



**Center on Terrorism and Counterterrorism
at the FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**



**The Palestinian Islamic Jihad's U.S. Cell [1988-95]:
The Ideological Foundations
of its Propaganda Strategy**

By Tally Helfont

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Introduction

Arab nationalism, territorial nationalism, and Arab socialism, among other ideologies, all heralded the restoration of the Middle East in early twentieth century to its pre-colonial, former glory. During the 1950s, various leaders and movements had surfaced, each attempting to win the hearts and minds of the people based on some exclusive, and supposedly undeniable, identity. Whether rooted in the historic primacy of Egypt or the cultural-linguistic bond of the Arab people, men of varying stature and inclinations identified the sagging state of the Arab-Muslim people and offered up a path that was said to guarantee redemption. Nevertheless, by the late 1960s, and with the humiliating defeat of the Arabs by the Israelis in 1967, many of these ideologies and their “paths of redemption” proved to have failed. Meanwhile, the Islamist trend, which traces its ideological roots to the forefathers of the *Salafiyya* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reemerged in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during the mid-1970s. Growing steadily into one of the strongest political forces on the Palestinian scene, it was not until the 1987 Intifada that the Islamic movement in the Palestinian Territories had transformed into a major force able to unsettle the existing balance of political power in Palestinian society.¹

Because the majority of Palestinians are Muslim, and because Islam has historically played at least a rudimentary role in Palestinian society, the Palestinian Islamic movement has enjoyed broad popular support. Additionally, both Israel’s continued existence and its unwelcome branding as a foreign presence in the region serve as reminders of local weakness, threatening both the Arab identity and Islamic character of its embattled people. The Islamic movement in Palestine has capitalized on this situation by seeking to champion the Palestinian cause where others have failed. This endeavor represents both the Islamization of the conflict and the politicization of Islam, based on the necessarily universal application of Islam and the political tenets inherent in it. Viewing the conflict with Israel through an Islamic lens therefore offers an alternative set of causes and solutions, all of which are religiously rooted. Whereas previous paradigms have attempted to pinpoint the underlying cause of the conflict in a multitude of ways, Meir Litvak, professor of Middle East history at Tel Aviv University, maintains that the Islamic trend “portrays it as a battle between two rival religions, Islam and Judaism, or between two opposing absolutes.” Further, he adds that the religious idiom has played a unique role in the evolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.² The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), a Palestinian resistance organization founded in the early 1980s by Fathi al-Shiqaqi and Sheikh ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ‘Awda in Gaza, offers a clear demonstration of this.³

¹ Ziad Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: The Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad* (Bloomington: Indianapolis University Press, 1994), p. xiv.

² Ibid. Meir Litvak, “The Islamization of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: The Case of Hamas,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, No. 1 (January 1998), p. 148.

³ *Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami fi Filastini* is also often rendered as Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine or Islamic Jihad Movement.

Forging together an Islamic platform with Palestinian national aspirations, the PIJ identifies Palestine “as the central cause of the modern Islamic Movement.”⁴ Aspiring to liberate Palestine, based on an Islamically-derived imperative, it established itself on the local scene as the armed, ready-and-willing defender of the Palestinian people. It looked to the Islamic past to identify legitimate means for its struggle; it found these means in the concept of jihad (holy war). Seeking to accomplish its goal through every possible venue, it relied on diverse means to support its cause. In 1988, the PIJ informally established a cell in the United States for the sole purpose of propagandizing to raise funds for the violent liberation of Palestine. This cell gained the PIJ numerous U.S. supporters and collected thousands of dollars towards its deadly enterprise. The moneys raised directly funded, among other things, violent attacks carried out by PIJ operatives against Israeli civilians. However, following years of undercover surveillance, the cell was raided and subsequently dissolved in 1995 by the FBI, culminating in the warrant, arrest, and trial of several cell members.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the content of the U.S. cell’s propaganda and to identify its ideological foundations from within the formulations of a group of well-known modern ideologues. The study begins with this group of ideologues and highlights the specific concepts that influenced the PIJ. This will be followed by an introduction to the PIJ and the creation of its U.S. cell. Finally, this study will analyze the cell’s propaganda materials with regards to the established context.

The cell’s propaganda, some generated by cell members and some originating from the group’s Middle East-based operatives yet distributed in the United States, includes conference speeches, publications, and solicitations. These materials were assembled and translated by the U.S. Government as part of its 2005 case against PIJ cell members, *USA v. Al-Arian et al* and will be referenced accordingly. Any other Arabic material not identified with this case was translated by the author of this study. The analysis of these materials clearly illustrates the PIJ’s ideological platform, its perceived problems, and its proposed solutions. It also identifies the way in which the PIJ employs its ideology as a fundraising tool. This study represents the first analytical look at this body of material that focuses on sourcing and understanding its ideological content. It is the hope of the author that this study will offer new insight into the PIJ’s views and *modus operandi* as the group is still a force to be reckoned with in the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

⁴ “Internal By-Laws of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad: Political Constants of the Movement, 1” (henceforth “Bylaws”), *USA v. Al-Arian, et al. MDFL 03-CR-77*, Exhibit 400. All translations from Arabic in government exhibits quoted herein were by the U.S. government.

Chapter 1: Ideological Influences

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad as an organization, and the set of ideas that make up its ideology, draws inspiration from a number of sources, including the formulations of various prominent Muslim ideologues, the deeds of certain historical personages within the Palestinian narrative, as well as specific historical events. This section provides an exposition of the ideological influences that helped shape its doctrine, focusing on Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Hasan al-Banna

Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) founded the Society of Muslim Brothers (*Jam'iyat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*) in 1928 in Egypt. Occupying the role of head of the Ikhwan, known as *al-Murshid al-'Amm*, or General Guide, al-Banna spearheaded the Islamic revivalist effort in the region. While the Muslim Brotherhood was essentially a religious movement at the beginning, it also combined elements of politics, economics, and social needs into its message. Central to this was the idea of the propagation of Islam (*da'wa*) by means of education (*tarbiyya*). The Brotherhood's efforts entailed preaching and instruction, as well as opening schools, clinics, and mosques. In Brotherhood parlance, both terms were used interchangeably, emphasizing their moral and value-based connotations alongside their practical and economic implications.⁵

In accordance with his commitment to *tarbiyya*, al-Banna selected and trained a group of "disciples" who would serve as "missionaries and propagandists," or *du'at*. Installing his *du'at* as preachers and educators throughout the country, al-Banna instructed them to disseminate and promote the principles of the Brotherhood. Likewise, al-Banna viewed political participation as yet another means to promote Ikhwan values, at times allying with the existing leadership while in other instances, personally participating in a local election in Isma'iliyya. This was all done in an effort to bring about the "revitalization" of society, which would then lead to the establishment of a unified Islamic *umma* (nation). For al-Banna, this was the starting point for improving the current state of malaise in Egypt and even in the greater Middle East.⁶

The principal themes al-Banna focused on in his activities, his writing, and his doctrinal formulations include Egypt, Islam, and the Western presence in the region. Accordingly, the Ikhwan's activities were generally centered around the perceived problems relating to these concepts, including attempting to oust the foreign influence within Egypt, to end Egypt's alliances with Western powers, as well as striving to lead the "errant" society back to Islam.

During the late 1930s, Egypt shifted in orientation, responding to both the political and economic hardships of the previous decades as well as to the competing emerging ideologies. According to Israel Gershoni, professor of history at Tel Aviv University and James Jankowski, professor emeritus of history at the University of Colorado, this shift involved a renewed identification with "the people and cultures of the 'East' rather than

⁵ Christina Phelps Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1964), p.154.

