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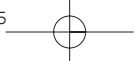
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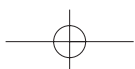
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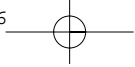
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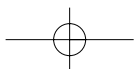
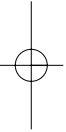
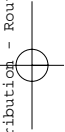


THE MEDIA AND THE ISRAELI ARAB CITIZENS





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# The Israeli Newspapers' Coverage of the Israeli Arabs During the *Intifada*

ILAN ASYA

The deplorable acts carried out in the occupied territories on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, which began in December 1987 and led to the Arabs' adoption of the name *intifada*, placed the Israeli Arab citizens of the state of Israel in a difficult position. Israeli Arabs are those Arabs who remained within the borders of the state of Israel, as determined by the armistice between Israel and the Arab states after the 1948 war. These Arabs, who became Israeli citizens, were in fact severed from the rest of the Palestinian population who lived west of the Jordan River and until 1967 were under the rule of Jordan or Egypt. Only after the Six Day War and Israel's capture of what is defined as Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and the Gaza Strip (thereafter referred to as 'the territories') was there a reconnection of both sectors of the Palestinian people.

The events of the *intifada* deepened the conflict of loyalties to which the Israeli Arabs were subject: loyalty to the state of Israel of which they are citizens, and loyalty to their conception of a Palestinian nation and their identification of themselves with a people who lived under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This article reviews and analyses the Hebrew Israeli newspapers' coverage of the Israeli Arabs' reaction to the *intifada* during its first three years – from December 1987 to December 1990.

Researchers of the Israeli media's coverage of the *intifada* mostly describe the way it treated those events whose focal point was the *intifada* in the territories held under Israeli authority. They do not deal with the media coverage of Israeli Arabs. Tamar Liebes describes how the Israeli media is controlled by a Zionist hegemony; a situation that influences the coverage of the *intifada* and of the Arab conflict in general.<sup>1</sup> The effect of the Zionist hegemony on journalists and editors operates, according to Liebes, on two levels. First, the technical influence – relying heavily on authority sources – makes for coverage that is biased in favour of the Israeli

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side; second, the journalists and editors see themselves as part of the Zionist movement, a condition which precludes coverage that is detached and free of bias. In Israel the army is a symbol of anti-exile, which makes criticism of it or anything to do with it difficult. Accordingly, Israeli newspapers place restrictions on the extent of criticism of the establishment. This is also consonant with the Israeli media consumer, who will not tolerate any transgression of these accepted restrictions. Liebes argues that the Israeli coverage of the *intifada* objectified Arabs as violent mobs lacking a human face. The tendency to depersonalize while reporting on the *intifada* is also highlighted by Roeh and Nir, who maintain that the Israeli coverage constructed a 'them-and-us' scenario.<sup>2</sup> Their finding that only six per cent of the Arabs who appeared in reports on the *intifada* were referred to by their names, compared to 44 per cent in cases of Jews who appeared in reports, serves as a stark example.

Arabs in the occupied territories, asserts Liebes, were initially perceived as a factor that lay outside the orbit of Israeli society, a fact which facilitated the objectification/distancing of them. Israeli Arabs, on the other hand, presented a much more difficult problem; they shared characteristics with the external enemy, yet also with Israeli society of which they made up a part of the fabric.

Liebes assumes the Israeli Arab perspective. The subject of her analysis is how the *intifada* impacted upon them, rather than how they were treated in the media. The same subject is addressed by Eli Reches, A. Bligh, N. Rouhana and M. al-Haj.<sup>3</sup> This research, however, aims to shed some light on the position which the Israeli newspapers took towards the phenomenon of Israeli Arabs identifying with the Arabs in the occupied territories.

On 9 December 1987 four Palestinians from the Gaza Strip died when their car collided with a lorry driven by an Israeli. This incident was to spark off the *intifada*, which can be dated from the following day. Rumours to the effect that the accident had, in fact, been a reprisal for the murder of the driver's relative in Gaza's central market induced widespread rioting.<sup>4</sup>

Any observer would have felt during this time the build-up of tension before it exploded into the *intifada*. The level of animosity towards the occupation had been escalating throughout Palestinian society. In the course of 1987, up until the *intifada*, violations of the law increased by 100 per cent.<sup>5</sup> Before the *intifada*, the Gaza Strip had been considered a dangerous area and, owing to the increasing hostilities, access to it was periodically blocked. But in spite of these indications, Israel's security and political systems, as well as public opinion, were taken by surprise when rioting broke out. The shock was increased when it came to light that the rioters came from all walks of life, and that children and youths – in so far as they also constituted the largest demographic group – were the most active among them.

The impact of the *intifada* on Israeli Arabs was immediate. On 21 December 1987 their leaders called a general strike which met with

unequivocal consensus. Strikes and demonstrations, however, did not provide a sufficient outlet for the pitch of anger and discontent, and the violent forms of protest seen in the territories were adopted on the same day. The main highway connecting the central region of Israel to Emek Yezreel – Wadi Arra – was blocked by residents of Arab settlements that lie along the route. The uprising in the territories led to a 100 per cent increase in subversive activities and Israeli Arab expressions of nationalism, according to Eli Reches. These took the form of rioting, burning tyres, blocking roads, stoning cars, daubing nationalistic slogans, waving Palestinian flags, damaging property and agricultural produce, and setting fire to forests. Most severe were violent terrorist acts, which increased sharply. Reches counts 208 terrorists attacks in 1988, in contrast to 69 attacks in 1987. According to official Israeli estimates, some 80 per cent of the terrorist attacks in 1988 were perpetrated by Israeli Arabs. The attacks consisted of 170 petrol bombs, 12 stabbings, 20 incidents involving explosive packages, and three involving hand grenades.<sup>6</sup>

The tumultuous events unfolding in the territories and the hundreds killed and injured attracted large-scale media attention. But it was only when Israeli Arabs took to the streets that coverage of the Israeli Arabs' activities began.

The following analysis will refer to newspaper coverage of five events, which focused on the connection between the Israeli Arabs and the *intifada*:

1. The Israeli Arab general strike in sympathy towards Arabs in the territories was the first episode showing the *intifada*'s impact on Israeli Arabs. This took place on 21 December 1987, ten days after the first riots in the territories began.
2. The second event took place on 30 March 1988, during the Israel-Arab 'Land Day'.
3. The third event was the 1989 'Land Day.'
4. The Israeli Arab reaction to the murders of seven Arab workers from the Gaza Strip by an Israeli soldier was the fourth event. The murders occurred on 20 May 1990 in the city of Rishon Letzion, near Tel Aviv.
5. The fifth event was the Israeli Arab reaction to scenes of rioting by thousands of worshippers at the holy site of the Temple Mount, which occurred on 8 October 1990. Nineteen Arabs were shot and killed by Israeli security forces.

The analysis also includes the sporadic coverage from the years 1988 to 1990 that does not focus on specific events but which relates more generally to the impact of the *intifada* on Israeli Arabs.

This analysis of the Israeli-Hebrew newspaper coverage is qualitative, and textually examines the commercial newspapers – *Ha'aretz*, *Ma'ariv*,

*Yediot Ahronot*, and the papers affiliated with political parties – *Davar* and *al-Hamishmar*. *Davar* represented the ideology of the then Labour Party and *al-Hamishmar* was the journal of the left-wing party Mapam. Both were closed down a few years ago.

