with them for two thousand years.”

Kahane spent the next several years between Washington and New York. He was an FBI informant against Communism. He was active in a campaign in favor of the war in Vietnam. He was a known womanizer. He often used a fake name, Michael King. He spent much of his time with Joseph Churba who had connections with the CIA and Israeli intelligence. Churba later went on to become a Middle East specialist for Air Force Intelligence, a foreign affairs advisor for Ronald Reagan, and a senior policy advisor for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

On May 24, 1968 Kahane took out an advertisement in The Jewish Press for Jews who were interested in Jewish pride. The first meeting of the JDL took place just a few weeks later in the West Side Jewish Center on West 34th Street in Manhattan where Kahane’s cousin was a Rabbi. The meeting took place at eight thirty in the evening on June 18, 1968. There were 35 people in attendance. The next day Kahane opened the first JDL office. Churba helped finance the JDL.

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25 Ibid., p. 51.
26 Ibid., p. 86.
27 Ibid., p. 56.
28 Ibid., p. 59.
The JDL was originally formed in order to fight black anti-Semitism. Kahane wanted to show a different image of the Jew. He felt that Jews were too often portrayed as “weak and vulnerable” and he was determined to change that to “mighty fighter who strikes back against tyrants”.\textsuperscript{79} The JDL often resorted to threats and violence, which only increased the tensions between Jews and African Americans in New York City.

In 1969 Palestinian terrorists led by Leila Khaled hijacked TWA flight 840 from Los Angeles to Tel Aviv. In retaliation three members of the JDL broke into PLO offices in the United States and stole information from their files. The JDL handed this information to an Israeli official. “Thus began a long, fruitful relationship between the JDL and various Israeli intelligence organizations.”\textsuperscript{80} As Jabotinsky’s heir as head of the revisionist movement, Menechem Begin, though not publicly supportive of Kahane, admired the JDL and felt it was doing good work in the United States.\textsuperscript{81}

In December of 1969 the JDL began to switch gears. It was during a secret meeting between Kahane, Prime Minister Yitzak Shamir, and Tehiya party leader Guela Cohen that the focus of JDL was moved away from racial tension in New York City and towards fighting for Soviet Jews. “Despite their vehement denunciations of Kahane in recent years, the two (Shamir and Cohen) were part of a secret group that helped make the militant leader of the Jewish Defense League an international figure and a force to be reckoned with in Israel.”\textsuperscript{82}

On December 29, 1969 Kahane kicked off his campaign against the Soviet Union. At one pm the JDL pulled off three simultaneous attacks. At the TASS (Soviet press)

\textsuperscript{79} Rabbi Meir Kahane, \textit{The Story of the Jewish Defense League} (Jerusalem: Institute for Publication of the Writings of Rabbi Meir Kahane, 2000), p. 83.
\textsuperscript{80} See Freidman, \textit{The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane from FBI informant to Knesset member}, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., pp. 98-100.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 106.
office in New York City, Kahane and others spray-painted the walls with slogans. At the Intourist (Soviet tourist agency), the JDL members took over the office and locked the doors. The biggest of the three was Aeroflot (Soviet airline); JDL members boarded a plane from Moscow. While one JDL member spray-painted the cabin with Hebrew slogans two other JDL members chained themselves to the front wheel of the plane and chanted “Am Yisrael Chai” or “the children of Israel live”.

On December 30, 1969, according to Kahane’s own words, 300 JDL members marched towards the Soviet Mission where a riot broke out when police tried to stop the protestors. Kahane claimed that he himself led the crowd into the police blockade.

Kahane issued a press release the following morning. “Our attacks upon the institutions of Soviet tyranny in America represent the first step in our campaign to bring the issue of oppressed Soviet Jews and other religious groups to the attention of an apathetic public and indifferent news media. We have pleaded, implored and tried the traditional methods of diplomacy. They have failed to open the gates. There is little remaining for us to do but heed the requests of the Russian Jews themselves who have commanded us to shake the world.”

It was during this time in the life of the JDL that they became responsible for making famous the phrase “Never again” which is still seen today on pins, bumper stickers, and T-shirts. “Never again” has become the slogan of the holocaust survivors. Another catch phrase that owes its roots to the JDL is “every Jew a .22”. This slogan

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84 Ibid., pp 2-3.
86 “Never again” is a reference to the Holocaust. “Never again” meant that, never will we allow another Holocaust against our people.
87 “Every Jew a .22” is a reference to arms. A “.22” means a .22 caliber weapon.
was meant to emphasize that Jews could no longer afford passivity, that they must become active in their own defense.\textsuperscript{88}

By 1971 the JDL had more than ten thousand members in the United States, England, France, and South Africa. According to Friedman, "...it became harder for Kahane to control. Soon handfuls of adventurous youths were carrying out violent operations without consulting the JDL leader."\textsuperscript{89} Kahane’s message was beginning to take on a life of its own. Kahane was also becoming a pop culture icon, particularly among the Orthodox Jewish community.

On May 12, 1971 Kahane was arrested for conspiracy to manufacture explosives, a charge for which Kahane received four years probation. The following day he announced that the JDL would be joining forces with the Italian American Civil Rights League or IACRL\textsuperscript{90}, which Joseph Columbo Senior, a known mob boss, had founded.\textsuperscript{91} Kahane and Columbo were friends and when Columbo was shot his sons went to the JDL to ask for help assassinating their father’s rival, whom they believed was responsible for their father’s shooting.

