

A NO-STATE SOLUTION: ISRAEL, HAMAS, GAZA, and THE ROAD TO PEACE



picture: a makeshit Hamas rocket sails towards an Israeli target.

Any Anarchist worth their salt knows that the Israel-Palestine conflict is, in and of itself, a bit of a false choice. Whether one or two states are enacted, both “solutions” ultimately advance the cause of statism and take for granted the notion that some sort of political hegemony in regards to race ought to exist. The sensible “solution” to the conflict lies in a cancellation of the state, and a brokering of voluntary arrangements among the people. We know this because the State, particularly the State of Israel, has always served to exacerbate violence and undermine peace; such a violent influence must be removed from the equation of this conflict.

Nowhere is this more evident than in recent developments in the Gaza Strip. Hamas, an Islamic socio-political collective in Palestine, and its effective control of the Gaza Strip stands at the forefront of this crisis. Their leadership in the Gaza Strip is responsible for numerous human rights violations; Israel would be wrong to allow peace while this occurs. Their rule has also divided Palestine into two camps, to the point that it operates almost as two countries: one being the Gaza Strip, governed by Hamas; and the other the West Bank, governed by Fatah, the party of deceased Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat. Once again, the specter of Statism stands to erode peace: no lasting peace can occur with a political structure like Hamas in place.

While Hamas' violence did drive Fatah out of the Gaza Strip and allow them to seize control, their rise to power cannot be viewed as an isolated insurgent movement. To place the blame of the stagnation of peace upon Hamas is to ignore the history of their rise to power and the factors that led to their takeover of the Gaza Strip. A close examination of the history and these factors reveals a kind of perverse historical irony: Israel, the nation whose Prime Minister proclaimed he would use "all means necessary" to drive Hamas out of Gaza¹, and the United States, which has classified Hamas as a terrorist organization since 1995², are directly responsible for Hamas' rise to prominence, win in the 2006 Palestinian elections, and subsequent takeover of the Gaza Strip. Through their lack of *realpolitik* in dealing with the conflict and their pursuance of an outmoded, Cold Waresque model of international relations, the State served to debilitate peace and encourage violence.

¹ Jeffrey Heller, "INTERVIEW-Israel's Netanyahu says Hamas must be uprooted," *Reuters: US Edition*, December 30, 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSLU121755> (accessed November 31, 2009).

² S. Res. 10, 111th Cong. (enacted).

In recent years, Hamas has replaced Arafat, Fatah, and his PLO coalition as the primary enemy, so to speak, of Israel. Israel's three major parties, Likud, Labor, and Kadima, have all enumerated a vehement, and in the case of Likud, militaristic, opposition to the group³⁴⁵. Founded in 1988 during an Arab uprising, or *intifada*, the group can best be described as an Islamist socio-political collective, adhering to a very hard-line version of Islam.⁶ It is perhaps best known for its military wing, responsible for many rocket attacks on Israel⁷, but also contains a political wing with several seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council⁸, a media wing including its own propaganda-based television network, and social wing that provides health, education, and other services to Palestinians⁹. The ultimate goal of the group, as stated in its 1988 charter, is to liberate Palestine through armed struggle: one passage of the charter reads: "there is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad. [Diplomatic solutions] are but a waste of time..."¹⁰. Furthermore, the group has maintained a steadfast refusal to recognize Israel, with one leader even claiming that he "dream[s] of hanging a huge map on the wall at my Gaza home

³ Mualem, Mazal. "Kadima kicks off campaign with threat to assassinate Hamas chiefs " Haaretz Daily Newspaper. January 27, 2009 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1059079.html> (accessed January 28, 2010).

⁴ Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, "Barak: Hamas will pay for attack on Gaza border crossing," *Haaretz--Israel Daily Newspaper*, April 20, 2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/976384.html> (accessed January 11, 2010).

⁵ Israel, Likud Party, *Likud Platform*, under "The Palestinians," http://www.knesset.gov.il/elections/knesset15/elikud_m.htm (accessed November 12, 2009).

⁶ "Backgrounder: Hamas," *Council on Foreign Relations* (August 27, 2009), <http://www.cfr.org/publication/8968/> (accessed October 24, 2009).

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Rubin, Barry, and Walter Laqueur, eds., 345

which does not show Israel on it”¹¹. The troubles of the group go far deeper than political however; Hamas is a boon of human rights violations, ranging from rampant suicide bombings to rocket attacks on Israel¹², the kidnapping and hostage-taking of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit¹³, the use of “human shields” to fend off attacks from Israel¹⁴, and oppression of women. This group, at present time, controls the Gaza Strip.