⁶ Harris, p. 153.

with those of the ‘West.’” The adoption of an “Eastern” orientation resulted from the conclusion — drawn by many Egyptian intellectuals regarding their economic, social, and political dissatisfaction during the 1920s — that the pitiable state of affairs was directly attributed to the abandonment of the East’s “true essence in favor of an alien and inferior Westernism.”⁷ According to al-Banna, Egypt was at a crossroads in which one path led to “the way of the West” and the other to “the way of Islam.” Richard Mitchell, author of a seminal work on the Brotherhood, suggests that in al-Banna’s view, “Islam ... is sufficient for the renaissance of the nation,” making all other systems—including internationalism, nationalism, and capitalism—unnecessary.⁸ Al-Banna sought to convince the people that their salvation lay in something much more familiar, tangible, and, most importantly, indigenous. For al-Banna, “Islam is dogma and worship, a fatherland and nationality, religion and state, spirituality and action, the Qur’an and the sword.”⁹

However, this does not mean that al-Banna did not accord nationalism a place within his idea of “correct” identity. While al-Banna viewed nationalism chiefly as a foreign implant, he attempted to reconcile it with Islam by infusing patriotism with Islamic meaning, given how it had spread throughout Egypt.¹⁰ In fact, Gershoni and Jankowski explain that “al-Banna spoke of a hierarchy of concentric circles of identity, in which patriotism and Arab nationalism ultimately led to Islamic unity in one supra-territorial and supra-racial homeland.”¹¹ His concept of circles (*halaqat*) of national identity did not reject loyalty to several communities, rather viewing them as “an overlapping and mutually reinforcing network of allegiances.” Conversely, giving exclusive primacy to any one circle, similar to the self-styled Arab nationalists, in al-Banna’s view, was not only erroneous, but even blasphemous. It was within this framework that al-Banna reconciled his own territorial nationalism, viewing Egypt as a “valid object of Egyptian Muslim loyalty and commitment.”¹² The need to liberate Egypt from foreign influence and occupation was based not only on the religious imperative to liberate Islamic lands, but also on the belief that its liberation was a stage in attaining the larger goal of a greater Islamic community, regionally.

Al-Banna argued in his various works, including *al-Rasa’il*,¹³ that through a campaign of education and Islamic revivalism, the Ikhwan would be able to spearhead the establishment of an Islamic state, which would then confront the enemies of Islam by

⁷ Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 38.

⁸ Richard Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 233.

⁹ G. Delanoue, “al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, et al., Brill, 2006, *Brill Online*, Tel Aviv University.

¹⁰ While there has been a plethora of scholarship dealing with the way the terms nationalism and patriotism have been understood in the Middle East, it is sufficient to say for these purposes that the terms are different but inter-related.

¹¹ Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 80-3.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 94-5.

¹³ The most famous of al-Banna’s works, *The Messages (al-Rasa’il)*, was a compilation of both reproduced and summarized letters written by al-Banna on a range of topics, from his ideas on membership duties and responsibilities to his views on the state of Egyptian society. This work is also referenced today as either “The Collection of the Messages of the Imam Martyr Hasan al-Banna” or “The Collection of the Letters of the Martyr Hasan al-Banna” (*Majmu’at Rasa’il al-Imam al-Shahid Hasan al-Banna*). See Mitchell, p. 13.

force.¹⁴ This progression essentially described al-Banna's prescription for waging jihad. On this note, al-Banna stated that "The Brotherhood knows that the ultimate degree of force is the force of doctrine and belief; the force of the arm and weapons comes second."¹⁵ This statement has been interpreted in different ways. Muslim Brotherhood traditionalists argue that force must only be used once the above-mentioned conditions have been met. Others argue that waging jihad in Palestine, for example, not only employs the same logic driving al-Banna's call to liberate Egypt, but is also a way to launch the confrontation between Islam and the West in the region, therefore hastening the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate.

According to al-Banna's ideology, jihad was a tool to achieve specific ends, both in the short and long term. Particularly, he felt that Brothers should focus on the far enemy in the form of imperialism and the British and French regional occupation. Then, following years of *da'wa* and *tarbiyya*, Brothers should shift their focus to the near enemy, i.e. repressive failed states, in an attempt to establish an Islamic state. Considering that the Brotherhood during al-Banna's leadership existed in the former condition in its confrontation with the British, his primary promotion of jihad "was in the spirit of defense against 'imperialism and unbelief (*kufr*).'"¹⁶ In his *Risalat al-Jihad (Message on Jihad)*, written in the late 1930s, al-Banna uses a theological approach to expound on his concept of jihad.¹⁷ He opens the piece with an explanation of why "All Muslims Must Make Jihad" in which he charges that "Today, the Muslims are subjected to foreigners and ruled by unbelievers. This is why preparing for jihad is a personal obligation for everybody, without exception." He systematically proceeds with his development of the subject by presenting, *inter alia*, Quranic justifications of jihad, mentions of "jihad" in the *Ahadith* (Traditions), and scholarly treatment of jihad.¹⁸ These writings were not simply intellectual exercises but rather served as guides for the Ikhwan members. In accordance with the groundwork laid down by al-Banna during his leadership of the Ikhwan, acts of jihad were carried out periodically against British civil and military installations in Egypt.

Furthermore, al-Banna, who himself had become more radicalized by the 1940s as a result of the worsening situation in Egypt, promoted jihad in another arena based on similar reasoning. Palestine, in line with his ideas of Western imperialist oppression and the obligation to defend Islamic lands, was worthy of his call for jihad.¹⁹ He sent Brothers on two occasions to assist the Palestinians in their fight against the British and subsequently, the Zionists, an issue which will be elaborated on in subsequent chapters.

Although al-Banna certainly promoted violent jihad against enemies of Islam, he also promoted the notion of a spiritual, internal jihad. In an essay written during his time at the teacher's college, Dar al-^cUlum, al-Banna posited that there was a marked difference between "isolated spirituality" (*al-ruhaniyya al-ictizaliyya*) and "social spirituality" (*al-*

¹⁴ Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 121.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 120.

¹⁶ Mitchell, p. 76.

¹⁷ Brinyar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998), p. 90n, 165.

¹⁸ Hasan al-Banna, "The Message of Jihad" (*Risalat al-Jihad*)," *Young Muslims – Canada*, http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/jihad/index.htm.

¹⁹ Olivier Carré, "From Banna to Qutb and 'Qutbism': The Radicalization of Fundamentalist Thought Under Three Regimes," in *Egypt from Monarchy to Republic: A Reassessment of Revolution and Change*, ed. Shimon Shamir (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995): p. 184.

ruhaniyya al-ijtima'iyya), in which the latter led to personal struggle (jihad) towards the solution of social problems; a major goal of the Ikhwan.²⁰ Al-Banna vacillated between his two concepts of jihad, believing that both were indispensable in achieving a greater Islamic *umma*. The same cannot be said for all of those claiming al-Banna as their inspiration.

Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) was the chief ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1950s and 1960s.²¹ Responsible for some of the group's most radical formulations, Qutb's views were much more severe than those of al-Banna. In 1962, Qutb wrote his seminal work, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones Along the Way),²² which presented revolutionary analysis and advocated a new Islamic way. *Milestones* is a call to action to recreate the Muslim world based on strictly Quranic foundations. Qutb's ideology, and particularly his prescription of a specific near enemy (in the form of corrupt Arab regimes) that must be fought by means of jihad, represents a major break away from the official ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. Qutb completely turned against secular, territorial nationalism, rather believing that Muslims owed their allegiance only to Islam and to God. For Qutb, the Islamic system was said to be the "believer's homeland (*watan*), nation (*qawm*), and people (*ahl*)."²³ Therefore, he argued that any regime which claimed its legitimacy through nationalism was inherently working against the ideals of Islam.²³

Unlike al-Banna, Qutb was completely removed from society and therefore developed a more rigid and ideologically pure vision. The fact that most of Qutb's ideological repertoire was written during his incarceration, while experiencing none of the realities of daily life in Egypt, likely contributed to the absolutism in his language. While Qutb was still adamantly anti-Western, blaming the West for the predicament of the Muslims, he was writing in the age of decolonization and decreasing imperial influence. The fact that the regime that imprisoned him was an Arab nationalist one incensed Qutb even further. Had it been a puppet regime of the West, he could have denounced it as such; rather, he was being incarcerated and tortured by those who had, in his view, simply turned away from Islam. Therefore, Qutb directed his primary attention to the internal Egyptian dilemma as opposed to the anti-imperialist problems al-Banna had addressed. In

²⁰ Mitchell, 216.

²¹ J. J. G. Jansen, "Sayyid Qutb," *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

²² The title, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, translates into English as *Milestones Along the Way* or *Milestones Along the Road*. English translations of the book are usually entitled simply *Milestones*; the book is also sometimes referred to as *Signposts*.