"By Autumn of 1971 JDL’s attacks against Soviet targets in America had become so numerous that President Nixon became concerned that Kahane would wreck the strategic Arms Limitations Talks."\textsuperscript{92} Kahane and the JDL were under extreme pressure; many senior members had been arrested. Many more had moved to Israel to escape facing prosecution in the United States. It was in this environment that Kahane made the

\textsuperscript{89} See Friedman, The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane from FBI informant to Knesset member, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{90} IACRL stands for Italian-American Civil Rights League.
\textsuperscript{91} See Friedman, The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane from FBI informant to Knesset member, pp. 122-125.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 117.
decision to move to Israel in 1971. Kahane did not leave the United States without stopping to see his friend Columbo, who remained brain dead from the bullet, which had pierced his skull.93

Upon his arrival in Israel Kahane was courted by several different political parties. Begin offered Kahane a seat in his party, Herut. Josef Berg who had been a dinner guest at his parent’s home in Brooklyn when Kahane was growing up, also offered Kahane a place in the National Religious Party. Kahane turned down all party offers because he did not want to be forced to vote along party lines. Kahane wanted his own party.

After having formed and then abandoned two other youth groups in Israel, Kahane returned to the JDL, which he now brought to Israel. “But while Cohen, Shamir and others applauded the JDL’s fits of violence in America, they were enraged when Kahane imported the same tactics into Israel. Despite promising his patrons that the Israeli JDL would be a non-violent educational organization, it was soon firebombing Christian churches and bookshops in Jerusalem and staging violent demonstrations against a sect of black American Hebrews94 that had settled in Dimona.”95

On November 1, 1971 Kahane’s Israeli JDL staged its first demonstration against Palestinian’s. The mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kolleck, was quoted in the Jerusalem Post in response to JDL’s first demonstration: “They are more unwelcome and more dangerous to Israel than a whole network of Fatah agents…. As far as I’m concerned

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93 Ibid., pp. 132-134.
94 The Black Hebrews immigrated to Israel in the early 1970’s claiming the law of return. Israel initially allowed them in. The majority of the Black Hebrews were African Americans who had created their own unique form of Judaism. Black Hebrews are no longer allowed to immigrate to Israel by claiming the Law of Return.
95 See Freidman, The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane from FBI informant to Knesset member, p. 142.
Rabbi Kahane is an unwanted import and you can have him back as quickly as possible."96

Kahane unleashed his plan to remove all of the Palestinian’s from Israel in a press conference on March 1, 1973 in Tel Aviv.97 Kahane had already been tried in Israel for arms smuggling, sedition and conspiracy. He was also at odds with JDL members in the United States who had accused him of stealing JDL funds. Regardless Kahane began his first campaign for the Knesset98 that same year. “Campaigning under the banner of JDL, Kahane was the first politician in modern Israel to run on a platform that openly called for the expulsion of Israel’s Arabs.”99

Kahane lost this bid for a Knesset seat. He received only about 13,000 votes, which was not enough for a seat. In July of 1974 Kahane began setting the stage to convert his followers towards his new organization, which would be Kach.100 Kach was to be the vehicle for Kahane’s messianic message. In 1977 during the Knesset elections Kach received less than 4500 votes. In 1981 Kach again failed to win a seat on the Knesset. Then in 1984 the Central Election Committee ruled that Kach could not participate in the elections. Kach appealed to the High Court of Justice and won. In the 1984 elections the Kach movement finally won a seat on the Knesset with 26,000 votes. This is how Kahane finally became a member of the Knesset. It did not take long for Kahane to announce that Kach would not support any government that did not advocate the expulsion of Arabs from Israel. In 1985, Israel amended its election laws to

96 Ibid., p. 143.
97 Ibid., p. 156.
98 The Knesset is the Israeli version of our Senate.
99 See Freidman, The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane from FBI informant to Knesset member, p. 168.
100 Kach is a Hebrew word meaning “Only Thus.”
disqualify parties that oppose democracy and incite racism. Kach was banned from subsequent elections.

In November 1990, while speaking to followers at a New York hotel, Kahane was shot and killed. El-Sayyid Nosair, an Egyptian Islamist who has been linked to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing plot, was convicted on weapons charges in connection with Kahane’s killing.\textsuperscript{101} Kahane said in his last speech, “If you love Jews enough, you say the painful things, which will save them. No concern what they will do to you, that’s not relevant...”\textsuperscript{102}

Kahane was buried in a park that bears his name inside the settlement Kiryat Arba just outside of Hebron. On a stone marker near his grave it reads, “In memory of Rabbi Meir Kahane, a lover of Israel, a giant in Torah, heroic in deeds, murdered in sanctification of the divine Name.”\textsuperscript{103}

Kahane’s death did not deter his movement; in fact since his death several splinter groups have emerged. After his assassination in 1990 an extreme subgroup of Kahane was formed. The group is called Kahane Chai or Kahane Lives and was formed by his son Binyamin Kahane. In December 2000, Palestinian gunmen killed Binyamin Kahane and his wife in a drive-by shooting in the West Bank. The killers seem to have been targeting settlers in general, not the Kahane’s in particular; a Palestinian militant arrested in connection with the shooting said it was “luck” that they killed Binyamin Kahane.\textsuperscript{104}

According to Kahanist philosophy, God manifests himself on earth through the Jewish people. The central theme or mission of Kahanism is kiddish hashem, or

sanctifying God’s name. Rather than subscribing to the Jewish belief of sanctification through martyrdom, the Kahanist sanctifies God’s name by killing the enemy, thereby revealing God’s power. Kahanists view all enemies of the Jews as Amalek. Amalek was a tribe, which attacked the Jews as they wandered through the dessert in the time of Moses. The bible calls for the annihilation of Amalek. Each generation it is believed that a new Amalek emerges to defeat the Jews. In the past generation Amalek was the Nazi’s. Today Amalek has manifested as the Arabs or more specifically the Palestinian’s.

Followers of Kahane believe that when the Jews finally defeat Amalek then evil will disappear from the world and the messiah will come. “It is a great mitzvah to take the revenge of the righteous and humble the evildoer. Whoever forgoes or rejects such an opportunity is cruel, and he denies belief in G-d.”