Several main conclusions spring from the analysis. The position of Israeli Arabs with regard to the *intifada* was referred to in the Israeli Hebrew newspapers mainly when they were actively involved in extreme demonstrations, rioting or acts of sabotage of various degrees. In other words, analysis and commentary in these newspapers normally followed coverage of those events that were initiated by Israeli Arabs and that had violent effects or the fear of such effects.

From an analysis of the events as reported, the Israeli newspapers emerge as agents of the Israeli government and of the Israeli Jewish establishment, serving to transmit on their behalf messages to Israeli Arabs. In other words, the major findings of Liebes, Roeh and Nir concerning the ideological hegemony are valid: the works of journalists and editors reinforce the consensus and instruct the coverage of the Israeli Arab protest. However, the *modus operandi* adopted by the newspapers when reporting on Israeli Arabs was rather sophisticated. The fact that it was Israeli citizens who were involved here, rather than the occupied population, had turned the newspapers into an educational tool with the purpose of bringing Israeli Arabs back into line. Most of the newspapers here under review, employing the classic method of threats and inducements, were mobilized by the government to diminish militant forms of Israeli Arab participation in the *intifada*, or to prevent the *intifada* from spilling over into Israeli territory. Analysis of various publications that focused on the violent events of the *intifada* supports this conclusion.

The newspapers carried out this role in several ways:

1. By emphasizing in their news pages government messages that were intended to act as a deterrent – at times these amounted to open threats.
2. By producing analyses and commentaries by in-house writers which transmitted overt and implicit threats. Sometimes threats were transmitted by commentaries contributed by experts on Arab affairs.
3. By producing sympathetic articles intended to mollify Israeli Arabs through the expression of empathy towards them and for their feelings.

It should be noted at this juncture that on many levels Israel functions as a democracy of consensus. Its social structure is heterogeneous, Israeli Arabs making up a large minority – 18 per cent of which arrived during the *intifada*.<sup>7</sup> The Jewish population is not homogeneous, comprising people of European, North African and Middle Eastern origin. Crossing ethnic lines, there is also a religious–secular divide, between which there is constant tension. Neither is the Arab population homogeneous, comprising Muslims, Christians, Druzes, Bedouins and rural and city dwellers.

Operating within a consensual democracy, the Israeli media assumes contradictory roles. The tensions and divides in Israeli society create a multiplex of bitter dispute and public argument that involves large segments of the population. This situation is exploited by the media, especially the commercial media, which often has the effect of perpetuating the social tensions and divisions, which assists in expansion of both distribution and ratings. Conversely, the Israeli newspaper industry is conscious of its essential role in the Israeli consensual democracy. It is especially sensitive to issues that appear seriously to threaten public order, national security or the foundations of democracy, society and state. Where these are at stake it is possible to discern the process by which newspapers, following directives from the political administration, will mobilize to ease tensions or reduce dangers.

The *intifada*'s intrusion into Israeli borders was perceived as one such threat to national security and to the social equilibrium – a situation that, naturally, activated mobilization of editorial boards.

The political stance of the newspapers had a substantial influence on the coverage of Israeli Arabs during the *intifada*. For instance, the relatively right-wing editorial board of *Ma'ariv* expressed the most extremist position in relation to Israeli Arabs. But even *al-Hamishmar*, the mouthpiece of the left-wing Mapam party, also railed against the possible intrusion into Israeli borders of the *intifada* (see below). *Al-Hamishmar* employed different devices for transmitting messages to the Arab public, which they did via Arab members of Mapam who were also *al-Hamishmar* subscribers. *Al-Hamishmar*'s dovish stance along with the potential for negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were considered by the Mapam leadership as seriously threatened by the possibility of Israeli Arab loyalty to the PLO. A situation in which Israeli Arabs chose this kind of loyalty over loyalty to the state of Israel would undermine the basis for Jewish public faith in them and would provide justification for the stigma of 'Fifth Columnists' which Israeli Arabs were subjected to. It can be assumed that this reality would have had a detrimental effect on the Jewish public's acceptance of the dovish stance of the 'peace camp'. *Al-Hamishmar* expressed positive and understanding views as to peaceful and quiet actions of support and of demonstration that were taken by the Israeli Arabs. It strongly rejected, however, all expressions of violent action and riots and, in fact, it used even overt threats in order to prevent Israeli Arabs from resorting to such action.

#### THE GENERAL STRIKE – 21 DECEMBER 1987

On the day before the general strike, the popular and commercial *Yediot Ahronot* and *Ma'ariv* issued a forceful message warning against the *intifada* spreading into Israeli borders. The moderate newspaper, *Yediot*



*Ahronot*, published on its front page Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's warning to Israeli Arabs and to Arabs in the territories, not to follow agitators.<sup>8</sup> The more nationalistic and right-wing *Ma'ariv* published on the same day a more heavily loaded item, under the headline, 'Arab Sector to Strike Tomorrow – PLO Urges Spreading of Riots over Green Line'.<sup>9</sup> The article said that, according to Israeli security sources, direct pressure was put on leaders of the Israeli Arab public through telephone calls and through the Israeli Communist Party, the majority of whose membership and leaders were Israeli Arabs. Only at the end of this article is it mentioned that violence was shunned during a rally of Israeli Arab activists who termed the day of the strike a 'Peace Day'. *Ma'ariv* points to links between Israeli Arabs and the PLO, in an attempt to depict the general strike as an outcome of Arafat's prompting. In more explicit terms, *Ma'ariv* in fact suggested that Israeli Arabs were a 'Fifth Column'. It must be borne in mind that before the Oslo accords in 1993, the PLO was regarded by Israelis – because of its activities – as a terrorist organization responsible for the deaths of many innocent civilians. The above headline has another, perhaps predominant, intention of conveying to Israeli Arabs that the stigma of 'Fifth Column' will seriously damage their credibility and undermine their efforts to demonstrate loyalty to the state. Accompanying the news item is an appeal from a right-wing Jewish member of Knesset (MK) to Prime Minister Shamir, demanding that Shamir should not recognize heads of local Arab authorities within Israel as representatives of the Israeli Arab community.

The front page of *Ma'ariv*, on the day of the strike itself, is entirely taken up by a banner headline, serving as a thinly veiled threat to the Israeli Arab public that 'Police and Army Forces Are on the Alert as Sympathy Strike Begins'. A sub-headline, intended to soften, reads: 'Government instructs security forces to act with restraint and avoid friction with strikers'.

The purported objectivity of the reporting is somewhat belied by the editorial of this issue, which makes very plain the newspaper's position. This position is assumedly that of the Israeli establishment towards a possible Israeli Arab–*intifada* connection. The editorial declares that it is too early to tell whether the strike planned by heads of Arab city councils is a one-off event or the start of a major breakdown in order. According to the author, the sympathy strike sets a precedent: never before have Israeli Arabs identified so closely with Arabs in the territories. This precedes the following threat:

There is no point preaching to, or reminding those who have already joined the strike that their socio-economic situation is much better today than it was when the state was established – better even than that of their brothers in the other Arab states.