²³ Ronald Nettler, "A Modern Islamic Confession of Faith and Conception of Religion: Sayyid Qutb's Introduction to the Tafsir, fi Zilal al-Qur'an," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21, No. 1 (1994): pp. 106-7. Qutb's understanding of the term *hakimiyya* (sovereignty) stipulated that Muslims should reject manmade laws and in turn, accept an all-encompassing system based on the *Shari'a*, which provides laws, values, customs, and social norms. Qutb used this understanding to separate the societies of the world into two distinct categories: Islam, and its opposite, *jahiliyya*. Accordingly, the loyalty of Muslims belonged to the Islamic *umma*, which includes all Muslims, and not any specific secular nation. He went on to state that "any society where someone other than God alone is worshipped" should be considered un-Islamic. See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones (Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq)*, rev. trans. and fwd. Ahmad Zaki Hammad (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1993), p. 78.

this transformation, Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir's state became the enemy of Islam and the chief propagator of the new *jahiliyya*,²⁴ or the near enemy.

Because modern Muslim society had received the word of God but chose not to fully implement it, Qutb considered the modern *jahiliyya* to be even worse than its pre-Islamic predecessor, which had been based on ignorance. Furthermore, the fact that Qutb's view of Egyptian society was drastically different from al-Banna's made his prescription for its amelioration radically different as well. While al-Banna had preached for the evolution of Egyptian society through education and outreach programs, Qutb preached for revolution. He declared that materialist obstacles needed to be removed so that, in essence, Islam could be spread by the sword (*jihad bil sayf*) and by the book (the Qur'an). To do this, true Muslims needed to separate themselves from *jahili* society and join together.²⁵

In his thorough exposition of the concept of jihad in the *Milestones* chapter aptly titled *Jihad fi Sabil Allah* (Jihad in the Way of God),²⁶ Qutb states plainly that he uses the term to the fullest extent of its meaning. Unlike those he considers to be apologists or defeatists, he does not condone limiting jihad to internal struggle or as a purely defensive tool. Rather, he promotes offensive jihad for man to "free himself from the yoke imposed by certain of his fellow man."²⁷ Gilles Kepel, a prominent scholar of radical Islam and Philippe Roman Chair in History and International Affairs at the London School of Economics, elaborates on this point, writing that,

The insistence with which Sayyid Qutb reiterated that the establishment of 'the reign of God on earth' cannot be brought about 'through sermons and discourse' is revealing of the context in which *Signposts* was written: faced with the totalitarian state being created by Nasserism, Islamist militants must not limit themselves to words alone.²⁸

Nevertheless, Qutb does not discount the power of *da'wa* but rather contextualized it within violent jihad, stating that, "preaching confronts beliefs and ideas while the 'movement' tackles material obstacles." Qutb viewed 'Abd al-Nasir's regime as such a material obstacle, not only to restoring freedom in Egypt but more importantly, to restoring the freedom to listen and accept the message of Islam. Qutb argued, "After annihilating the tyrannical force, whether political or a radical tyranny, or domination of one class over the other within the same race, Islam establishes a new social, economic and political system in which all men and women enjoy real freedom."²⁹

²⁴ The term *jahiliyya* literally means "ignorance" and is used to connote the period prior to God's third and final revelation through the Prophet Muhammad. More specifically, it is often characterized in Islamic terminology as the pre-Islamic period, which was "ignorant of divine guidance." For Qutb, *jahili* societies were backward and barbaric because they lacked the only legitimate civilizing factor, Islam. See William E. Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of Jahaliyya," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (2003): pp. 525-7.

²⁵ Gilles Kepel, *The Roots of Radical Islam*, trans. Jon Rothschild (London: SAQI, 2005), pp. 52-5.

²⁶ Jihad is said to involve a "determined effort" aimed at a goal that is both for the sake of Islam and in the path of God (*jihad fi sabil Allah*; *jihad* in Islam must be in God's way or path in order to distinguish it from the wars of pre-Islamic Arabia).

²⁷ Kepel, p. 54.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 55.

²⁹ Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 49.

This is what he envisioned for his native country and was willing to wage *jihad bil sayf* for it to be achieved. Qutb's ideological output in the latter years of his life, as embodied in *Milestones*, set a militant example for others seeking to overthrow their own near enemies by means of jihad and revolution.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

Imam Sayyid Ruhollah al-Musavi al-Khomeini (1902-1989) was the engineer and primary ideologue of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. Seeking to eliminate the corruption, foreign influence, and socio-economic malaise that existed in 1970s Iran, Khomeini triggered an event that completely transformed the country in a dramatic and unprecedented fashion.

During the Qajar (1794–1925) and Pahlavi (1925–1979) dynasties, Iran had been driven towards emulation of the West, followed by “enthusiastic imitation,” which later came to be known by the Islamic opposition movement as “Westoxication” (*Gharbzadegi*). Meanwhile, resentment built within the country as a result of what was considered the sale of the nation and its resources to foreign powers. This dichotomy, the former rooted in the country's pre-Islamic heritage, monarchical rule, and territorial nationalism and the latter grounded in the collective identity and cultural values of the Islamic religion, was essentially embodied in the last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.³⁰

Khomeini began to solidify the ideological foundations of the Islamic Revolution when he laid out his concept of Islamic government in a series of lectures given in Najaf in 1970. These lectures, which were assembled and published in *Hokumat-e Islami: Velayat-e Faqih* (Islamic Government: Authority of the Jurist),³¹ communicated a clear political message: the state should not be governed by men and laws of this world, but rather by divine law. The only role for human beings is to interpret the already existing and perfect laws handed down by the Prophet Muhammad and the Infallible Imams.³² Khomeini frequently drew upon his perceived progression of authority from the Prophet, to the Imams, and then to the clerics, expressly to afford his concept Shi'i legitimacy.

Khomeini took this concept of clerical authority to heart and began to reshape many Islamic notions. Using accepted Islamic terminology and applying it to a radically new concept became a recurring feature in Khomeini's ideological approach. For example, in Khomeini's earlier writings, he rarely made mention of the term *shahid* (martyr), using it only in the conventional sense to connote the Shi'i saints who met their deaths according to

³⁰ See David Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran* (Portland: F. Cass, 2001), p. 1. Unless otherwise indicated, references to Khomeini's ideology throughout the course of this work will refer to his formulations as they evolved from the 1970s on.

³¹ Two English translations of Khomeini's *Islamic Government* have been published, one by Hamid Algar, a convert to Shi'a Islam and staunch Khomeini supporter, and one by Joint Publications Research Center, a program associated with the American CIA. Given the sources of these translations, scholars have accused each of bias.

³² The term 'Infallible Imams,' according to the Twelver Shi'i sect of Islam (*Ithna 'Ashari*), refers to the Fourteen Infallibles (*M'a'sumin*) made up of the twelve Shi'i Imams as well as the Prophet Muhammad and his daughter, Fatima Zahra. They are all said to have committed no sins and never made a mistake. Therefore, they are believed to be infallible.