Perhaps the most deadly and most infamous attack ever carried out by a member of Kahane or any of its offshoots was the Hebron massacre. It was February twenty fifth 1994 when Doctor Baruch Goldstein pushed his way through the mosque in Hebron with a Galil assault rifle strapped across his body. He opened fire on Palestinian worshippers as they knelt in prayer killing dozens and wounding more. Goldstein was also killed during the attack.

The man who carried out these attacks, Doctor Baruch Goldstein, was born in Brooklyn New York. Goldstein first became involved with Kahane while attending Yeshiva medical school. Following his graduation in 1983 he followed Kahane to Kiryat Arba, a radical settlement in the West Bank. Before he arrived in Israel, Goldstein was already a fully formed racist having called for the expulsion of all Arabs from Palestine.

During the war with Lebanon, Goldstein was removed from service in the Israeli military because he refused to treat Arab victims.

Goldstein was known in Kiryat Arba for being a “soft spoken and pious man.” He was considered to be a tzadik or holy man. He was known and beloved for his selfless medical service. Every morning he immersed himself in the “mikvah” or holy bath. When Kahane was assassinated in 1990 Doctor Goldstein was completely devastated. He vowed to avenge Kahane’s murder.106 “When Goldstein opened fire on the crowd, in his mind he was not killing innocent men at prayer, he was killing Amman and Hitler, sanctifying God’s name by avenging Amalek.”107

Residents of Kiryat Arba celebrated Goldstein’s deeds. Goldstein was buried near his beloved Rabbi Kahane and his grave has become a religious pilgrimage sight. At Goldstein’s eulogy the chief rabbi of Kiryat Arba, Dov Lior, proclaimed Goldstein to be a hero who embodied the highest Jewish morals.108 Kiryat arba is the only settlement to ever elect a Kach representative into town council, Baruch Goldstein. This is the only settlement where Kach is considered to be mainstream.

After the 1994 Hebron massacre the Israeli government was forced to examine the Kahane movement more closely and as a result the Kahane movement and the groups associated with it were put on the Israeli list of terrorist organizations.109 Up until this point Israel had a much looser position on right wing Israeli militant activity. Baruch Goldstein forced the government to reexamine this issue and take a tougher stance on Jewish extremism.

107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
The United States government has also put Kahane on a list of terrorist organizations. The State Department’s designation of the two groups as foreign terrorist organizations makes it illegal for Americans to fund them; nonetheless, U.S. officials suspect that Kahal and Kahane Chai receive money from sympathizers in the United States and Europe. In January 2001, the FBI raided the headquarters of a Brooklyn group that maintains a Kahanist Web site in search of documents linking them with Kahal or Kahane Chai. 110

Kahane.org had this to say, “The recent designation of Kahane.org and other Kahane sites as foreign terrorist organizations by the US State Department is another one-sided anti-Jewish, decree passed by the blatantly anti-Israel State Dept. This recent designation will definitely go down in history as one of the most irrational and obscene decisions ever carried out by the US government.” 111

Some of Meir Kahane’s former associates remain active in the United States, Israel and Europe; in December 2001, two JDL leaders in California were charged with planning bomb attacks on a mosque, a Muslim advocacy organization, and the offices of an Arab-American congressman. 112 Yigal Amir, who assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, was known to have connections within the Kahane movement. Binyamin Kahane would not condemn Rabin’s murder and said, “a person could understand Amir.” 113

Kahane’s death did not end the Kahane movement as many people predicted it would. Instead Kahanism has continued to thrive as a philosophy. Kahane paved the

110 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
way for Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon among others. “Attracting public attention with his demagoguery, his flagrant appeals to racism and mob intimidation, and his eventual 1984 electoral success, Meir Kahane filled an entirely unintentional role. It was that of diversion from the Techiya party’s much larger delegation of five Knesset members... The image they (Tehiya) projected, in common with that of Gush Emunim religious spokesmen, surely was the opposite of moderation. By contrast to Kahane, however, it appeared to the Israeli public at least to be one of civility.”

114 The Tehiya was formed as a political party completely devoted to the de-legitimization of the Camp David Accords.
115 See Sacher, A History of Israel From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time, p. 929.
The Hamas Movement

Palestinian’s have experienced a growth in religious extremism over the past few decades and Hamas has been part of that growth. It was not until after years of Israeli occupation that fundamentalist religion began to take hold. Hamas was poised to take off before the beginning of the Intifada in 1987. "The intifada has transformed the Islamic movement in the occupied territories into a major force that has become able to shake up the existing balance of political power in the Palestinian society." The reasons for this growth in fundamentalism were the same as the reasons that tensions were building up amongst Palestinian’s in the years leading up to the intifada. Among these reasons were, the exile of the PLO from Lebanon in 1982 and the harsh treatment of Palestinian’s living in the West Bank and Gaza by the Israeli government. Another factor was the rising popularity of the ideas expressed by Kahane and other extremists, including the idea of transfer.

Perhaps the most important change that has occurred over the past two decades was that there was an entire generation of Palestinian’s that had grown up under Israeli occupation. They did not have the same fear of the Israeli army that their parents and grandparents had. There was less to lose and everything to gain by confronting the occupying power.