But their attention should be drawn to the dangers that ensue from the course they are currently taking. At this juncture, we can only hope that the Arab citizens of Israel will choose not to dance to the tune of the PLO's pipe in participating in these futile acts of protest. Such actions can only increase the tensions and violence, and will jeopardize the region's chances of finding a political solution.

If the citizens of Nazareth, Shefar'am and the 'small triangle' really want to influence the fate of the citizens of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, they would do well to remember that, as citizens of Israel with the right to vote, they could achieve their ends more successfully by exercising that and other rights, without burning the bridges of understanding.

These bridges are essential for Arabs of the occupied territories, Israeli Arabs, Israel, and the Middle East. We can only hope that those heads of Arab councils, who decided on today's strike, will do their utmost to ensure that bridges will not be damaged.<sup>10</sup>

A cartoon by Dosh, Israel's foremost nationalistic cartoonist, features on the same page. It depicts a personification of Israel, walking on a path that will shortly split. He is watching with some concern a figure who represents the Israeli Arabs. This figure holds a tyre in one hand, while his other hand holds the hand of a hooded terrorist carrying a bomb – in other words the PLO. The cartoon clearly depicts the Israeli Arabs as standing at a crossroads, faced with a choice between siding with the Jews or joining the Arab terrorists in the territories.

In contrast to the hawkish *Ma'ariv*, *Yediot Ahronot* is less ideologically orientated; it is Israel's most popular paper among both the Jewish and Arab readerships. *Yediot Ahronot* was less geared to representing the hawkish position of the predominant right-wing elements of the then coalition. The day before the general strike, *Yediot Ahronot* published an article expressing the attitude of the Israeli Arab leadership. Its title posed the question: 'Are We To Sit Here in Silence While Throughout the World There Are Demonstrations on Our Behalf?' The subtitle runs: 'Head of Sakhnin Council: "We are torn and we are hurting", Head of Shefar'am Council: "We have family in Nablus"'.<sup>11</sup>

This article created a forum in which Israeli Arabs could express the complexity of their predicament as they saw it; they are Israeli citizens, yet they are a part of the Palestinian people – often with relatives in the territories. In offering a channel for public discourse the paper gave vent, at least in part, to the mounting frustrations of Arab leaders and the Arab community. *Yediot Ahronot* provided here a platform for the moderate section of the Israeli Arab leadership; the more extremist views are presented only at the end of the article. In this way, the paper brings to the fore moderate views to an Arab public which, we can reasonably assume,

is more exposed to extreme messages, which are by nature more easily assimilated.

Despite its more sensitive tone, *Yediot Ahronot* also issues threats. A cartoon on the opinion page depicts a pile of burning tyres. Upon each is written the name of an area that has risen against the occupation. The last tyre being thrown on to the pile displays the name 'Israeli Arabs'. The opening article beneath the cartoon is by Zvi al-Peleg, an expert on the Middle East who served for many years as a military governor of Arab areas and, later on, as ambassador to Turkey.<sup>12</sup> This article, which gives an analysis of the Israeli Arabs' relationship with the state of Israel, also contains concealed threats. For example, al-Peleg explains why, since the establishment of the state, Israeli Arabs have exercised restraint when other events in the Middle East before the *intifada* were potentially more explosive. Al-Peleg explains that Israeli Arabs usually refrained from overt expressions of protest for fear of upsetting the precarious coexistence maintained with the Jewish population. Later, however, he writes: 'Another factor that contributed to the state of equilibrium is the attitude to the Israeli Arab minority by the Jewish majority. This attitude made it clear to all that the Jewish majority will not tolerate nationalist expressions from the Israeli Arab minority.' The article closes with a direct address to Israeli Arabs: 'In these difficult times it can only be hoped that within the Arab community reason will prevail over the recent outbursts of emotion. Relations with the Arab minority have to be a two-way thing: the state has obligations to its citizens, and likewise, citizens have obligations to their state.'<sup>13</sup>

The paper placed this article at the top of the articles page. This underlined the paper's efforts – probably made in consort with government bodies – to reduce the scale of protest, and to subdue Israel's Arab minority. This, while in the territories the uprising and the military response claimed the lives of many victims each day. It should be noted that these were the early days of the *intifada*, a time when the Israeli government had no understanding of the events unfolding, or of the direction they were taking. The uprising was wrongly assessed to be temporary only, as had been previous disturbances in the territories.

As it turned out, the 'Peace Day', declared by Israeli Arab leaders, turned into 'War Day', and threats in the Israeli press came to no avail. An article in *Yediot Ahronot* on 22 December 1987 (the day after the strike) cried: 'Black Day of "Peace" from Nazareth to Jaffa', which clearly expresses the shock felt in the wake of the nationwide, violent protests. A sub-headline ran: 'Expressions of nationalism in the Israeli Arab sector send shock waves through the political system'. The main headline issued a blatant threat: 'Rabin: We Will Impose Order Even If It Means Hurting'. This headline is in fact inaccurate and misinforming, in that it distorts the information in the body of the article, which quotes Rabin as saying that

he will maintain order in the *occupied territories*. But the headline implies that Rabin threatened to clamp down on Arabs within Israeli borders as well, when in fact, as minister of defence, Rabin had no authority or power over areas within the Israeli borders; these fall under police control. His authority to enforce order extended only over the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip where Martial Law was in effect. The article's author makes no mention of Arab settlements in Israel, but *Yediot Ahronot* took the liberty to extend Rabin's threat also to the Arab citizens of Israel. This, we can assume, was done by *Yediot's* editors not only to reflect their own opinion, but also to express the pressure and panic that were felt in the political and professional elite who were responsible for the defence of the state. Panic can also be discerned in the sub-headline, which speaks of the shock felt by the political system on witnessing the level of disorder created by Israeli Arabs.

The severe shock to the authorities and to the political system is attributable to the many disturbing precedents set by the riots on 'Peace Day'. One of the foremost journalists in Israel, Danny Rubinstein, reporting from the occupied territories for *Davar*, anticipated the authorities' assessment that the events taking place in the occupied territories were part of a unique process, beyond previous experience. In an article on 25 December 1987 he claimed that the two weeks of rioting in the territories, the general strike, the protests, and the blocking-off of roads by Israeli Arabs had set a number of precedents in the life of the state of Israel.<sup>14</sup> This fact is also hinted at by the main headline – 'Not Since 1948'. The high death toll of Arabs from the occupied territories constituted the first precedent – according to official reports, 12 were killed. Although most of the victims were young men, Rubinstein lists among them 'children aged 11 and women up to the age of 51'. The presence of women and children among the victims was a new phenomenon. Violent riots prior to the *intifada* had been composed mostly of young men. Three further precedents that Rubinstein highlights directly concerned the Israeli Arabs: first, the general strike encompassed Israeli Arabs as well Arabs in the occupied territories; second, the blocking of roads; third, the extensiveness of the riots. Violent events occurred in Jaffa, Lod, Acre and Shefar'am. 'We haven't seen anything like this since 1948', remarks Rubinstein. He also relates his impressions of meetings with army officers and Israeli politicians, among whom, he says, the reaction was one of bewilderment and dismay. Such reactions are conveyed again in the leading article.