God's will. By contrast, during the Islamic Revolution, Khomeini came to refer to any person "killed in the streets as a glorious *shahid* – as a revolutionary martyr."³³ What's more, Khomeini began to depict the *shahid*, one who demonstrates his faith by sacrificing his life for it, as infusing society with new blood and spirit. Therefore, Khomeini's retooling of the term served his purpose to rouse the nation against its enemies by glorifying its so-called "soldiers." Likewise, the notion of martyrdom (*shahada*) operations such as suicide bombings came into vogue via Khomeini's urging. Meir Hatina, author of several works on Palestinian Islamic radical movements, argues that, "fueled by a sense of humiliation and nurturing an eschatological expectation of salvation," rooted in the Shi'i collective experience, Khomeini promoted a culture of active confrontation against "the forces of injustice and tyranny" by means of jihad and self-sacrifice. Khomeini's championing of martyrdom served as a source of inspiration for his followers in Iran during the Islamic Revolution as well as in Lebanon through Hizballah and in Palestine through the PIJ.³⁴

Khomeini also fortified the concept of jihad in his work, *Velayat-e faqih*. He argued that jurists (*fuqaha*), "by means of jihad and enjoining the good and forbidding the evil,"³⁵ must expose and overthrow tyrannical rulers and rally the people so that the Islamic *umma* can establish an Islamic government. Khomeini added that only the proper teaching of Islam would cause the entire population to become *mujahids* (holy warriors).³⁶ Furthermore, Khomeini placed the responsibility of embarking on this sacred jihad on the religious scholars or jurists because of their rank and position, specifically calling for, in this example, an end to "usurpation and plundering of wealth" and to "exploitation by the West."³⁷

This raises an interesting question concerning the legitimacy of the jurists, or in this case Khomeini himself, to initiate jihad as the stand-in leader for the Twelfth Imam. (According to strict Shi'i doctrine, no lawful expansionist jihad can be carried out while the Twelfth Imam is in occultation, or hidden but set to return.) In Islam, defensive jihad is obligatory upon every Muslim.³⁸ It is plausible that the "exploitation by the West" and "plundering of Iranian wealth" that Khomeini perceived in Iran were sufficient threats to the religious foundation of the country to warrant defense. But what does this say about Khomeini's conception of his own authority to wage expansionist jihad? It appears that the

³³ Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 27.

³⁴ Meir Hatina, "The 'Ulama' and the Cult of Death in Palestine," *Israel Affairs* 12, No.1 (January 2006): pp. 31-2.

³⁵ This refers to the Qur'an, 3:104, 110, calling upon Muslims to "enjoin the good and forbid the evil."

³⁶ Ruhullah Khomeini, "Islamic Government," in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, trans. and ann. Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), p. 108, 132.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 116.

³⁸ For Islamic jurists, jihad fits a context of the world divided into Muslim and non-Muslim zones, *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam) and *Dar al-Harb* (Abode of War) respectively. Defensive jihad is in essence the defense of *Dar al-Islam* from the invasion of non-Islamic and therefore heretical (*kufr*) forces. See Douglas E. Streusand, "What Does Jihad Mean?" *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1997.

mere intention to “export the Revolution”³⁹ has expansionist implications. Conversely, one could argue that exporting the Revolution to Muslim countries was in a sense an attempt to free Muslims from the control of Western puppet regimes. Therefore, it also could be considered defensive in nature. As for an all-out expansionist jihadist campaign on *dar al-harb* similar to those in the time of the Prophet, no such intention was explicitly expressed. Many scholars have referred to Khomeini’s extrapolation regarding his authority to declare jihad and those who imitate it as “the new Shi’a.”⁴⁰

In promoting jihad, Khomeini also focused on what he considered to be the greater jihad.⁴¹ He transitioned between his two conceptions of jihad by arguing that,

All segments of society are ready to struggle for the sake of freedom, independence, and the happiness of the nation, and their struggle needs religion. Give the people Islam, then for Islam is the school of jihad, the religion of struggle; let them amend their characters and beliefs in accordance with Islam and transform themselves into a powerful force.⁴²

By using the above principle in the context of his call to “overthrow the tyrannical regime,” a Shi’i motif relating to the notion of historical struggle,⁴³ Khomeini argued that the transformation of individual character and belief would serve as a major source of power in this endeavor. He also believed that no tangible improvements in the political, military and economic arenas were attainable except through “the greatest struggle and combat with the self.”⁴⁴

³⁹ The Islamic Revolution, as Khomeini envisioned it, was to be carried out in four distinct stages. The first step comprised of the indoctrination and politicization of Iranian society; the venue through which the Iranian people would be re-introduced to the ideology of jihad. This was to be followed by the abolition of the monarchy and the subsequent establishment of an Islamic state. Finally, the revolution would be exported. See David Menashri, *Iran: A Decade of War and Revolution* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990), p. 71.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Elie Rekhess, “The Iranian Impact on the Islamic Jihad Movement in the Gaza Strip,” in *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*, ed. David Menashri (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 195.

⁴¹ Jihad is said occur in two general forms, “the first being the peaceful form of a ‘struggle’ against one’s evil inclinations (sometimes referred to as the ‘greater jihad,’ or *mujabdat al-nafs*.)” The second, *jihad* by the sword (*jihad bil-sayf*), is “sometimes referred to as the ‘smaller jihad.’” The latter usage employs violence, among other things, to either a) defend the *dar al-Islam* from the invasion of non-Islamic and therefore heretical forces (see note 38 above) or b) to expand the House of Islam until all the world is brought under the banner of Islam. The meanings of the greater and lesser *jihad* are not universally accepted and, as in the case of Sunni scholar Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, their meanings are often reversed. See Ella Landau-Tasseron, “Jihad,” *Encyclopedia of the Quran*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Brill, 2007. *Brill Online*, Tel Aviv University, and Streusand, “What Does Jihad Mean?”

⁴² Khomeini, “Islamic Government,” p. 132.

⁴³ See Moghadam, Assaf. “The Shi’i Perception of Jihad.” *Al-Nakblab*, 2. (2003), p. 1. According to Moghadam, the Shi’i notion of jihad is irrevocably tied in with the notion of historical suffering, “leading its exponents to emphasize those grievances and myths that have had a particular impact on their identity, including injustice, tyrannical rule, dignity, humiliation, and resistance.”

⁴⁴ Hamid Algar, “Introduction by the Translator,” in Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, trans. and ann. Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981).

Khomeini further elaborated on this idea during a lecture he gave in Najaf on the the greater jihad titled *Jihad-e Akbar*. He called on his students to purify themselves in preparation for the struggle that lay ahead of them and the responsibilities that would fall on their shoulders. Again, these ideological urgings are in line with the first stage of the Islamic Revolution, as Khomeini envisioned it, in which the indoctrination and politicization of Iranian society was to take place. It is plausible to deduce that for Khomeini, the greater jihad was merely a step in the preparation for waging armed jihad against the enemies of Islam.

While hostility towards the West and opposing the Shah were two domains in which Khomeini promoted jihad and self-sacrifice, he identified an additional enemy: Israel. As Litvak avers, “anti-Zionism has become an important pillar of Iranian revolutionary ideology,” centering on both the centrality of Palestine and a basic enmity towards the Jewish state. Having characterized Israel as “the Little Satan” (in contrast to the United States, which it views as “the Big Satan”) and as a “cancerous tumor” that must be removed, Iran’s deep animosity towards the Jews stemmed from two closely related views.

First, Zionism and its manifestation in the Jewish State represent what Litvak terms “the culmination of a Judeo-Western political and cultural onslaught on the Muslim World.”⁴⁵ Israel, they argue, sprang up in the center of the Muslim homeland—Palestine—and therefore displaced its rightful inhabitants, bringing forth corruption and aggression into the midst of the Muslim *umma*. This event is exacerbated by the fact that Palestine is not simply perceived as a stretch of land, but rather a country that has been “blessed by Allah in the Qur’an.”⁴⁶ Thus, Muslim lands must be defended against the invasion of outsiders.

Second, traditional anti-Jewish attitudes in Islamic culture and history regard the Jews as being hostile to Islam since its inception.⁴⁷ The latter view is epitomized by Khomeini’s statement that, “The Islamic movement met its first saboteur in the Jewish people, who are the source of all the anti-Islamic libels and intrigues current today.”⁴⁸ Therefore, the Jewish presence in Palestine is both the doing of the West as well as part of the historical continuity of the Jewish threat against Islam. It is on this basis that Khomeini promoted jihad against Israel, serving as one of its most outspoken critics in the region.

Khomeini’s ideology and specifically his canonization of jihad and *shahada* to overthrow tyrannical forces have served as inspiration to many. Likewise, the establishment of an Islamic state, especially in the manner in which it was achieved, has been held in high regard by many claiming to work towards the same goals in their respective countries. Of course, the Shi’i nature of the country’s Islamic regime has still left many in the Sunni world to question its legitimacy.

⁴⁵ Meir Litvak, “The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Holocaust: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism,” *The Journal of Israeli History* 25, No. 1 (March 2006): p. 268.

⁴⁶ Rekhess, “The Iranian Impact on the Islamic Jihad Movement,” p. 195.

⁴⁷ Litvak, “The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Holocaust,” pp. 267-8.