119 See Shapiro, Lebanon, p. 10.
120 See Hroud, Hamas: Political Thought and Practice, p. 37.
The mayor of Gaza, Rashad al-Shawwa, had this to say about the climate in the occupied territories in a radio interview on December 10, 1987: “One must expect these things after twenty years of debilitating occupation. People have lost hope. They are frustrated and don’t know what to do. They have given up hoping Israel will give them their rights. The Arab states are unable to do anything, and they feel that the PLO, which is their representative, also has failed.”\textsuperscript{121}

Hamas is an offshoot of a much older group known as the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood began in Isma‘iliyya, Egypt in March of 1928. The founder of the organization was Hasan al-Banna. The goal of the Muslim Brotherhood was to build an Islamic society based on Islamic Law or shari‘a.\textsuperscript{122} During the first few years after the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood, however, they were mainly concerned with expanding the membership of the group.\textsuperscript{123}

“Banna and selected deputies pursued this goal by direct contact, touring the countryside on weekends and during vacations, preaching most usually in the mosques but also in the homes, clubs, and other meeting places of the people. The use of mosques gave the speakers the legitimacy and respectability they needed. Direct communications with the people in their homes, at their work, and in their places of leisure added to the legitimacy the quality of sincerity and the personal touch. Within four years there were branches along the eastern edge of the Delta in Isma‘iliyya, Port Sa‘id, Suez, and abu-
Suwayr, and on the western edge as far as Shubra Khit; there was also minor contact with
Cairo.  

The Muslim Brotherhood had a policy of gradual Islamicization. The relationship
between the Muslim Brotherhood and Palestine was first established in 1935 when the
brother of Hasan al-Banna, Abd-al-Rahman al Sa’ati, traveled to Palestine. Sa’ati toured
Palestine, Lebanon and Syria spreading the message of the Muslim Brotherhood.  
During his tour he stopped in Jerusalem where he met with Hajj Amin al-Hussseini.
Aside from being the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hussseini was also the head of the
Higher Islamic Council. The relationship between Palestine and the Brotherhood was
limited over the next few years to letters mainly between Hussseini and Sa’ati.  

Perhaps the first formal connection between the Brotherhood and Palestine was
the formation by the Brotherhood of the General Central Committee to Aid Palestine.
This committee was formed in 1936 and headed by Hasan al-Binna. The purpose of this
committee was to protest against Britain on behalf of the Palestinian’s during the
Palestinian revolt of 1936. During this revolt against British occupation in Palestine the
Brotherhood also carried out propaganda on behalf of the Palestinian’s. They also
raised money for the Palestinian cause and issued equipment and supplies to help the
Palestinian’s. 

"Some studies take the presence of Palestinian delegates to the fifth Convention
of the Brotherhood, held in Aleppo in 1944, as an indication of the presence of a Muslim

124 Ibid., p. 9.
126 See Abu Amr, Islamie Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza, p. 1.
128 See Abu Amr, Islamie Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza, p. 1.
129 See Mitchell, The Society of the Muslim Brothers, p. 55.
Brotherhood organization in Palestine in the period 1943-44. However, the first official branch of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Palestine, according to Brotherhood veterans, was established in Gaza after the Second World War. It was headed by Hajj Zafer al-Shawwa. Later, the Brotherhood’s branches in Gaza grew to four: one belonging to the administrative office, another in al-Rimal, a third in Harat al-Zaitunah, and a fourth in Harat al-Darraj. There were other branches in the Gaza Strip as well.130

The Brotherhood chose to have its Palestine headquarters in Jerusalem and moved its central office there with a ceremony on May 6, 1946.131 The Brotherhood has continued to play a strong role in the politics of the region ever since. The influence of the Brotherhood has been felt on multiple levels through all of the conflicts between Israel and the Arab world. A distinction can be drawn between the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza and those who exist in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Egypt.

“This discrepancy between the relative effectiveness of the Brethren in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip may have been due to the increased independence the latter enjoyed, a consequence of the lack of organic links between the Gaza branch and the Brotherhood in either Egypt or Jordan.” The independence of movements such as the Brotherhood, HAMAS, or Fateh has increased today with the erection of the security fence surrounding Gaza. “Hence, Gazan Brothers stood at the forefront of military and political engagement. More than one study maintains that the Brotherhood ‘emerged as the foremost political movement in the Gaza strip until 1955.’”132

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Muslim Brotherhood has never wavered on its stand on the issue of Palestine. The Brotherhood feels that

130 See Hroud. Hamas: Political Thought and Practice, p. 15.
131 Ibid. p. 15.
132 Ibid. p. 23.
Palestine is the property of the Arab people in general and the Palestinian’s in particular. The Brotherhood opposes the establishment of the State of Israel in any portion of that land. To recognize any Jewish State in the land of Israel is to endorse the loss of Arab lands to an invading force. For this reason the Muslim Brotherhood will not endorse the PLO, which has recognized the State of Israel by attempting to engage in a peace agreement that concedes former Palestinian lands to the Israeli State.

The word Hamas is an Arabic acronym for Harakat al-muqawamah al-Islamiyya, or the Islamic Resistance Movement. In December of 1987, Hamas began militant operations this date coincided with the beginning of the first Intifada. Hamas began operating primarily in the Gaza Strip. Throughout the Intifada Hamas gained momentum and expanded its activity into the West Bank and eventually became the dominant Islamic fundamentalist movement in the occupied territories. Hamas states that its first priority is Jihad for the liberation of Palestine and Hamas takes as part of that Jihad the desire to establish an Islamic Palestine that stretches from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.

"The formation of Hamas almost coincided with the outbreak of the Intifada. This is why Hamas made 8 of December 1987 the official date for its emergence, although its first communiqué was not released until several days later. This temporal coincidence really indicates a remarkable degree of prior causal interaction of the two events. This is not to imply that the turn by the Muslim Brotherhood to active resistance

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133 See Abu Amr, Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza, p. 23.
134 ibid., pp. 28-29.
137 www.ict.org.il/.
against the Israeli occupation precipitated the intifada, but it was an auxiliary causal factor for popular rebellion. In a sense, the joint eruption of the intifada and the emergence of Hamas was the culmination of two parallel, but not separate, curves of changes, one national and one partisan.\(^{138}\)

The Intifada brought the Palestinian people together for the first time. Historically there had always been a certain level of tension and fighting between different political factions among Palestinian’s. There had also been a history of leaders exploiting the population for personal gain. The Intifada was the first time that the Palestinian’s had moved together as a single unit without any guidance from any leaders. It was a completely spontaneous uprising whose main participants were the youth.