The participation in the riots by Arabs living in mixed cities also gave cause for extreme consternation. In Jaffa, for example, the main street was blocked and four Jewish students were injured by stone-throwers. Previously, citizens of Tel Aviv had felt distanced from violent events in areas with high Arab concentrations – the Galilee and the Triangle. In

Israel, Tel Aviv is regarded as the most Jewish Israeli of cities, yet this did not make it immune from Israeli Arab rioting. Rubinstein does not mention all the precedents set on 'Peace Day'. *Al-Hamishmar*, 25 December 1987, widely reviews another precedent in an article which notes that for the first time Bedouins from the Negev took an active role within the general scope of the Arab protests. This included stoning vehicles carrying Jews on Negev roads.<sup>15</sup> Yet another precedent is discussed in *Ma'ariv*. Journalist Menachem Talmi, under the headline: 'Riots in Jaffa; Stone-Throwing in Abu Ghosh', sharpens the paper's right-wing message by drawing a comparison between the recent violence in Jaffa and the bloodshed and 'pogroms' against the Jewish minority that took place in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>16</sup> Talmi cites the words of a citizen of Bat Yam, an outlying suburb of Tel Aviv and bordering Jaffa. His words are emphasized in large print within the body of the text:

Arabs have blocked off Jaffa. What, pogroms here in Israel? – It must be a bad dream. My own brother Binyamin was nearly killed in 1921 when Arabs were massacring Jews just near the building for immigrant affairs. Good God what's happening to us? The last thing we need now is for the British to return.

As if this emotionally charged message aimed at reinforcing anti-Arab feeling among the Jewish readership were not enough, Talmi brings up a fourth precedent. This was also set on 'Peace Day' when cars *en route* to Jerusalem were stoned in the Arab village of Abu Ghosh. Talmi points out that, in contrast to Arab villages that up to 1948 had surrounded it, Abu Ghosh never participated in activities against Jews: 'Abu Ghosh has never been witness to stone-throwing or shooting. Not in 1921, in 1929, nor in 1936.' In the War of Independence this island of peace offered refuge to Jews under attack by surrounding Arab villages. These villages were razed after the war. Only Abu Ghosh was left intact, but now, 'even in Abu Ghosh it rains stones'. This issue serves a dual function: first, by emphasizing Abu Ghosh as the least likely scene of violence, Talmi suggests the extreme level of intensity and ubiquity which Israeli Arab militancy has reached. Second, by distinguishing Abu Ghosh from other Arab villages, Talmi delivers the implicit warning that if it continues on the militant path, Abu Ghosh, like its one-time neighbours, will also be eliminated.

The shock caused by the 'Peace Day' violence was followed by severe censure from the more moderate elements of the political spectrum. On 23 December 1987, *Davar* – journal of the Labour Party, which was then part of the coalition government – printed an article, taking a strong stand against elements of the Israeli Arab leadership that condoned the rioting.<sup>17</sup> The warning addressed to the Arab leadership is, in this instance, explicit rather than implicit. Again a parallel is drawn between the stoning of Israeli vehicles on 'Peace Day' and 1948, which saw Arabs cut off

transport routes by shooting at vehicles. The writer asks ironically if the Arab leadership intends to resort to the measures of 1948. This is followed by a rhetorical rejoinder: 'But will Israel tolerate the blocking of her main routes and big cities?'

Another important point is posed for the left. Ten years before the *intifada* the Labour Party's monopoly of power had been broken, the culmination of an increasing shift to the right in the Israeli public, owing especially to demographic changes in the Jewish population. Since this defeat the Labour Party had lost two further elections, and now that the riots had played into the hands of the right, who could assert the legitimacy of their opposition to a settlement with the Arabs – how was there room for negotiations when even the Arab citizens of Israel have become enemies? It is suggested here that the violent Israeli Arab protests sabotaged the attempts of the left to improve conditions and to secure equality for them, also that the violence undermined Israeli Arab support from the left while assisting their enemies on the right.

More blatantly, *Yediot Ahronot*, on 22 December 1987 (one day after the strike and riots), states in its report on the 'Black Day of Peace' that there is no difference between Israeli Arabs and Arabs of the occupied territories. Alongside the report is a large map indicating all the areas that saw rioting. The map demonstrates the extent of the turmoil from the Golan Heights in the north to the Negev in the south. Details of each disturbance are given by area. In Jaffa, for example: 'Four female Jewish students aged eleven were injured. Nineteen Arabs were arrested and one policeman severely beaten.' The areas of Shefar'am, Acre, the Golan Heights, Nazareth, Umm al-Fahm, the Triangle, Lod and the Negev all appear on the map, but in order to illustrate the extent of the participation of both Israeli Arabs and Arabs from the occupied territories, the events which took place in Judea and Samaria and Gaza (occupied territories) are also included. The newspaper omits to draw in the 'Green Line', representing the border between Israel and the occupied territories, which serves to give the impression that the rioting is taking place all over the land of Israel.

The weekend papers from 25 December 1987 began assuming a new and completely different role. Warnings and threats ceased, and the focus shifted to the Israeli Arab population itself, revealing their distress and their difficult predicament. Meanwhile the media, consciously or not, allayed some Israeli Arab frustrations. Placing them at the centre of public agenda and media discourse, and allocating a platform in the media for the expression of their views, provided an outlet for some of the anger, and in this way helped to reduce the tension. The two most popular papers, *Ma'ariv* and *Yediot Ahronot*, devoted articles to this purpose.

Amos Levav, in *Ma'ariv*, interviewed Arabs from all parts of the country, wherein each interviewee expressed his feelings and attitudes. In

these interviews the plight of the Arabs is emphasized by editorial sub-headlines. A businessman: 'Financially I'm not too badly off. I can't complain. But the lack of freedom is a problem – I feel like an alien in Tel Aviv.' A student: 'No doors are open to me. I can't fulfil my dreams. I'm not dispirited, just very frustrated.' A teacher: 'There is both Palestinianization and assimilation. The Jews don't understand that we are already a part of this state.'<sup>18</sup>

*Yediot Ahronot*, on the same day, published an article under the headline: 'The Arabs Support a State, But Want to Live in Israel'.<sup>19</sup> It seems the Israeli Arabs were an enigma to the Israeli leadership and media alike. In the opening, the journalist Eli Tavor reiterates Yitzhak Shamir's speech where he summarizes his response to the riots: 'We, the Israeli people, were surprised and shocked'. Tavor claims that this surprise derives from ignorance and negligence. The Israeli Arab sector, according to Tavor, had up to that time hardly been researched – even in the last ten years research has been mostly confined to the academic sphere. It has yet to be taken up by executors of government policy or, so it seems, by the media. The media has also over looked the Israeli Arab factor by its neglect of Israel's social peripheries and margins – where the Arab communities have been placed, and where their populations have increased.<sup>20</sup> Tavor mentions the very surprising finding that Israeli Arabs want to form closer ties with Jews much more than do Jews with Israeli Arabs.