⁴⁸ Ruhollah Khomeini, *The Sayings of Ayatollah Khomeini: Political, Philosophical, Social, & Religious*, ed. Tony Hendra and trans. Harold Salemsen (New York: Bantam, 1980).

Additional Inspiration

Al-Banna, Qutb, and Khomeini not only dramatically influenced the formulation of PIJ's ideology, but also gave it its *raison d'être*. Drawing on various aspects of each ideologue's extrapolations, PIJ has developed a distinct repertoire of radical rhetoric steeped in Islamic fundamentalism. But it did not draw its inspiration from words alone. It sees Izz ad-Din al-Qassam (1882-1935) as the quintessential pioneer of the Palestinian struggle. Representing "the most outstanding religious figure to have carried out jihad against Western imperialism and its allies in the region despite the oppressive circumstances under which he operated," al-Qassam inspired a sense of revolutionary fervor in the group, serving as "an example of how to translate abstract beliefs into deeds."⁴⁹

Born in Syria and later educated in Egypt, al-Qassam already had several years of revolutionary experience when he came to Palestine. He had participated in the anti-British demonstrations in Egypt in 1919 and later in the Syrian resistance against the French in 1921. Shortly after his arrival in Haifa, al-Qassam quickly rose to prominence, working as both a preacher and teacher. This enabled him to come into contact with large segments of the population in Palestine, which would be extremely important to his recruitment efforts in later years.⁵⁰ By 1922, he was appointed *Imam* of *al-Istiqlal* Mosque in Haifa and began gathering a small but dedicated group of adherents.

With the growing tensions in Palestine, including the riots of 1929,⁵¹ al-Qassam began to mobilize his followers, establishing a secret terrorist organization known as the Black Hand (*al-kaff al-aswad*). The aim of the group, which worked as an anti-Zionist and anti-British militant organization, was to kill Jews and to terrorize the Jewish population in the North.⁵² The Black Hand began to carry out military attacks against both the British as well as Jewish settlers.

Al-Qassam viewed the conflict in explicitly religious terms. He was outspoken about the need to defend Islam against "infidelity and heresy" in the form of Western imperialism and the Zionist enterprise; both of which were in political and ideological conflict with Islam.⁵³ By invoking the tradition of the *fidaiyyin* (those who are ready to sacrifice their lives), steeped in the popular memory of the Assassins and wars against the Crusaders, al-

⁴⁹ Meir Hatina, *Islam and Salvation in Palestine: The Islamic Jihad Movement* (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center of Tel Aviv University, 2001), p. 121, 124.

⁵⁰ Ted Swedenburg, "The Role of the Palestinian Peasantry in the Great Revolt (1936-1939)," in *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, ed. Edmund Burke, III, and Ira M. Lapidus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 189.

⁵¹ In the summer of 1929, a long-running dispute emerged between Muslims and Jews over access to the Western Wall in Jerusalem, known as the Wailing Wall Disturbances. The conflict escalated and later erupted into a series of violent demonstrations and riots. Among these events were the Hebron Massacre and the Safed Massacre. Al-Qassam, in order to legitimize such activities, obtained a *fatwa* from Shaikh Badr ad-Din al-Taji al-Hasani, the Mufti of Damascus, authorizing the attacks, a move that would set a precedent for many terrorist groups to come. See: Shai Lachman, "Arab Rebellion and Terrorism in Palestine 1929-39: The Case of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and His Movement," in *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel*, ed. Elie Kedourie and Sylvia G. Haim (London: F. Cass, 1982), p. 63.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Lachman, p. 60-1.

Qassam promoted the notion of struggle through sacrifice. Preaching for the preservation of the country's Muslim character and a return to fundamentalist faith, al-Qassam charged that, "Palestine could be freed from the danger of Jewish domination" through "an organized and methodical armed struggle." He relied on verses from the Qu'ran referring to jihad as a religious basis for his argument.⁵⁴

The Islamic basis for al-Qassam's struggle in Palestine was distinctly interwoven with nationalist-Arabist tendencies. Al-Qassam, like others before him including Rashid Rida,⁵⁵ viewed Arabism as "the cradle of Islam, and that as its standard-bearers, the Arabs were the purest and most faithful believers." Shai Lachman, author of an important work on al-Qassam, explains that although "the national endeavor of the Arabs in Palestine was a political struggle with political aims," its origins were religiously rooted in "the preservation of Islam's holy places in Palestine and the demonstration of the faith's superiority."⁵⁶ It is on this basis that al-Qassam waged his struggle against the Jews and the British.

The culmination of these efforts resulted in al-Qassam's large-scale mobilization of his men in the fall of 1935. After departing Haifa, al-Qassam and his followers engaged British troops in what came to be known as the Battle of Ya'bad,⁵⁷ resulting in al-Qassam and several of his men's being surrounded in a cave by British troops. Al-Qassam was killed in the ensuing gunfire, thus beginning his legacy as a national hero. That al-Qassam fought until the bitter end for the sake of his beliefs remains a source of inspiration for radical groups until the present day. The slogan, "God's book in one hand and the rifle in the other" serves as a symbol of that struggle and has motivated scores of contemporary Palestinians to emulate al-Qassam's actions; the PIJ is among them.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Swedenburg, p. 189; Lachman, pp. 61-2.

⁵⁵ Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865- 1935) was influential in the revivalist Islamic movement of the nineteenth and early century and the most important disciple of Muhammad Abduh and of Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 63.

⁵⁷ Swedenburg, p. 190.

⁵⁸ Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 99.

Chapter 2: History of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad's establishment in the early 1980s marks the culmination of several emerging trends and historical events. The group's founders, many of Palestinian origin, were enrolled in Egyptian universities in the 1970s and were highly influenced by the activities of militant Islamic groups in the country, including *Tanzim al-Jihad* (The Jihad Organization) and *al-Takfir wal-Hijra* (The Atonement and Holy Flight). The young men drew additional inspiration from the ideologies of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hasan al-Banna and radical thinker Sayyid Qutb. The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran provided a third source of inspiration for PIJ leaders. They not only regarded this event as a model that could be emulated in Palestine, but also sought to incorporate some of the teachings of its primary architect, Ayatollah Khomeini.

In essence, the atmosphere in Egypt at the time was rife with the aforementioned influences and numerous competing ideologies, including Arab nationalism, pan-Arabism, territorial nationalism, Islamism, and pan-Islamism. The young, more militant students studying in Egyptian universities sought to identify the winning formula that would improve their general condition, which they perceived to be in decline. For the Palestinians among them, nationalist goals became fused with these ideologies to produce a distinct Palestinian ideological inclination. Leaders Fathi al-Shiqaqi and 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Awda were two major champions of such goals.⁵⁹

The Founders

Fathi Ibrahim 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Shiqaqi was born in 1951 in the Rafah Refugee Camp in Gaza. Shiqaqi's academic career included a mathematics degree from Birzeit University in the Palestinian Territories followed by a medical degree from Zaqaziq University in Egypt. While in Egypt, Shiqaqi came under the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood. Through his involvement with the Brotherhood, Shiqaqi met many of his future PIJ associates. Shiqaqi and his comrades, who represented the new, younger, more militant generation of the Ikhwan, became increasingly dissatisfied with the Brotherhood's approach to the Palestine issue and began to agitate for change. Shiqaqi was arrested and subsequently deported to Gaza in 1979 for authoring a book on the Islamic Revolution in Iran (*Khomeini: The Islamic Solution and the Alternative*, or *al-Khomeini: al-Hall al-Islami wal Badil*), along with other subversive behavior. After briefly practicing medicine at Muttala' (Augusta Victoria) Hospital in East Jerusalem, Shiqaqi returned to the Gaza Strip and opened a private medical clinic. There, he began collaborating with fellow former-Ikhwan member, 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Awda.⁶⁰

Sheikh 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Awda was born on December 20, 1950 in the Jabaliyya Refugee Camp in Gaza. 'Awda studied at Dar al-'Ulum in Cairo, earning his degree in Arab and

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 91 and Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 23. Although Shiqaqi and 'Awda are the primary founders of the organization, Bashir Musa Nafi, Sami Al-Arian, and Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, among others are credited with contributing to the group's creation. Ibid., p. 26.