Hamas did not develop as an independent insurgent movement, striking at Israel from afar. To the contrary, the policies of Israel are responsible for Hamas’ very existence.

Hamas’ roots lie in the Muslim Brotherhood, an Egyptian faction dating back to the 1920’s¹⁵. The Brotherhood, like Hamas today, taught that a lack of devotion to the Koran was responsible for the political woes of the Arab People; the solution, they claimed, lay in a return to Islamic ideals¹⁶. The writings of members like Sayiid Qutb, who advocated global jihad, are often seen as the foundation of modern radical Islam, or Islamism¹⁷. Following Israel’s 1967 War with

¹¹ Scott Shiloh, "PA Foreign Minister: ‘No Place’ for Israel on Middle East Map," *Free Republic*, April 2, 2006, <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1607859/posts> (accessed November 5, 2009).

¹² “Backgrounder: Hamas”

¹³ Richard Beeston and Ian MacKinnon, "Shy Boy Whose Fate Could Change History," *Times Online*, June 29, 2006, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article1095181.ece (accessed December 23, 2009).

¹⁴ *BBC News*, "Gaza 'human shields' criticised," January 8, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7818122.stm (accessed November 4, 2009).

¹⁵ Andrew Higgins, "How Israel Helped to Spawn Hamas," *Wall Street Journal Online*, January 24, 2009, section goes here, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123275572295011847.html> (accessed November 12, 2009).

¹⁶ Craig Lockard, *Societies, Networks, and Transitions A Global History, Complete* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007), 945-946.

¹⁷ Higgins

Egypt and numerous other Arab countries, during which Israel captured Gaza and began a 26-year occupation of the area¹⁸, the Brotherhood saw an opportunity for growth. Seizing on the failure of secular Arab forces to defend Gaza during the war, the Brotherhood established a presence in Gaza, and began to promote their own ideology¹⁹. It seems the implications were lost on Israel; the Brotherhood's presence ultimately served as a springboard for the organization that would become Hamas.

During the late 20th Century, the Brotherhood flourished in the guise of the Islamist group Mujama Al-Isimiyeh, often with Israel's compliance and even guidance, beginning with Israel's recognition of Mujama as a charity in 1979²⁰. Israel seemed to encourage the rise of Mujama. Israel raised no objections to the group's efforts to establish hospitals, schools, and other social services; services that were largely funded by the United States-backed government of Saudi Arabia. This went a long way toward Hamas' eventual entrenchment in Gaza. The group grew strong during the Israeli occupation because, other than the UN, it was one of the few groups providing these social services²¹. Mujama was given free reign to print its own tracts and writings, including the writings of Qutb and others that advocated violent Jihad²², and hold demonstrations, meetings, and other forms of public assembly²³. At the time, Israel endorsed the es-

¹⁸ Jimmy Carter, *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), pg. 58.

¹⁹ Higgins

²⁰ Zunes, Stephen. "The Rise of Hamas." Edited by Emily Schwartz Greco. *Foreign Policy in Focus* (June 22, 2007). http://www.fpiif.org/articles/the_rise_of_hamas (accessed October 22, 2009).

²¹ Alexandra Avakian, "Gaza: Where Peace Walks a Tightrope," *National Geographic*, September 1996, pg. 45.

²² Higgins

²³ Zunes, "Rise of Hamas"

establishment of the Islamic University of Gaza²⁴, a University that by all accounts was run by radical Islamists and serves today as a bastion of radical thought²⁵.

The PLO, an umbrella group for numerous Palestinian factions, remained the most prominent Palestinian Faction at this time. Most Arab governments had acknowledged the PLO as the “sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinians”²⁶, and following the 1967 the PLO headed up a kind of “quasi-government” designed to meet the basic needs of Palestinians living in disputed areas with Israel--among these areas, the Gaza Strip.²⁷ The group, responsible for attacks on an Israeli Schoolbus in 1970, a massacre at the Lod Airport in 1972, and numerous other acts of guerilla warfare against Israel²⁸, was largely considered *persona non grata* by Israel at the time, a status that would remain until Arafat’s renouncement of terrorism and recognition of Israel in 1988. Until 1993, the Israeli government barred any citizen from meeting with the group²⁹. The group also found itself denied freedoms such as the right to public assembly, the right to print its own media³⁰. The secular group, although just as extremist as Mujama, also contained numerous Moderate groups and figures, such as Assad Saftawi, himself a close friend

²⁴ Higgins

²⁵ Alan M. Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel* (Hoboken, N.J: Wiley, 2003), pg. 234.

²⁶ Carter, *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid*, 69.

²⁷ Ibid, pg. 53

²⁸ "Ma'alot, Kiryat Shmona, and Other Terrorist Targets in the 1970s," Palestine Facts, section goes here, http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_terrorism_1970s.php (accessed January 28, 2010).