It is possible to trace in these articles how the media operated as a factor that served to create conformity and widen the national consensus to encompass the problematic sectors. The media tried to reconcile opposing groups by searching for common ground between them. A good example is presented by the picture accompanying the article by Eli Tavor in *Yediot Ahronot*, 25 December 1987. The picture shows a group of Arab-Israeli girls giving the Churchillian 'V' sign, a gesture which had been adopted by Arafat. The caption below reads: 'This week in Arab streets: The attitude towards a Palestinian state resembles the pride of the American Jew in Israel'.<sup>21</sup>

In that same weekend Shlomo Nakdimon, one of *Yediot Ahronot*'s political writers, emphasized yet another factor which might have served to divert Israeli Arab anger and frustration from the streets to more democratic forms of political action.<sup>22</sup> Quite possibly, this wasn't Nakdimon's intention. But, by focusing on the political power that Israeli Arabs wielded within a democratic framework, he could indeed have opened a window of hope. The article reviews the political achievements of the Israeli Arabs, and stresses the number of Arab parliamentary representatives since the establishment of the state. Nakdimon estimates their voting strength at ten potential parliamentary seats. Out of 120 seats ten does not appear very significant, but it is enough to swing the balance in the political stalemate between right and left. Nakdimon's reference to

the Israeli Arabs' parliamentary option thus exposes their potential as a substantial force. MK Amnon Lin assumed, in this article, that when Arabs gain nine or ten seats, they would aspire to become the factor that would tip the scales in the coalitions' composition. This would enable the Labour Party to form a coalition without the Likud, but only 'in exchange for far-reaching steps in the direction of Arab nationalism'. According to Nakdimon, MK Lin fears that the Labour Party might be tempted to pursue this course. Lin's forecast was proved correct some years later by the Rabin-Peres government, which between 1992 and 1995 carried out far-reaching external and internal policies in respect of Palestinians, made possible by relying on the support of Arab MKs to break the impasse. The Oslo B agreement is one such political step that ran against the Jewish parliamentary majority.

The position of moderate Jews towards the riots is summarized in *Yediot Ahronot* by Avishi Margalit, on 27 December 1987.<sup>23</sup> He claims that some Israeli Arabs come to the demonstrations not only to identify with the suffering of their people – 'a thing that is their moral duty, and their civil right' – but also to shift the uprising's sights to the Green Line: 'to exchange the ballot box for fire. To them and to ourselves it is time say "there is a limit"'.

#### 'LAND DAYS' 1988 AND 1989

While memories of the 'Peace Day' rioting were still fresh, the media began to turn its attention to the possibility of similar outbursts on the approaching 'Land Day'. 'Land Day', commemorated by Arabs in Israel and in the territories, marks the bloodshed of 30 March 1976 when six Arabs were killed and tens of police and Arab residents injured during violent protests against land expropriations. On this annual event violence was predicted as a matter of course. The newspapers under review here, principally the leftist *Davar* and *al-Hamishmar*, began to speculate and to transmit pointed messages to the Israeli Arab population, two weeks prior to the anniversary.

As the mouthpiece of the Labour Party, *Davar* found itself in the awkward position of having to negotiate the fact that the defence minister charged with quashing the *intifada* was labourite Yitzhak Rabin. On 18 March 1988, *Davar* published an interview with Eli Reches, a senior researcher at the Dayan Center,<sup>24</sup> who is one of the few experts on Palestinian affairs. The following was emphasized by the editor at the opening of the interview: 'Due to the hostile activity of Israeli Arabs targeted at areas within the Green Line, the discussion on them as a security threat has been renewed.' Alongside the apparently factual information of the text, the perception of Arab Israelis as a security threat serves as an unequivocal warning to the Israeli Arab public. The



implication is clear: a return to Martial Law in Arab villages and towns within Israel. This entails nightly curfews and especially the obligation for residents to carry a permit when exiting villages. In the body of the interview Reches remarks that since 1948 Israeli Arabs have been treated as a security threat and as a 'Fifth Column', manifest in the imposition of Martial Law. However, since over the years it has become obvious that Israeli Arabs do not constitute a security threat, the treatment of them as such has gradually ceased. Reches discerns a change that runs even deeper than the events of the 'Peace Day' would suggest. His perception is based on the number of sporadic outbursts of violence against targets within the Green Line since the 'Peace Day'. This, Reches claims, is what has reopened the discussion of the Israeli Arabs as a security threat. Further on Reches discusses the anticipated events of 'Land Day' and forecasts the possibility of violence, if Israeli Arab leaders call a strike on the same day. Again the editor stresses those sentences that send a message to the Israeli Arabs, for example: 'We are witness to a partial duplication of the uprising in the occupied territories by certain Israeli Arab elements. If a strike does take place on "Land Day" it may well lead to violent confrontation.'

This sub-headline transmits a clear message that violent outbursts on 'Land Day' will not be perceived as a domestic affair, as were previous Israeli Arab outbursts, but as an extension of the *intifada* into Israel. In simple terms, Israeli Arabs pose a very real threat to security, which means the necessity of a return to Martial Law. These messages should be viewed in light of the fact that Israeli Arabs, as distinct from Arabs in the occupied territories, had something to lose. Continued provocation would jeopardize all the gains that they had made over 40 years as Israeli citizens.

*Al-Hamishmar* – which represented the sector that carried the flag of coexistence – transmitted unequivocal messages in support of that cause. The editorial that appeared on the front page of the issue of 21 March 1988 attacked the decision by the Israeli Arab leadership to call a general strike on 'Land Day', claiming that it could 'seriously damage Jewish-Arab coexistence'.<sup>25</sup> *Al-Hamishmar* asserted that the violent events of 'Peace Day' played into the hands of the Israeli right, which now painted the Israeli Arab minority as an 'internal enemy'. The paper added: 'Right-wing voices already predominate and are trying to exploit the opportunity created by an anti-Arab atmosphere to undermine Israeli Arab rights – Martial Law in the Galilee has already been suggested.'

A conciliatory proposal in *al-Hamishmar* that the Arab leadership refrain from violent measures was probably of some assistance to the defence. The message made it clear that if the proposal were not accepted the right wing would be in a stronger position to carry out the threat of Martial Law. On 24 March 1988 *al-Hamishmar* transmitted another 'educative' message, this time in an article by Arab journalist Kassem Zaid.<sup>26</sup> The sub-headline is in especially large print: 'The stand taken by

the residents of Israeli Baqa El Gharbiya and Barta'a against the attempts of their Palestinian brothers to drag them into the uprising can set an example to all the Arab villages in Israel.'

The next day, 25 March 1988, two articles appeared in *al-Hamishmar*, one in the newspaper itself, the other in the weekly journal *Hotam*. The first article's headline constitutes a clear threat: '1936, 1948, 1988'.<sup>27</sup> Journalist Amiram Cohen proceeds to give a detailed list of disturbances within Israeli borders (we can assume that at least a portion of these was attributable to Israeli Arabs). Cohen also relates the experience of a 'kibbutznik friend' from the north of Israel and concludes that it would appear from the story that, owing to Arab harassment, travelling in northern Israel is a perilous undertaking. The father of this friend was apparently attacked while in his car near the village of Dabburiya by children throwing stones: 'All that Saturday my father, who is a Mapam veteran with many Arab friends in the Triangle, was depressed. He predicts that the tragedy of 1948 will be repeated.' To bring the message home the mysterious friend adds:

I've decided that I won't live in my country enclosed. To this purpose I am willing to join Rafial [Rafial Etan] and Geola Cohen. As 'Land Day' nears, I call upon my Arab friends to restrain the extremists, otherwise there will be a conflagration. If you cannot distinguish between Israel and the occupied territories, or if you do not comprehend the difference, I predict that we will see more refugee camps. Do not put us in a position where we have no other alternative.