⁶⁰ "Curriculum Vitae of the Martyr Dr. Fathi al-Shiqaqi (*al-Sira al-Dhatiyya al-Shahid al-Duktur Fathi al-Shiqaqi*)."
Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine. www.qudsway.com/Links/Doctor/1/Html_Doctor1/1hdo1.htm; Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 93; and Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 25.

Islamic Studies. He then earned a master's degree in *shari'a* from Zaqaziq University. During his time in Egypt, he too joined the Muslim Brotherhood but felt a similar sense of dissatisfaction with the group's priorities. In 1975, 'Awda was expelled from Egypt and subsequently moved to the United Arab Emirates to take a teaching position. He returned to Gaza in 1981, initially working as a lecturer at the Islamic University in Gaza but soon being appointed imam at the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Mosque. He began to work with Shiqaqi on founding the PIJ, serving as the group's spiritual advisor.⁶¹

The Founding

Though both Shiqaqi and 'Awda were affiliated with the Ikhwan and had an ideological affinity for the group's general platform during their time in Egypt, they were "disappointed by the supposed moderation of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and what they considered the neglect by the Egyptian Islamists of the priority that should be given to the Palestinian problem."⁶² Upon their return to Gaza, they began to strategize about creating an organization capable of responding to some of the problems that plagued them, including the centrality of Palestine in the Arab and Islamic world, the sagging state of the *umma* in general, and the lack of legitimate leadership among Arab regimes in the region.

This endeavor, which reached ideological and organizational maturity by the early 1980s, called for an alternative and increasingly militant stance to that of the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, "They began to formulate the revolutionary ideas they had absorbed while in Egypt" and "accommodate them to the Palestinian arena, at the same time separating themselves from the ideology and organizational framework of the Moslem Brotherhood."⁶³ Specifically, the PIJ founders rejected the Ikhwan's reformist approach, believing rather that Palestine needed to be liberated from Western imperialist oppression, in the form of the Zionist Enterprise, by means of an immediate violent campaign waged by an Islamic revolutionary vanguard (*tali'a*).⁶⁴ In short, the PIJ and the Ikhwan differed most dramatically about the order of priorities rather than the means. The PIJ was formally established as an organization for this exact purpose, to immediately initiate a violent jihad against Israel until the liberation of Palestine had been achieved.

Worldview

One of the most revealing aspects of a group's worldview comes from its symbols. The PIJ emblem (see monograph cover) is no exception. It depicts a full map of Palestine, i.e. from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, signifying its goal to uproot Israel and replace it with an Islamic, Palestinian state. The Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem appears

⁶¹ Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 94 and Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, pp. 25-6.

⁶² "The Palestinian Islamic Jihad," The Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), <<http://www.ict.org.il/organizations/orgdet.cfm?orgid=28>> (5 May 2007). [Hereinafter, "Palestinian Islamic Jihad," *ICT*]

⁶³ "The Palestinian Islamic Jihad," *The Intelligence & Terrorism Information Center at the Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center (IICC): Special Information Bulletin*, (October 2003), <http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/sib/pij_11_03/pij.htm> (8 May 2007). [Hereinafter, "Palestinian Islamic Jihad," *IICC*]

⁶⁴ Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 120.

behind the map along with a pair of crossed rifles as well as two fists. These elements are meant to express the movement's ardor for violent action. The *takbir*, or proclamation of God's greatness using the phrase "Allahu Akbar," appears between the crossed rifles. Finally, the name of the movement, *Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami fi Filistin* frames the symbol in the lower half of the circle.⁶⁵ In short, the emblem is a visual depiction of the group's identity, favored methods, and main aspirations.

According to its bylaws, the PIJ's core doctrine revolves around several key issues. "The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine is a revolutionary *jihad* movement embracing Islam as religion and state. It is the vanguard of the Islamic Revolutionary Movement."⁶⁶ Yehudit Barsky, author of a notable terrorism briefing on the PIJ, explains that the PIJ views itself as "a revolutionary vanguard of 'believers' who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of purifying the Islamic world by driving Western influence from its territory." In their view, Israel is the primary outpost for disseminating Western influence in the Middle East and destroying it is their primary goal.⁶⁷ In this vein, the PIJ views terrorist attacks against Israel as the only means to achieve its goals. The bylaws stipulate, "Jihad is the solution to liberate Palestine and topple the infidel regimes," and it is PIJ's specific mission to lead the "Arab and Islamic masses in the defense of their entity."⁶⁸ As is evident in the aforementioned excerpts, a central feature of the PIJ platform combines Islamic fanaticism and extreme nationalism, echoing in many ways the ideological platform of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam some five decades earlier.⁶⁹

Alternatively, the PIJ views its ideology as being wholly Islamic, representative of "the ideology of the righteous forefathers and the pious companions." It claims to draw its goals and principles from Islam, including "1) The shaping of the Palestinian identity into a committed Islamic form, 2) Setting off a state of general popular revolution, 3) The realization of the Islamic unity through collective jihad, and 4) The liberation of the Holy Land from the Zionist occupation." The PIJ maintains that these goals will only be achieved through a two-pronged approach: 1) "the creation of a state of terror, instability, and panic in the souls of Zionists and especially the groups of settlers," forcing them to leave their homes and 2) "the creation of a psychological barrier between Jews and the Muslim Palestinian people" and the "conviction that coexistence is impossible." As is apparent from these statements, for the PIJ, peace is not an option. In fact, the PIJ wholeheartedly rejects "any peaceful solution for the Palestinian Cause and the affirmation of the jihad solution and the martyrdom style as the only option for liberation."⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the liberation of Palestine is not the extent of PIJ's overarching goal.

After launching an all-out, violent campaign aimed at the destruction of Israel, the PIJ envisions establishing a radical Islamic state in its stead, and ultimately, creating a new pan-Islamic empire fashioned in the likeness of the seventh-century Muslim state of the

⁶⁵ Yehudit Barsky, "Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine." *American Jewish Committee: Terrorism Briefing*, (July 2002), <http://www.ajc.org/atf/cf/%7B42D75369-D582-4380-8395-D25925B85EAF%7D/IslamicJihadMovement_July2002.pdf> (5 May 2007).

⁶⁶ "Definition," Bylaws.

⁶⁷ Barsky, p. 10.

⁶⁸ "Characteristics-2, 4," Bylaws.

⁶⁹ "Palestinian Islamic Jihad," *IICC*.

⁷⁰ "Principles and Basic Thoughts of the Movement-1," "General Goals," "Specific Goals (Provisional)," and "The Political Constants of the Movement," Bylaws.

Prophet Muhammad. At times, PIJ members have gone as far as to prophesize the fall of the West at the hands of this empire.⁷¹ However, several scholars regard this particular aspect of PIJ's ideology as not only vague, but underdeveloped compared to the group's other formulations. It is plausible that the movement's counterargument would be that its primary goal of liberating Palestine takes precedence over any detailed formulations of the nature of a future Islamic state, save perhaps that it will be based on *shari'ca*. Litvak adds, albeit in relation to another Muslim Brotherhood offshoot, Hamas, which will be discussed later, that these groups are able to reconcile the tension between their "enhanced Palestinian orientation and adherence to the pan-Islamic ideal by making a distinction between the short-term goal—the complete liberation of Palestine and the establishment of an Islamic state in Palestine—and the long-term goal of universal Islamic state and the restoration of the Caliphate."⁷²

In evaluating PIJ's placement of Palestine at the center of the Arab-Muslim world and its primacy in the Islamic struggle against the tyrannous West, it becomes apparent that this is yet another case which reinforces the combined religio-nationalist undertones that are a staple of its platform.

The PIJ gleaned some of its major tenets from another relatively unlikely source. As mentioned in brief, it was deeply inspired by the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. This inspiration was three-fold, comprising a) an admiration for Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's charismatic leadership alongside his elevation of Palestine and its struggle with Israel, b) identification with and adoption of his conception of jihad and *shahada*, and c) an appreciation for his success in establishing an Islamic state founded on *shari'ca*. As Yehudit Barsky, author of several works on Islamic resistance groups, points out, despite these shared ideological convictions, the mere fact that the Palestinian Sunni leadership of the PIJ "reveres and seeks to emulate the Shi'ci radical ideology of the late Ayatollah Khomeini" is an anomaly. Rather than follow the ideological path of Sunni extremist movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood, the PIJ, in a sense, "bridges the divide between radical Sunnis and Shi'cis in the Muslim world" by identifying with Iran's Islamic Government and its violent revolution.⁷³ The predicted result of this move is that the PIJ is located outside the mainstream of Palestinian Islamic radical ideology. Certain polls have sought to quantify this support, confirming that the PIJ enjoys limited support from local Palestinians. Percentage-wise, PIJ supporters number in the single digits.⁷⁴ Additional factors are responsible for the PIJ's small membership, as will be discussed later.