²⁹ Clyde Haberman, "Unthinkable Made Legal," *The New York Times*, January 21, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/01/21/world/unthinkable-made-legal.html?pagewanted=1> (accessed November 22, 2009).

³⁰ Zunes, “The Rise of Hamas”

of Arafat³¹. Yet, while Israel virtually built up Mujama, the PLO remained caught in a bit of a chokehold.

As Mujama became more powerful, conflict between the two groups inevitably developed over. It was a battle for control, both for territory in Palestine and for the hearts and minds of Palestinians. It was also a battle Israel chose not to become involved with. PLO-Mujama clashes contained a marked absence of Israeli action of intervention. At one point in the 1970's, Islamists associated with Mujama burned a secular, PLO-run health facility to the ground while IDF troops stood by and watched³². Many sources has come forward saying this was deliberate, both on the Israeli and Palestinian side. In fact, Mahmoud Musleh, now a legislator for Hamas, recalls that "[Israel] hoped we would become an alternative to the PLO"³³.

Musleh's words are the key to understanding Israel's actions. Obviously, a Jewish nation had no vested interest in encouraging the rise of a radical Islamist group calling for global jihad. If anything, it can be argued that the sheer existence of Mujama ran counter to the Zionist mission of Israel. Mujama's vitriol, however, was not reserved for Zionists; even before the aforementioned power struggles emerged, the group saw the PLO as too secular³⁴ and opposed them vehemently. This last position, opposition to the PLO, was common ground for Israel and Mujama. Seeing opportunity to erode the influence and power of the PLO, Israel clearly wanted t,

³¹ Sarah Helm, "Gunmen kill Gaza Leader," *The Independent*, October 22, 1993, section goes here, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/gunmen-kill-gaza-leader-1512309.html> (accessed December 30, 2009).

³² Zunes, "The Rise of Hamas"

³³ Higgins

³⁴ Ibid

as Musleh speculated, play the two groups off of each other. Their strategy can be summed up, ironically enough, by an Arab proverb that states “ the enemy of my enemy is my friend”³⁵.

Such a strategy is a classic play from the United States’ Cold War playbook. The United States even played it prior to the Cold War in WWII-era Vietnam, when OSS officials worked alongside the Viet Minh to defeat the Japan’s Axis forces³⁶. In the 1980’s, the United States pledged support for Sadaam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq War, hoping to undermine the anti-American government in Tehran³⁷. Later, the US would support the Mujahideen, a resistance group to the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan, pouring millions of dollars into the group to arm and train its resistance³⁸.

The problem with playing this card is that it rarely worked. The Viet Minh wound up violently opposing the French, a US Ally³⁹, and drawing the US into the violent, long Vietnam War⁴⁰. Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait in the early 1990’s drew then President Bush’s condemna-

³⁵ ""The Enemy of My Enemy"" The Investigative Project on Terrorism,

<http://www.investigativeproject.org/1369/the-enemy-of-my-enemy> (accessed December 22, 2009).

³⁶ Gary R. Hess, "Franklin Roosevelt and Indochina," *The Journal of American History* 59, no. 2 (September 1972): pg. 366-367.

³⁷ Alex Chadwick and Mike Schuster, writers, "U.S. Links to Saddam During Iran-Iraq War," in *Day by Day*, National Public Radio, December 22, 2005.

³⁸ Michel Chossudovsky, "Who Is Osama Bin Laden?" *Centre for Research on Globalisation (CRG)* (September 12, 2001), <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO109C.html> (accessed January 12, 2010).

³⁹ Wiliam J. Duiker, *He Communist Road To Power In Vietnam*, 2nd ed. (Westview Press, 1996), pg. 137-138.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pg. 265-267

tion, and later a military response from a US-led coalition⁴¹. The Mujahideen, following the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan, would later become the Taliban, a major antagonist in the War on Terror⁴². All three groups shared a common enemy with the United States, but little else, a truth evident in the Viet Minh's communist ideals, Hussein's brutal dictatorship, and the Mujahideen's Islamism. Once the common enemy was taken out of the equation, little need for diplomatic relations existed, and the "enemy of my enemy" simply became a flat-out enemy.

Israel's support of Mujama Al-Ismiya presents the exact same situation: like the US with the Mujahideen et. al, Israel had little in common with Mujama other than a staunch opposition to Arafat and the PLO. Israel would soon learn the exact lesson the US had; in the form of the creation of Hamas and its rise to power.