In other words, the left-wing party Mapam, friend of the Arabs, threatens that unless peace returns to the roads, it will join up with the extremists on the right – Geola Cohen and Rafial Etan, and it will also take an active part in the transferral of Israeli Arabs to refugee camps.

*Al-Hamishmar's* weekend supplement *Hotam* of the same day, 25 March 1988, contained an article called 'Land Consumed by Fire', which deals with the preparations for 'Land Day'.<sup>28</sup> This article contains a direct appeal to Israeli Arabs written by Zvi al-Peleg. Under the sub-headline 'My brothers, the Israeli Arabs' he urges Israeli Arabs not to sever the bond between Jew and Arab in Israel. The appeal is made with civility, and by a writer who presents himself as working for the Arab causes, namely assisting Muslims in regaining *waqf* property, or helping refugees from the village of Ikirit return to their home. Al-Peleg lays before Israeli Arabs what he believes are the two alternatives open to them: 'We are brothers, not of the same people but of the same state; a state from which we will not expel you and from which you will not expel us. These options do not exist. The choices before you are – return to the path of coexistence, or resort to the gun, the stone and the Molotov cocktail.'

Al-Peleg makes it clear that expulsion is not an option. However, because Israeli Arabs knew him as a former military governor and orientalist researcher it is clear, reading between the lines, that the option of a return to Martial Law is very real.

'Land Day' passed, in the main, without incident. *Al-Hamishmar's* front-page editorial, 31 March 1988, praises Israeli Arabs for their relative restraint.<sup>29</sup> The editorial board also credits itself: 'It seems that the anxieties and preparations for the "Land Day" had a calming and moderating effect'. The paper claims that moderate and extreme forces in the Israeli Arab population are in a state of conflict, a fact also true for the Jewish population. The moderate factor constitutes the majority, which understands, 'violence will bring them more harm than it will to Arabs in the occupied territories who have nothing to lose'.

On the eve of the following year's 'Land Day' 30 March 1989, the newspapers again mobilized to deter Israeli Arabs from violence. Shmuel Segev, *Ma'ariv's* expert on Arab affairs, wrote articles in the opinion section and the editorial.<sup>30</sup> The paper transmitted an extreme threat. Segev bluntly points out that, 'this is the first time since 1948 that Israeli Arabs have assisted those trying to undermine the stability of the state'. Segev disagrees that Israeli Arabs identify with Arabs from the territories as American Jews do with Jews from the USSR. According to Segev, the state of war between Israel and the Arab states as well as the PLO creates a distinction. Segev does not regard Israeli Arab protests against Israeli policy in the territories as legitimate, and he claims that Israeli Arabs exploit the law in order to express an emotionally felt identification with state enemies.

The main editorial, which appears on the front page, asserts even more threateningly that since the start of the *intifada* 'seeds of insurrection, lawlessness, and nationalistic crime have been revealed'. While acknowledging the slow pace of improvement in the conditions of Israeli Arabs, the article attributes this improvement to the feeling of Jews that Israeli Arabs' loyalty to the state was unquestionable. However, the recent display of nationalism and the active participation of 'a number of Israeli Arabs in terrorist organizations begins to create some strong antidotes amongst the Jewish population'. In order to eliminate hopes of a split in Jewish opinion the editorial makes it clear that 'there is a broad Jewish consensus, which encompasses the spectrum of Jewish society. This consensus is closer to Tzomet [Hawkish party extreme right] than it is to Ratz [Dovish liberal party]'.

On 'Land Day' *Ma'ariv* published an article with a headline which for the first time highlighted the Islamic Movement's appeal not to break the law on the impending 'Land Day'.<sup>31</sup> The Islamic Movement was then a new and rising force. It would seem that *Ma'ariv's* editorial board (and perhaps governmental factors) influenced the Islamic Movement's appeal,

seeing the Islamic leadership as an effective means of averting violent activity on 'Land Day'. The whip is raised, however, by the banner headline that informs readers that more than 5,000 policemen are on the alert to suppress any disorder. Here also, an additional message is conveyed by the paper: that police will not enter villages where disorder does not break out.

In the event, 'Land Day' protests did not break the law and once again *Ma'ariv* praised Israeli Arab leadership. The headline of an article by Amos Gilboa (prime minister's adviser on Arab affairs, 1986–88), asserts that the orderly protests on 'Land Day' are proof of the Arab leadership's control.<sup>32</sup> The paper also credits itself for having published the right headline on the previous day. The article goes on to say that on the Israeli Arab side, the Islamic Movement was the most instrumental factor in averting disorder on 'Land Day'.

The period between the 'Land Day' of 1988 (30 March), and the murder of seven Arab workers by a Jew, 20 May 1990 – the fourth significant event – is characterized by a small number of isolated articles which deal with the *intifada*'s encroachment into Israel. The articles refer to Arabs in the Galilee,<sup>33</sup> the residents of Taiybe,<sup>34</sup> and the Bedouin of the Negev.<sup>35</sup>

Unequivocal messages continued to be transmitted to the Israeli Arab population. For example, journalist Avner Regev in *al-Hamishmar*, 25 September 1989: 'If the Israeli Arabs intend putting their words into actions they ought to consider the sharp response of the Israeli public and government'.<sup>36</sup> To illustrate the point, Regev cites the speech of Labour Party agriculture minister, Avraham Katz-Oz in which he called for 'a kind of transfer' of Israeli Arabs from the Galilee to the central region and for the settling of Jews in their place, the objective of such a measure being to prevent the creation of a large concentration of Arabs in the area. The head of Naharia city council, Jacki Sabag, from the right-wing Likud Party, announced at this time that he would not permit Arabs to live in his city. Along with the 'stick' Regev also invokes the 'carrot' with the hope of inducing Israeli Arab conformity. He commends the political integration of Israeli Arabs: 'One should see this as a positive development ... because it may serve to put a break upon the separatist notions which have recently taken root in certain sectors of the Israeli Arab population'. The integration of the Israeli Arabs into the political arena should be facilitated, according to Regev.

The leading article of *Yediot Ahronot*'s weekend supplement, 28 July 1989, 'The Intifada Encroaches into the Galilee', presents a plethora of disturbing facts, figures and expressions of Arab nationalism:

In 1988, 655 records were opened in the Galilee: 162 cases of arson, 119 incidents of stone-throwing, 31 cases of blocking roads, 205 cases

of daubing slogans and hanging Palestinian flags, 131 acts of sabotage. The first half of 1989 shows similar statistics. Also: the emergence of Intifada summer schools and Intifada weddings; the distribution of nationalistic, anti-Israel videos in Western Galilee; 'In blood and in spirit we will free Palestine'. 'From Dir Hanna to Jenin' (We all of us are Palestine); the Galilee Arabs are forging the tools of a nascent state: a monitoring committee that includes Arab MPs, sub-committees, and activities to revive the Arabic language.<sup>37</sup>

Even more distressing was the announcement of the article's main argument:

Tomorrow, in the face of the new threat, we will be sweating; the Intifada is creeping into the Galilee; Palestinian nationalism, Palestinian flags, terrorist attacks, and a form of Arab autonomy.