The PIJ attempts to underplay the Sunni-Shi'ci schism, stressing Iran's pan-Islamic orientation. The PIJ considers "existing controversies [between the sects] as 'marginal' matters (*far'iyyat*)," citing with approval "the endeavors of Hasan al-Banna and of Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut (of Al-Azhar) to bring the various Islamic schools together." Likewise, PIJ

⁷¹ Barsky, p. 12.

⁷² Litvak, "The Islamization of Palestinian Identity," p. 21.

⁷³ Barsky, p. 9.

⁷⁴ As a clarification, it is not that the population opposed the PIJ's goals or means, but rather that it prefers those goals and means when coupled with infrastructural provisions, as is the case with Hamas. Meir Litvak, "The Palestine Islamic Jihad: Background Information," *Tel Aviv Notes*, no. 56, Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies (28 November 2002).

references with approval “Shaltut’s famous *fatwa* of 1959 declaring the Twelver Shi’a to be an orthodox school alongside the four other, recognized schools.”⁷⁵

The PIJ instead seeks to highlight that Ayatollah Khomeini is the first Muslim leader to accord Palestine its proper place within the framework of his Islamic ideology. ‘Awda also noted that “the rise of Khomeini was an important and serious attempt to achieve an Islamic awakening and to unify the Islamic nation.” The PIJ often quotes a *fatwa* issued by Khomeini, which “spoke of the religious duty of bringing about the ‘elimination’ (*izala*) of the ‘Zionist entity’ and allocated income from *zakat* (almsgiving) for this purpose.”⁷⁶ This latter move illustrates the transition that occurred from PIJ’s one-sided support of Khomeini to the creation of mutually a beneficial relationship between the two, discussed below.

Additionally, the PIJ marveled at Khomeini’s example of carrying out an Islamic Revolution which ousted Western influence and established an Islamic State in its stead. Hatina suggests that for the PIJ, the Islamic Revolution represented a “major historic link in the Muslim struggle against Western attempts to exclude Islam from politics.” The overthrow of the Shah, who was seen as the embodiment of Western influence, signaled the first modern victory of Islam over the West. For Shiqaqi and his comrades, this was a demonstration of the feasibility of ousting their own Western installation, Israel, and replacing it with an Islamic state in historic Palestine. In short, PIJ members saw in Iran the antithesis to the corrupt Arab regimes, which themselves served as tools of the West to weaken Islam in the Middle East.⁷⁷

The PIJ also embraced the means through which Khomeini claimed to have enacted his revolution: jihad. Khomeini’s revolutionary call for jihad, as opposed to civic or cultural struggle, as advocated by the Ikhwan, strongly appealed to the movement. As Hatina presents, “Jihad under Iran’s leadership...has both a defensive and an aggressive character and strives to advance the struggle of all the oppressed (*al-mustad’afin*) against the forces of evil and tyranny (*mustakbirin*).”⁷⁸ The PIJ’s view of Israel as being evil and tyrannous matched Khomeini’s perception of the Shah’s regime, therefore allowing the group to effortlessly adopt Khomeini’s formulations and rhetoric on the issue. Khomeini maintained that Islam is “the religion of the *mujahidin* who want truth and justice. It is the religion of those who demand freedom and independence.”⁷⁹ Palestinians of many religious and political leanings very much identified with his emphasis on the struggle for independence.

However, the PIJ did not need to work hard to fit its struggle into Khomeini’s ideology. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in speaking on behalf of Palestine, Khomeini also spoke out against Israel, based on a) the Judeo-Western political and cultural onslaught on the Muslim World and, b) traditional anti-Jewish attitudes in Islamic culture and history. Khomeini therefore provided not only a religious framework through which the PIJ could channel their grievances, but also utilitarian means to express them in the form of jihad and self-sacrifice.

⁷⁵ Rekhess, “The Iranian Impact on the Islamic Jihad Movement,” p. 198.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 195. See also Litvak, “Palestinian Islamic Jihad.”

⁷⁷ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, pp. 53-54.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 101. Abu Amr cites *Al-Khomeini: al Hall al-Islami wal-Badil*, (Cairo: *al-Mukhtar al-Islami*, 1979), p. 33.

Ideological Break

The PIJ's embrace of Khomeini-esque views occurred in conjunction with an ideological break with its erstwhile parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood. The core distinction between the Ikhwan and the PIJ is in what each group considers its principal priority to be. According to the Muslim Brotherhood, the prerequisite for dealing with the Palestine issue is the Islamic transformation of society, in line with their notion of *tarbiyya* and *da'wa*.⁸⁰ The Ikhwan maintained that, "the Muslim world should deal with Israel only after curing its own spiritual and religious ills by returning the masses to Islam and revitalizing Islam." They argued that Israel's destruction would be swiftly achieved only once Muslim unity was realized.⁸¹ In short, "Islam must prevail before the struggle in Palestine starts."⁸² Litvak points out that, "By contrast, Shiqaqi argued that Israel, by its very existence, was a source of moral and spiritual corruption that prevented Muslims from remedying the malaise of their society."⁸³ Therefore, in PIJ's view, only revolutionary action by an Islamic vanguard would be capable of achieving the destruction of Israel and the revitalization of the *umma*.

For the PIJ, and in contrast to the Muslim Brotherhood, education, reform, and indoctrination comprise neither the appropriate sense of urgency needed to affect change nor the efficacy of an all-out war, maintaining that deeds are more important than indoctrination. Barsky adds that, "By raising the banner of jihad through acts of violence, others within Palestinian society would be inspired and mobilized to follow in the footsteps of the movement and, in this way, the destruction of evil as embodied by Israel would be achieved."⁸⁴ From the PIJ perspective, acts of violence against Israelis serve as its own form of indoctrination.

Interestingly, both groups claim to draw inspiration from Hasan al-Banna on this issue. According to Ziad Abu Amr, prominent scholar of the Brotherhood and other Islamic resistance movements, "The Islamic Jihad movement blames the Muslim Brotherhood for not having a correct understanding of what Hasan al-Banna represents, and for not being committed to the essence of his ideas and positions," namely, jihad.⁸⁵ Referencing al-Banna's dispatching of Muslim Brothers to fight in Palestine in the 1936-39 Arab Revolt and in the 1948 War,⁸⁶ the PIJ argues that al-Banna was committed to waging jihad against imperialist forces in Islamic lands and more specifically, in Palestine. The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, held fast to the notion that the establishment of an Islamic state, following years of *da'wa* and *tarbiyya*, was at the core of al-Banna's teachings. It is on the basis of these major differences that the PIJ split with the Muslim Brotherhood and began recruiting members.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 106. The MB changed its stance on this issue with its sanctioned creation of the Palestinian offshoot, Hamas, whose core mission and activities were very much in line with that of the Islamic Jihad.

⁸¹ Litvak, "Palestine Islamic Jihad."

⁸² Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 106.

⁸³ Litvak, "Palestine Islamic Jihad."

⁸⁴ Barsky, p. 11.

⁸⁵ Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 119.

⁸⁶ On the Arab Revolt, see Ibid., p. 2, 121 and Harris, p. 180; on the 1948 War, see Mitchell, p. 56.