By the time the *Intifada* occurred in Gaza and the West Bank 1988, Mujama was well-established enough in the community for several of its senior members to launch Hamas—a paramilitary resistance to Israel's attempts to quell the uprising⁴³. This began the transformation of Mujama from a social to a military movement, one that cemented itself with Hamas' first suicide bombings in 1994, and escalated acts of terrorism throughout the 1990's. Israel then cracked down, implementing armed opposition to Hamas⁴⁴, but their efforts were too late. From this point on, any attempt to crack down on Hamas, either through military means or imprisonment, only elicited further attacks from the group and made the group stronger. One such effort

⁴¹ Larry S. Krieger, Kenneth Neill, and Steven L. Jantzen, *World History Perspectives on the Past* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), pg. 866-870.

⁴² "From Mujahideen Heroes to Taliban Terrorists," editorial, *Press.TV*, February 16, 2009, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=85758§ionid=3510303> (accessed November 30, 2009).

⁴³ Higgins

⁴⁴ Zunes, "The Rise of Hamas"

involved the deportation of 400 Hamas affiliates to Jordan; however the UN condemned the act as a violation of International law, and the 400 became martyrs in the eyes of the Palestinian people⁴⁵. Many suicide bombing attempts were accompanied by a note demanding the release of Hamas members from prison, among other demands⁴⁶. One note, delivered along with a deadly suicide bomb, actually elicited Israel's release of Hamas founder Ahmad Yassin; a giant morale boost for the group⁴⁷. In the best case scenario, Hamas merely had the potential to cause widespread panic and short-term disorder; this seemed to be the case with the majority of the suicide bombings and other attacks⁴⁸. In the worst case scenario, Hamas proved capable of spawning all-out chaos⁴⁹. In the early 2000's, the latter occurred; Hamas' involvement in a second Intifada, far more violent than the first, helped bring the entire peace process between Israel and Palestine to a grinding halt, and turn the region into utter chaos. It is a political reality that will likely remain part of life in Palestine for some time; Jon Greenwald of the International Crisis Group describes Hamas as having "staying power"⁵⁰. The hope for Peace and stability in the region had been destroyed by the State and its insistence on controlling human affairs. Certainly, Israel was to blame for the violence of Hamas.

⁴⁵ Zunes, "The Rise of Hamas"

⁴⁶ Molly Moore and John W. Anderson, "Israel Stops Prisoner Release After Two Suicide Bombings," *The Daily Gazette* (Schenectady, NY), August 13, 2003, World sec.

⁴⁷ Heather Sharp, "Long history of Israel's 'covert killing'" BBC NEWS, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8488249.stm (accessed December 30, 2009).

⁴⁸ Jon Greenwald, telephone interview by author, December 15, 2009.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Israel's strategy erred in a far greater way than a lack of realism, however. The very basis behind the move, the ideology, so to speak, suffered from a lack of values. Israel, a nation founded in the aftermath of the Second World War and the horrors of Nazi Germany, has long held a unique position in the realm of human rights. Israel's history, or rather the history of the people of Israel, speaks to the horrors of hegemonism. Playing Hamas and the PLO off one another was a move worth of imperialists, a cloak-and-dagger manipulation designed to encourage human beings to fight and kill each other. A model emphasizing goodwill toward the PLO would have rang truer with the lessons taught by Israel's history.

Arguments that such a model would be "giving in" to a terrorist organization, or that it would only begat more violence, are ultimately foolish. Scholars have drawn parallels between the PLO and Northern Ireland's Provisional Irish Republican Army, a similar "terrorist" organization which disarmed, was allowed to enter into a dialogue with their supposed enemies, and brought a relative stability to Northern Ireland⁵¹. Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein, an organization long thought to be the political wing of the Provisional IRA, has compared himself to Yasser Arafat in this regard⁵².

Some might argue that, given Arafat's denouncement of terrorism in 1988, that Israel's strategy worked, diplomacy be damned; such a true remains debatable, but is also irrelevant.

⁵¹ Shelley Deane, "From Paramilitary to Parliamentary: Sinn Fein, the PLO, Hamas, and Hizbollah Compared," 2009, MS, ISA's 50th ANNUAL CONVENTION "EXPLORING THE PAST, ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE", New York City, NY, in All Academic, Inc., http://www.allacademic.com//meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/3/1/2/2/pages312222/p312222-1.php (accessed November 30, 2009).

⁵² "Sinn Fein president meets Hamas," BBC NEWS | News Front Page, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/5318978.stm (accessed January 30, 2010).

Whether the medicine of empowering Mujama actually weakened the PLO, it was active statist intervening in Palestinian affairs on Israel's part, and it created the undeniable side-effect of Hamas and all-out violence. Peace cannot exist with the state; it must be dismantled if real human cooperation is to occur and violence is to cease.