Jewish Galilee is dead. As a clear Arab majority prevails and flourishes the political establishment buries its head buried in the sand ... 296 thousand Israeli Arabs settled in the Galilee during the 1980s. 375 thousand in 1987 – an increase of 27%.

This extract, which does not focus on a specific event, is the bluntest and most severe that our research revealed. It lays bare the facts to both Jews and Arabs alike, yet behind this particular construction of an Israeli Arab reality the article harbours another purpose. Employing the words of Arab leaders interviewed for the article, it suggests the expediency of setting up a Palestinian state. The Arab leaders' claim is that the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel will bring peace to the region.

This climactic display of extremism, which was part of the process of Palestinianization, was followed by other articles that suggested opposite trends. These articles also try to represent and encourage the conformist elements of the Israeli Arab population. *Yediot Ahranot*, 23 June 1989, published an article by Uzi Machnyemi about the prevailing atmosphere among Israeli Arabs.<sup>38</sup> The article served as a platform for the presentation of the Israeli Arabs' position and especially for the expression of their sense of discrimination and injustice. In this respect, we can concede that the article probably helped let off much pent-up steam that might otherwise have burst out in a much more violent manner. Next to the 'carrot', however, there was also the 'stick'. Under the headline '500 Subversive Acts', at the bottom of the same page, police data of subversive activity by Israeli Arabs is presented. The combination of the statistics and headline of the main article transmits a clear message to the Israeli Arabs. It should be stressed that at least part of the Israeli Arab population identified these messages in the Hebrew newspapers as emanating from the government.<sup>39</sup>

The tendency to refute the belief of an encroachment of the *intifada* on to Israeli soil increased towards the end of 1989. In November *Ha'aretz* published an article containing the conclusions of six senior Israeli researchers, which argued that the *intifada* did not have an impact upon the willingness of Israeli Arabs to integrate with state institutions.<sup>40</sup> The headline, 'We Are Israelis First', highlights the claim that the Israeli Arabs use their 'Israeliness' as a tool in their struggle for equality in Israel. A sub-headline within the body of the article asserts (citing one of the researchers) that the Israeli Arab modes of operation following the outburst of the *intifada* and the rise in extremism are 'precisely that of conformity'.

One month later, *al-Hamishmar* published an article by Arab journalist Kassem Zaid. Zaid conveys his impressions of interviews and researches, which are defined in the following sub-heading: 'The facts on the ground show us that the Israeli Arabs are not taking an active part in the Intifada, in fact, they see the preservation of the Green Line as fundamental to their national interest'.<sup>41</sup>

According to Kassem Zaid there is little fear of the *intifada* encroaching over the Green Line. This belief, he concludes, is grounded mainly in the fact that no distinct changes in the voting patterns of Israeli Arabs have occurred.

#### THE MURDERS IN RISHON LETZION OF SEVEN ARAB WORKERS

The optimistic assessment of the Israeli Arab position did not stand up to the trials which the Israeli Arabs had to face following the murders by Ami Popper, an Israeli soldier on leave. On 20 May 1990, Popper approached a site where Arab workers from the territories in search of work in Israel were congregated. He opened fire, killing seven and injuring eleven. The murders ignited the occupied territories and Arab settlements in Israel. The severity of the riots (and especially the fear that both Israeli Arabs and Arabs in the territories might use firearms) occasioned a state of alert, unprecedented within the Green Line.

The blatant threat of mobilizing soldiers rather than policemen against the citizens of Israel is again carried in *Ha'aretz*, 22 May 1990, by the main headline: 'Army Forces on Alert to Keep Order in the Green Line', and the sub-headline: 'Extensive riots in Israel's Arab settlements. Four Arabs killed and 166 injured in the occupied territories, according to Arab sources'. An analysis by *Ha'aretz's* military reporter, Ze'ev Schiff appears, in an exceptional case, on the front page of this issue, 22 May 1990.<sup>42</sup> Schiff transmits a direct message, from the defence establishment to Israeli Arabs, that the government and the defence establishment view with severity the prominence of Islamic elements among those responsible for the breakdown in order. Although reluctant to mobilize

defence forces, the government will undertake to do this if Israeli Arab rioting continues. He emphasizes the fact that Israeli Arabs' support of the *intifada* only serves to affirm to their brothers in the occupied territories, and especially to the PLO leadership, the contribution made by Israeli Arabs to the *intifada*. On behalf of the defence establishment Schiff attempts to deter violent reactions to the murders by reminding the Israeli Arab public that 'Over the last two years PLO leadership has displayed caution by not encouraging Israeli Arabs to adopt the *intifada*'. Schiff concludes that the extremist voices have predominated among the Israeli Arab public and have been followed by many. In contrast to his conclusion, however, Schiff elsewhere makes the assumption that although Israeli Arabs identified entirely with the *intifada*, 'only a few were willing to join the stream of violence'.

An analysis by another expert, Shmuel Toledano, in the same publication expresses his amazement at the restraint exercised by Israeli Arabs over the last two years.<sup>43</sup> The violence in the wake of the murders is not perceived by Toledano as an Arab-Israeli *intifada*, but rather as a one-off outburst. This drew a distinction between violent reactions to one event or other and the *intifada* itself.

Some days after this publication, Schiff brought out another article titled 'The Israeli Arabs Are No Longer a Bridge to Peace'.<sup>44</sup> A sub-headline in the body of this article expresses Schiff's stance, while at the same time representing *Ha'aretz's* dovish editorial board: 'The continued occupation and bloody confrontation in the occupied territories will eventually bring a violent uprising to areas within the Green Line; this will mean a confrontation between the state of Israel and its Arab minority'. Herein we find a revealing editorial alteration, for in the main text Schiff does not use the phrase 'to areas within the Green Line' but the phrase 'to within Israeli borders'. Apparently the editor saw fit to express his or perhaps the editorial board's position by reviving the term 'Green Line' – a term which the Israeli government had sought to adopt since the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip following the Six Day War.

This article also transmits a clear message to the Israeli Arab leadership:

If the Arab minority is persuaded by those attempting to incite an Intifada on Israeli soil, those voices will be heard which seek to block Israeli Arab progress, and damage their rights, including their electoral right. Up to now, democracy has defended Israeli Arabs and opened up new opportunities for them. They must be very cautious, therefore, that their activities do not break the democratic frame.

Schiff adds that if the *intifada* is duplicated in Israel the right wing would claim that the struggle is over the whole, including Haifa and the

Wadi Arra and that, therefore, giving up the occupied territories is pointless. Schiff's purpose here is to steer Israeli Arab activities back into legal channels. Two threats are applied to this end: that continued violent activity will damage Israeli Arab gains, and that violent activity will play into the hands of the right and damage the chance for the establishment of a Palestinian entity in the occupied territories. This second threat operates according to the same principle – if the struggle is over the whole, giving up a part is pointless. Thus, if Israeli Arabs continue violent activity that reinforces the claims of the Israeli right, they damage rather than assist the interests of their brothers in the occupied territories.