The main platform Hamas used was education through mosques, schools, and universities. Hamas formed during the Intifada for several reasons. Demonstrations had swept the people out of their houses and into the streets, including members of the Muslim brotherhood. The Brotherhood quickly realized that the Intifada had changed the face of Palestinian nationalism. They knew that whoever was able to influence the masses would gain the most power. The members of the Brotherhood knew that they now had enough popular support to withstand attacks by the Israeli army who would never be able to completely eradicate them.

Throughout the Intifada one of the main weapons against the Israeli government has been a boycott on Israeli goods. Within the first six months of the Intifada, exports to Palestine decreased almost fifty percent. There has also been an increase in cooperation among Palestinian’s. There has been a decrease in individual spending. Many aid programs have been set up to help areas that are under curfew or siege by the Israeli

\(^{138}\) See Hroud, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*, p. 36.
army. National interests have begun to take precedent over personal interests. Self-sacrifice brings honor under the Intifada.

Debate began within the Muslim Brotherhood at the start of the first Intifada. One faction saw continuing cooperation with the Israeli's as a de-legitimization force; while another thought that Israeli support was necessary if the infrastructural and welfare program, an underlying part of their cultural program, was to continue. This resulted in a compromise: the formation of an independent body. Hamas would be the Brotherhood’s informal link to the Intifada with personnel drawn largely from the mujama. 139 Without formal ties to the resistance the Brotherhood would be protected in case the Intifada was crushed in the near future.

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin founded Hamas along with six other men at a meeting at Yasin’s home on December 9, 1987. 140 The six men present were ‘Abd al-Fattah Dukhan, Muhammed Shama’, Ibrahim al-Yazuri, Issa al-Najjar, Salah Shehadeh (from Bayt Hanun) and ‘Abd al-Aziz Rantisi. Other leaders included Sheikh Khalil Qawqa, Ismail al-Ashar, Mahmud Zahhar, Musa Abu Marzuq, Ibrahim Ghusa, Khalid Mish’al141 who were active leaders and members of the Islamic Center in the Gaza Strip.

On December 14 Hamas issued its first communiqué in the form of a pamphlet. 142 “Let the Jews understand that despite the chains, prisons, and detention centers, despite the suffering of our people under their criminal occupation, despite the blood and tears, our people’s perseverance and steadfastness shall overcome their oppression and arrogance. Let them know that their policy of violence shall beget naught but a more

140 See Abu Amr, Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza, p. 63.
142 See Abu Amr, Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza, p. 63.
powerful counter policy by our sons and youths who love the eternal life in heaven more than our enemies love this life. 143

In 1988 Hamas began officially acting as the military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood. One of the goals that Hamas created for itself was to wipe out all Israeli informants or Palestinian “collaborators”, as they were called. Collaborators were often taken to specific areas to be killed execution style. The Israeli army has walled off as many of these areas as they can. As you walk through the narrow corridors of the old cities of Ramala, Hebron and Nablus, you may see what look like newly bricked walls with a blue Star of David painted on them. These walls hide rooms and courtyards where informants were murdered, and not just by Hamas. 144 The most successful campaign against informants was actually carried out by Abu Jihad 145 who was an advisor to Yasser Arafat. Abu Jihad had an uncanny ability to discover informants. As soon as the Israeli army found one, he would soon be found dead. That was one of the motivating factors behind his assassination 146

Aside from killing informants Hamas has also been responsible for hundreds if not thousands of disturbances throughout the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, and Israel. Just a few months after the start of the first Intifada, HAMAS was already a top player in the politics of the occupied Territories.

Hamas is divided into two branches; these are the political and military branches. 147 The political branch directs Hamas’s social network. The political wing,

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143 See Hroud, Hamas: Political Thought and Practice, p. 265.
144 When I lived in Israel in 1993-1995 I was shown several of these by friends. I was also taken inside some of these rooms; the locals know where they are and if there is still a way in.
145 Abu Jihad means father of the holy war in Arabic.
146 See Livingston and Halevy, Inside the PLO.
staffed by Yassin's closest allies (Shanab, Yazuri, Rantisi, Zahhar) produced leaflets, raised funds especially in Gulf, recruited members and co-opted mosques.\textsuperscript{148} The military branch, 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam brigades, began as the smallest wing and combines intelligence gathering and militant operations.

The Izz al-Din al-Qassam brigades gather information about Palestinian's suspected of collaboration, and pursue those who have violated Islamic law. Izzedine al-Qassam squads are comprised of a few dozen activists that are organized into independent operations units. The intelligence apparatus is called al-Majd,\textsuperscript{149} and is under Yihyah Sanwar, and Ruhi Mushtaha. Al-Majd was created for internal policing, which includes rooting out informants, especially in Gaza. Hamas operates through a cell system, which is very difficult for Israel to penetrate. The cell system of operation also allows for highly autonomous functioning.\textsuperscript{150}

When a Hamas suicide bomber blew up a bus, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam brigades took credit for it, but a political supporter would not take responsibility. In other words, each section acts independently of each other. In fact, each section will drive away members who don't like that section. During the Beit Lid massacre, many people were upset with Hamas and Hamas supporters were turned away because of what they did.

There have been two Intifadas. We are now talking about the first Intifada, which began in the late nineteen eighties and ended with the Oslo accords. After it became more and more clear that the Oslo Accords had failed, the people rose up once again and created the second Intifada, which is currently still going on in Israel today. There are several similarities between the two Intifadas.