The response to Schiff's argument can be found in an article published by Sofian Cabha about a month later.<sup>45</sup> The writer argues that an Israeli Arab *intifada* does not exist, and that only on the day of demonstrations against the murder of the seven Arab workers did the Israeli Arabs identify completely with the Arabs in the occupied territories. On this day the existence of the Green Line was erased from the Israeli Arab consciousness. The next day, however, it was built anew. According to Cabha, the Israelis themselves are responsible for inviting the *intifada* into the Green Line, although it was born in the occupied territories and will continue until peace prevails. Israeli Arabs are continuing a twofold struggle: on an external level they are assisting in the establishment of an independent entity in the occupied territories, and on an internal level they are fighting for equal rights in Israel. Of these two, Israeli Arabs tend to view the struggle for equal rights in Israel as more crucial, says Cabha. In his opinion, the Israeli authorities' response to the demonstrations in Arab streets is expressed in threatening language: 'We will bring back Martial Law, we will clamp down hard'. Cabha's insights as an Israeli Arab confirm that the threats transmitted in the newspapers were understood and absorbed by the Israeli Arab population.

#### THE RIOTS AT TEMPLE MOUNT

Another significant event (the fifth), on 8 October 1990, brought severe Israeli Arab rioting in its wake. During the rioting, unprecedented at the holy site of the Temple Mount, 19 Arabs were killed and 140 injured by the Israel Defence Forces. One of the victims was an Israeli Arab. The next day, 9 October 1990, *Ha'aretz* came out with the following headline: 'After Temple Mount, Wave of Rioting and Rage among Israeli Arabs and Arabs of the Occupied Territories Feared'. The sub-headline reads: 'Large police and army deployment. Jewish taxi driver murdered by gunshot near Abu Ghosh; findings of police examination are to be filed tomorrow'. Appearing only in small print, another sub-headline informs readers that 'According to police data, ten Arabs killed and 140 Arabs and twenty Jews injured in yesterday's bloody scenes'. The newspaper's decision to express



fears of rioting, rather than focusing on the violent events of the previous day, can be attributed to the fact that the major facts surrounding the events had already been transmitted to the public by the electronic media. The editorial board perhaps wanted to pre-empt the electronic media by anticipating further rioting on the following day – that is, the day of the paper's publication. A second possibility is that the newspaper, rather than sensationalizing the Temple Mount incident, preferred to play it down. The newspaper may have chosen to serve the interests of the defence establishment by emphasizing fears and the possible scenarios in the event of further rioting. If so, the newspaper was fully justified in devoting most of the item not to a description of the Temple Mount violence, but to the information relayed by the defence establishment on the deployment of police and army in the territories and within Israel.

This style of journalism, we can assume, attempted to deter at least moderate Israeli Arabs from violence and disorder. In the body of the main news item we read that:

Police fear further violent outbursts among Israeli Arabs – more severe even than that seen after the murders in Rishon Letzion. Police are preparing for a nationwide state of emergency, army leave is cancelled, and recruits are being sent to reinforce police. Since the morning forces have been mobilizing and a state of alert has been declared. Border patrols and terrorists combat units have been stationed in the Jerusalem vicinity, the North and the Triangle where severe rioting took place after the murder in Rishon Letzion.

The day after the rioting and demonstrations, 10 October, the vice-mayor of Nazareth, Ramez Jarasi, was interviewed.<sup>46</sup> Jarasi expresses his opinion about the riots on Temple Mount and the Israeli Arab disorders. He takes the opportunity provided by this platform to attack government policy, which he claims led to the Temple Mount incident.

A similar accusation appears in an article in *Davar*, 19 October 1990.<sup>47</sup> Here too, Muhamed Chalilia, an Israeli Arab, attacks government policy, not only that which led to the Temple Mount incident, but also that which neglects the Israeli Arab population. Chalilia also heavily criticizes Israeli TV for, he claims, its inaccurate reporting of the events at the Temple Mount. Jordanian broadcasts, which transmitted a lot of live footage of the event, were much more accurate in his opinion. Chalilia claims that live footage, censored by Israeli TV, was broadcast by Jordanian TV: 'The Jordanians broadcast repeatedly footage of a police officer throwing tear gas between the legs of the old Mufti of Jerusalem, Alshech Saed Aldeen Alalame. Not surprisingly it is often possible to see film of the assistant chairman of the Islamic council, Sheik Muhammed Algamel, being led to the courts that were to prolong his trial'. However, Chalilia's criticism that 'the Jordanian TV was, this time, a much more reliable source for news'

is a severe one, since Israel claims – to Israeli Arabs and Arabs of all the Middle-Eastern countries – that it is the only democracy in the region and the only country that supports a reliable and free press, thus also the only reliable source of news in the region.

On 14 December 1990, *Davar* published an article that was a kind of summary of the processes undergone in the Israeli Arab population during the three years of the *intifada*.<sup>48</sup> The article's principal claim is that rather than bringing about a transition among Israeli Arabs, the *intifada* sped up processes which had already begun. Researcher Eli Reches illustrates Israel's duality and uncertainty towards Israeli Arabs and to their relationship to the *intifada*: 'The intifada is only a prompt. The political system of the Arab sector in Israel is in the midst of an organizational shake-up, in which it is trying to find its way wrestling with things unconnected to the intifada'.

Running contrary to Reches' conclusion, the article itself includes another story, which represents the Israeli Arab public as one acting on behalf of, and giving vast amounts of support to, their brothers in the occupied territories: 'the tightening of ties between Israeli Arabs and Arabs of the occupied territories is one distinct phenomenon prompted and reinforced by the intifada. This closeness is not insignificant'. This article provides a reliable illustration of what occurred among the Israeli Arabs during the *intifada*. It can be assumed that Israeli Arabs who read the article were encouraged to continue their conformist activities.

#### SUMMARY

From an analysis of the publications in Hebrew-language newspapers during the first three years of the *intifada* it is possible to trace the shift in stance taken by the papers. This is especially so during times and events in which there was fear of losing control over the Israeli Arabs. It is possible to identify strong ties between the defence establishment and the newspapers' editorial boards, which collaborated by transmitting its messages to the Israeli Arabs. It is also possible to discern the recurring pattern of this role. The distinct component of this pattern is the transmission of warnings to Israeli Arabs that they act and protest only within a legal framework. Added to these warnings are other messages and threats, which aim to make it clear to Israeli Arabs that they stand to lose what gains they have made since the withdrawal of Martial Law from their settlements in the early 1960s. Usually, after each event, the newspapers also provided a platform for the presentation of the Israeli Arab position in respect of the issues surrounding the event. This served to assuage frustrations. Except in those moments of crisis, dealt with in this article, the Israeli Arabs did not receive significant media coverage during the period covered by this research.

## NOTES

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8. *Yediot Ahronot*, 20 Dec. 1987.
9. Dan Caspi and Yechiel Limor claim that *Ma'ariv* exhibited a more nationalistic tone 'closer to that of the Likud', and followed its own ideological notions which were not in tune with the Zionist line. On the other hand, *Yediot Ahronot* was more pluralistic and open to a variety of opinions. D Caspi and Y. Limor, *The Mediators: The Mass Media in Israel 1948–1990*, Tel Aviv, 1992, pp.60, 62 (in Hebrew).
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