\textsuperscript{148} www.mideastweb.org/palestinianparties.htm#HAMAS.html.
\textsuperscript{149} This means glory in Arabic.
\textsuperscript{150} www.mideastweb.org/palestinianparties.htm#HAMAS.html.
One similarity is that they both were primarily youth movements. By youth I mean people under the age of eighteen. During the first Intifada these youth were known as the “occupation generation” because they were the first generation to have grown up entirely under Israeli occupation. They grew up under the PLO and were familiar with the system of occupational rule. They were highly aware of their political situation. Most of them grew up speaking Hebrew. Unlike their parents the occupation generation was not afraid of the Israeli army and they were not afraid to fight.

The second similarity is that the Palestinian’s under both Intifada’s had few weapons. The main weapons used by Palestinian’s are stones. It is the stone that symbolizes the discontent of the people. It is symbolic of the human spirit of the Intifada. During the first year of the first Intifada 20,000 Palestinian’s were arrested, more than 300 killed, and 3,500 – 20,000 injured by the Israeli army. During this time, Palestinian’s killed 11 Israeli soldiers and civilians.\(^{151}\)

The role of women continues to change under the Intifada. Palestine was a traditionally male dominated society; women have always been thought to be dependent on male guidance and protection. The Intifada has helped to liberate the women of the occupied territories. Most of the women’s groups in existence today have been established since the first Intifada began in 1987. Women have been allowed to take an active role, or at least a more active role, in the resistance movement. Women have more freedom now to partake in demonstrations. Just this past year we saw the first female suicide bomber.

Hamas has become one of the most extremist organizations in the West Bank. Their ideals are a combination of Pan Arabism and Palestinian Nationalism. They don’t

\(^{151}\) See Livingston and Halevy, Inside the PLO.
believe in territorial compromises: "the soil of Palestine is sacred". The people of Hamas believe that all of Palestine must be liberated from Jewish control. Hamas is often its own worst enemy. It is this unwillingness to compromise, just as the Kahane's are unwilling to compromise, that makes them impossible to satisfy.

The January 18, 1990 edition of the *Jordanian Daily* newspaper stated, "Hamas believes that the liberation of all of Palestine from the river to the sea is the highest possible strategic goal. The movement believes, however, that this does not preclude liberating parts of Palestine by force or any other method, as long as this solution does not include the recognition of the legality of the Zionist presence in Palestine. Nor should this solution revoke the right of the Palestinian and of the Arab and Islamic nations to liberate all of Palestinian homeland and destroy the foreign Zionist entity." 152

Hamas believes that the only solution to the present conflict with Israel is Jihad, which means holy war in Arabic, in other words a violent struggle to the death. The ideal Palestinian State, according to Hamas would be one of peace and tranquillity, where the Muslim Brotherhood rules. The Hamas movement describes jihad in a very broad sense; it is "not limited to bearing arms. The struggle against the enemy, with an appropriate word, a good article, or a helpful book; through support and assistance when done in the name of victory for the flag of Allah – are all jihad for the sake of God." 153

Inquiries into the funding of such terrorist organizations as Hamas have found that most of the money comes from the Middle East and the United States of America. Money is given to those who are homeless by organizations such as the United Nations. Businessmen and other sources also give money to schools and religious groups. It is

153 See Livingston and Halevy, *Inside the PLO*. 

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then sometimes given to groups such as Hamas. In most cases the businessmen who donate money to such groups and charities are acquitted in court if charges are brought against them. This happens because they are able to defend themselves by saying the group to which they contributed, is not involved in terrorism.

Hamas uses their money in the following ways: 95% goes to political or spiritual needs, while only 5% goes to military. The annual budget is approximately 60-70 million dollars. 25-60% of the financing comes from the United States. Most of the money from the US comes from Palestinian-Americans who don't care or don't know where the money is going. Other donators include Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia. In addition, countries such as Iran, Sudan, and Syria are believed to provide military training and radio broadcasting facilities for Hamas leaders.\(^{154}\)

Initially Israel barely interfered with Hamas activities, continuing to see it as a social reformist organization and thus promoting it as a viable partner in discussions in order to marginalize the PLO. There were frequent meetings between Hamas figures, including Yassin, and Israeli government officials. This tacit cooperation ended with the Sasportas / Sa'don killings.\(^{155}\)

In 1992, as a result of opposition to Arafat's role in the Gulf War, the Gulf States shifted their funding from the PLO to Hamas (it claimed receipt of $28m per month from Saudi Arabia) this took the PLO's welfare role away from it. Hamas received considerable public support due to its greater efficiency in conducting welfare programs.

\(^{154}\) [www.needham.k12.ma.us/High_School/cur/kane97/P1/alcg/ALCGp1.html](http://www.needham.k12.ma.us/High_School/cur/kane97/P1/alcg/ALCGp1.html).

\(^{155}\) [www.mideastweb.org/palestinianparties.htm#HAMAS.html](http://www.mideastweb.org/palestinianparties.htm#HAMAS.html).
Since the al-Aqsa massacre in October 1990, Hamas had turned its primary opposition to Israel; it declared every Israeli soldier and settler a legitimate target.\footnote{www.mideastweb.org/palestinianparties.htm#HAMAS.html.}

Hamas ridiculed the Oslo process and joined the wider rejectionist alliance that managed to gain considerable support (about 20% of Palestinian’s supported Hamas and Islamic Jihad despite PNA pressure). The PA\footnote{PA is the Palestinian Authority.} tried to use foreign donor funds to replace Hamas welfare services. In 1994 protest against the PA erupted in the West Bank and Gaza. These political outbursts resulted in an incident in Gaza where PA police officers were forced, because of political pressure from Israel insisting that the PA deal with the problem, to use violence against their own people in order to contain the crowds. In the chaos that ensued as a result of this incident Arafat co-opted leadership in Gaza. Arafat subsequently opted for non-military measures in dealing with the tension both within Palestine and with the Israeli’s. This caused a split in Hamas leadership throughout the occupied territories.\footnote{www.mideastweb.org/palestinianparties.htm#HAMAS.html.}

A BBC reporter interviewed Sheik Yassin in October 2003 about the possibility of a cease-fire. “The issue is where the Palestinian national interest is in all of this. In the past we declared a unilateral cease-fire, we gave the Israeli enemy a truce for 50 days, but they did not commit to it even for one day. They continued with their killings and crimes, with demolishing houses and building settlements. So we have to study where the national interest lies: with resistance, or with declaring a cease-fire.”\footnote{Barbara Piett, “Hamas Leader Talks Strategies,” BBC News World Edition, 29 October 2003.}
Yassin was killed in an air strike in Gaza on March 22, 2004.\textsuperscript{160} Israeli helicopters fired upon Yassin as he was leaving from morning prayers outside of a mosque in Gaza City. The Israeli’s fired three missiles at Yassin and his associates as they were leaving the mosque. “Only a charred metal seat and a twisted wheel were left of his wheelchair and a blood-soaked brown soled shoe lay in the street.”\textsuperscript{161} His death prompted immediate threats of revenge by Palestinian militants.

The assassination of Yassin was a gamble on the part of Ariel Sharon who is hoping that the assassination will have the effect of decapitating the leadership of Hamas much like the assassination of Abu Jihad\textsuperscript{162} decapitated the intelligence of the PLO in the late 1980’s. Israeli commandos assassinated Abu Jihad on April 16, 1988.\textsuperscript{163}

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin was father to 11 children; his family was one of the numerous Palestinian families expelled from their homes in what is today Israel during the first Israel-Arab war in 1948. Yassin was born in 1936 near the coastal town of Ashkelon. His family fled to Gaza when their village was destroyed in 1948. Yassin lost the use of his legs at the age of twelve while playing soccer in the Shati refugee camp in Gaza.

Yassin was first arrested in 1984 for possession of illegal weapons and explosives; he was released one year later.\textsuperscript{164} Yassin was arrested again in May 1989 and was sentenced to life in an Israeli prison for ordering the kidnapping and murder of two Israeli soldiers and suspected Palestinian collaborators.\textsuperscript{165} Many believe that Yassin

\textsuperscript{160} www.guardian.co.uk/israel/story/0,2763,1175088,00.html. Accessed on 22 March 2004.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{162} Abu is Arabic for father and Jihad means holy war. So Abu Jihad means father of the holy war.
\textsuperscript{163} See Livingston and Halevy, David. Inside the PLO, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
remained in charge of Hamas and gave his orders from his prison cell. He was released from prison in 1997 in exchange for the release of two members of the Israeli Mossad who were being held by Jordan.\footnote{166}{Ibid.}

The recent death of the spiritual leader of Hamas may have far reaching consequences. The new leader of the organization is considered much more militant than Yassin. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin has, since his death, been referred to as a stabilizing force in the Hamas organization.\footnote{167}{CNN. 24 March 2004.} On Tuesday March 24, 2004 Abdel Aziz Rantisi was chosen to be the leader of Hamas. Rantisi was a 54-year-old pediatrician who has been in and out of jails because of his involvement in Hamas. Rantisi spent seven years in an Israeli prison and was also imprisoned by the PA for 21 months. Israel has attempted to assassinate Rantisi in the past.\footnote{168}{Mulenga, "Hamas Aims to eliminate Jewish State."} He was considered a hard liner even by Hamas standards. He too has now been assassinated.

The newest leader of Hamas, whose identity is kept a secret for his own protection, had called on his followers to attack all Jews everywhere. Hamas has also calling for the assassination of Ariel Sharon as payment for Ahmed Yassin’s death. Assassinations always have had a profound effect on the peace in the Middle East. Never have assassinations brought peace closer; they have only served to polarize the two sides.

Under Ahmed Yassin’s guidance Hamas took an intentionally moderate approach. Despite Hamas’s primary objective, statements made by the former leader were intentionally moderate. Following the signing of the Oslo agreements he wrote the following from prison. “No doubt our Palestinian people are agitated and unhappy today. They are saddened and pained by the ignominy, capitulation, and abasement of the
Palestinian cause at the hands of a group of our own people who signed [documents] recognizing the state of Israel, thereby relinquishing all our lands, traditions, holy places, and culture, which Israel has usurped. To put the best face on it, let us say that they tried and failed, but let them not saddle us with this error and its attendant calamities.\textsuperscript{169}

It remains to be seen what the role of Hamas will be now that Arafat has died. Will there be changes in the hardened stance of Hamas leadership and its supporters or will Hamas soften under the promise of a new peace process? Only time will tell. It is still early in the negotiations.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{169} See Hroun, \textit{Hamas: Political Thought and Practice}, p. 62.}
Conclusion

Kahane and Hamas have both had a profound effect on Israeli and Palestinian politics and culture. Despite their obvious differences both groups have similarities in their ideology and history. Both movements were formed outside of Israel and imported into the country. Kahane was born in New York and his ideology was formed in the United States. The Muslim Brotherhood was started in Egypt and its ideology was imported into Palestine. Both groups grew out of a similar time period. Kahane’s ideology grew out of his childhood in the 1930’s. The Muslim Brotherhood was also formed in the 1930’s. The Jewish Defense League was a precursor to Kach, just as the Muslim Brotherhood was a precursor to Hamas. Kach and Hamas were both products of the tumultuous 1980’s. Both groups preach a doctrine of violence and both utilize the media to spread their message of hate and revenge. It is in looking at the extremes of the society that we can understand the potential or lack of potential for peace in the Middle East.

Kahane has had a lasting effect on Israeli society and politics has been a lasting legacy that remains to this day. Kahane said what so many others felt but were afraid to say. Robert Friedman wrote this of Kahane in the late 1980’s: “Ultimately the Israeli right is angry with Kahane because he says what they think: that the Jewish State should annex the Occupied Territories and expel all of Israel’s unruly Arabs. And declaring that openly is not good for public relations.”\textsuperscript{170} In the years since Kahane’s death the idea of Palestinian removal has become much more accepted.

\textsuperscript{170} See Friedman, The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane- from FBI Infomant to Knesset Member, p. 262.
The current Israeli leader, Ariel Sharon has publicly called for the expulsion of all Palestinian’s from Israel. Robert Friedman predicted that Kahane would “pave the way” for Sharon. “Thanks to the animosity of his former friends on the right, Kahane will never be the one to run Israel. But he will fan the flames of hatred and destruction, paving the way for a strongman like Ariel Sharon to step in and put the house in order.”\(^{171}\) Though Kahane died shortly after the book was written, his death did not change this fate.

Sharon has enacted a plan for unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, which has been a hotbed of Palestinian militancy for decades. The problem with a unilateral withdrawal is that Sharon proposes to maintain control of all borders as well as the waterfront. Palestinian’s living in Gaza will be unable to enter or exit without passing through Israeli security. Export and import of goods to and from Gaza will also be at the mercy of the Israeli government and military. Sharon also has continued to build up settlements in the West Bank and has proposed to continue increasing these settlements.

Sharon has long been an advocate of Israeli settlement in the West Bank and Gaza. Sharon led the West Bank settlement drive in the late 1970’s as Israel’s Minister of Agriculture. Ariel Sharon also led the Israeli attack on Lebanon in 1982. According to Friedman “Kahane owed much of his surprising success to Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon, who legitimization right wing extremism in Israel.”\(^{172}\) In a sense Kahane’s extreme fundamentalism was both benefited by and in turn benefited the far right in Israel.

Neither could have been as successful without the other.

\(^{171}\) Ibid., p. 262.
\(^{172}\) Ibid., p. 209.
The spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin was killed on March 22.

Two days later Hamas picked his replacement, Abdel Aziz Rantisi. Rantisi was assassinated less than one month later. The recent attacks on Hamas leaders have proven to be less than fatal for the Hamas movement thus far. Hamas has now said that they have picked a new leader, but that person will remain a secret for his or her own protection. Since its inception in 1988 Hamas has been an underground movement of some political force. Its impact on the peace process and on the Middle East continues to be significant. As militancy has continued to rise amongst Israeli’s, so too have Palestinian extremist groups gained more sympathy and more support. The quality of life in the Gaza Strip continues to decline.

The removal of Israeli occupiers, as Sharon has suggested, will not fully eliminate the negative impact on the Palestinian’s living in the Gaza Strip because of the nature of the withdrawal. Gaza is entirely blocked off from the rest of the world; tall fences and trenches with barbed wire surround it. I have stood on its borders and I am familiar with how these fences have stunted the economic, political, and social growth of the inhabitants. Constant curfews and air strikes make Gaza not only dangerous, but also economically unviable. Curfews can last anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. During that time Palestinian’s are unable to leave their homes for any reason. They cannot go to work, or to the doctor, or to any store. The borders cut off contact to the outside world. In order to leave Gaza, Palestinian’s are required to get special passes from the Israeli government. Passes can take weeks and sometimes even months to get. The argument has been made on the far right in Israel that the Arabs should just leave. However even if they wanted to, the Palestinian’s of Gaza cannot just leave.
This latest Sharon policy of handing over some of the territories to the PA could potentially lead to more problems in the future. Israel has also said that they will continue building the fence, which will cut off the entire perimeter of the West Bank.

(See Map 5) I will admit that there are no easy answers. What I do know is that in order for any peace process to be successful the Palestinian’s must have a viable State. This is something that will not happen without help from the outside and many concessions on the part of the Israeli government to give the Palestinian’s control of their own borders.

It is impossible for me to conceive of a solution that would appease every Israeli or every Palestinian. This is why I believe that the only way for there to be peace in Israel and Palestine is if the United States or an international body, either the United Nations or another coalition body, will not just mediate the conflict, but enforce its resolution. After almost fifty years in existence Israel most certainly has a right to exist. The Palestinian’s also have a right, the right to a nationality and freedom.

Yasser Arafat’s recent death seems to have changed the political landscape. I believe that this change will be temporary. Israel demands much of the new Palestinian leadership in the hunting down and punishing of criminals who participate in terrorist acts. If the new authority is unable to find and punish all those involved in every attack Israel may well refuse to continue negotiations. Should this occur, it would lead in turn to an increase in attacks and to the de-legitimization of the new Palestinian authority in the eyes of both Israel and the world. As a result the peace process will be no better off than it was before the death of Yasser Arafat. The instability of the region will continue well into the twenty first century.
Bibliography


Map 1

1947 UN Partition Plan

Map taken from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website www.mfa.gov.il/mfa

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Map 2

Israel After the War for Independence

Map taken from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website www.mfa.gov.il/mfa
Map 3

Israel After the 6 Day War

Map taken from Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs website www.mfa.gov.il/mfa
Israel's Modern Borders

Map taken from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website www.mfa.gov.il/a/mfa
Map 5

West Bank Separation Fence

The West Bank and Gaza strip, captured in 1967, comprise 22% of the pre-1948 Palestine. Upon signing the Oslo agreements, the Palestinians agreed to settle for these 22% and recognize Israel within the Green Line borders, conceding 78% of the land, was an historic Palestinian compromise.

The Green Line
- Wall under construction
- Approved path of the wall
- Suggested Path of the wall
- Enclave under construction
- Suggested enclave
- Palestinian controlled territory
- Israeli controlled territory

Map taken from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website www.mfa.gov.il/a/mfa