Recruitment

The PIJ leaders' personal charisma, modern organizational experience, and active involvement in society facilitated their image as a generation of consciousness and revolution (*jil al-wa'i wal-thawra*). This image stood in stark contrast to the then existing religious leadership of, among others, the Muslim Brotherhood, and offered Palestinians a new militant message. The movement devoted itself, during its formative years, 1981-83, "to extensive cultural and political activity in order to spread its revolutionary message and recruit members."⁸⁷ The two most important sources of potential supporters were the universities and mosques in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.⁸⁸ According to Hatina, "The role of the mosque in entrenching revolutionary messages was well reflected in the Friday sermons of 'Awda in the al-Qassam Mosque."⁸⁹ Likewise, substantial efforts were made to set up an infrastructure on university campuses, which would be devoted to ideological guidance by the group. Several clandestinely published leaflets and smaller periodicals were distributed in both circles in order to spread the movement's platform. These publications include, *al-Mukhtar al-Islami* (The Islamic Digest), *al-Tali'a al-Islamiyya* (The Islamic Vanguard), *al-Islam wa Filastin* (Islam and Palestine), among others.

Focusing on the task of political indoctrination, PIJ exploited both religious and "educational activities to set up a secret infrastructure of activists, at the same time establishing armed terrorist cells."⁹⁰ These cells became part of the operational, military arm of the movement, known as *Saraya Al-Quds* (The Jerusalem Brigades), and would be responsible for carrying out the group's attacks. Members of *Saraya al-Quds* were grouped in an underground network of cells known as "families" (*usar*), based on the model used by the Muslim Brotherhood, usually numbering five to six activists.⁹¹ These members were referred to as *mujahidin*, whose purpose was to carry out acts of *istishadiya*, or self-martyrdom.⁹² *Istishadiya*, which later became the preferred method of violence used by Palestinian terrorist groups, was preceded by smaller-scale attacks against individual targets. As such, PIJ marked its entrance into its armed confrontation with Israel by murdering an Israeli yeshiva student in Hebron in 1983. This event, the first of its kind, which resulted in the arrest of tens of PIJ members, represents a shift in the organization's development from a period of political indoctrination to that of armed confrontation.⁹³

Between 1984-1987, the PIJ carried out a string of murders, stabbings, and low-level bombings. These attacks served as a recruitment tool for the PIJ, which it characterized as championing the Palestinian cause. Both Shiqaqi and 'Awda were imprisoned on more than one occasion for inciting terrorist activity, eventually leading to their deportation to Lebanon in 1988. While Israeli authorities were anxious to rid themselves of the PIJ leaders, who had been ordering terror attacks outside of prison and conducting

⁸⁷ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, pp. 27-28.

⁸⁸ "Means and Methods of the Movement," Bylaws.

⁸⁹ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 29.

⁹⁰ "Palestinian Islamic Jihad," *IICC*.

⁹¹ Rekhess, "The Iranian Impact," p. 191.

⁹² Barsky, p. 10. Carrying out *istishadiya* is decidedly different from suicide in Islam. Whereas the latter is forbidden in Islam, the former is lauded, according to the Khomeini-inspired interpretation of the concept adopted by the group.

⁹³ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 32.

recruitment and indoctrination while inside, their expulsion to Lebanon proved to be a harbinger of worse things to come; Iranian sponsorship and the establishment of global terrorist cells included.

However, while the Sunni-Shi'i collaboration severely limited local interest in the PIJ, two other factors further stifled the number of PIJ supporters. The first, and perhaps more significant of the two, is its lack of a *da'wa* programs. Unlike its newer counterpart, Hamas, which had reputedly gained the unprecedented support of the Palestinian masses as a result of its numerous charitable endeavors, the PIJ explicitly decided against such a program so as not to divert any effort or resources away from the jihad. While Hamas, upon its emergence, also waged its own jihad campaign against the Israelis, it was simultaneously winning the hearts and minds of the people by providing all manner of infrastructural assistance. Second, the PIJ, with its uncompromising radical agenda, has failed to take into consideration the Palestinian people's need for periodic respites from violence and confrontation. Hamas, in contrast, has the ability to negotiate for temporary ceasefires or a *hudna*, due to its unique, partly *da'wa*-based relationship with the Palestinian people, whereas the PIJ would be reneging on its only pledge to its people by halting the jihad. Abu Amr affirms that, "the Islamic Jihad does not subject itself to the political and diplomatic considerations to which the rest of the organizations do."⁹⁴ However, as Hatina explains, "the importance of the Islamic Jihad did not lie in its organizational ability or political weight but in its success in entrenching militant Islamic among Palestinians."⁹⁵

External Support from Iran

Several events triggered a hands-on relationship between Iran and the PIJ. With the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), Iran continued to pursue its stated policy of exporting the Revolution, although now, it no longer restricted itself to the Shi'i domains. Sunni-populated areas, such as Sudan, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and the Palestinian arena were all fair game. The change in Iran's external policies coincided with the eruption of the Intifada and the deportation of Shiqaqi and 'Awda to Lebanon in 1988, and significantly increased Iranian involvement with the PIJ. Elie Rekhess suggests that "From this point on, direct contact was established between the Islamic Jihad activists and their Iranian sponsors through Iranian embassies in Beirut and Damascus, the Revolutionary Guards stationed in Lebanon, and Hizbullah."⁹⁶

Iran's sponsorship of the PIJ took on political, financial, and military dimensions. The U.S. State Department attests to this in its 1993 "Patterns of Global Terrorism," stating that "Iran is also the world's preeminent state sponsor of extremist Islamic and Palestinian groups, providing funds, weapons, and training to...the PIJ," among other groups. Shiqaqi further solidified this assertion in a 1993 interview with *Newsday* when he stated, "Iran gives us money and supports us...Then we supply the money and arms to the occupied

⁹⁴ Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 104.

⁹⁵ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 40.

⁹⁶ Elie Rekhess, "The Terrorist Connection - Iran, The Islamic Jihad And Hamas," *Justice* 5 (May 1995). The First Intifada (1987-93) to which the author refers will be discussed further in a subsequent chapter dealing with Jihad and *Shahada*.

territories.”⁹⁷ The PIJ was essentially “transformed into a paramilitary organization resembling the philosophy and structure of Hizbullah,” from which it obtained its arms and logistical supported.⁹⁸

The result of this multi-layered relationship between Iran and the PIJ is that the latter has the financial and military means to continue the struggle indefinitely against its enemy while at the same time serving as an instrument of Iranian policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁹⁹ Iran not only influenced the formulation of the group’s ideology and tactics, but also maintains a grip on events in the Levant through its calculated support of its terrorist groups. The relationship that developed between these two entities also highlights the distinctly Islamic-Palestinian identity of the movement as opposed to one rooted in Arab nationalism. This distinction is of consequence when considering that the PIJ reached out to an Islamic partner, Iran, for support rather than an Arab partner, for example. Had the PIJ identified itself through the prism of Arab nationalism, it could not have maintained its current ties. Nevertheless, Iran was not the sole source of external support to the PIJ’s infrastructure.

⁹⁷ “Terrorism Inc.: Islamic Jihad Founder Admits Funding by Iran,” *Newsday*, 11 April 1993.

⁹⁸ Rekhess, “Terrorist Connection.”

⁹⁹ Litvak, “Palestinian Islamic Jihad.”

Chapter 3: History of the U.S. Cell

While the PIJ relied on Iran for both ideological and financial backing, it established other sources of support beyond the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. “Operating a second tier of its leadership outside of its declared theater of operations,” it established cells in Western countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States, in order to conduct a wide range of secondary support functions. This global compartmentalization enabled the organization “to protect its leadership and establish a communications system that took advantage of the freedoms that Western nations guarantee to their citizens.” Specifically, individual members of the group’s leadership were able to direct certain of its activities from afar by communicating via telephone, fax machine, and computers.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, members were able to actively solicit and collect funds in the United States and the United Kingdom, obtaining support for the PIJ and its goals in various ways.

In the U.S., the PIJ carried out various activities: conducted and attended fundraising conferences and seminars, in which known terrorists from abroad were invited to speak; sent solicitations to individuals and countries in the Middle East; used the Internet to publicize its violent acts; advocated, both orally and in writing, such sentiments as “death to Israel” and its supporters; and wrote and disseminated articles about itself.¹⁰¹ The core individuals responsible for conducting these activities were Sami al-Arian, Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, and Bashir Musa Nafi.¹⁰²

The Leaders

Sami al-Arian was born in Kuwait on January 14, 1958 to a family of Palestinian descent. He and his family moved to Egypt in 1966, at which time al-Arian came into contact with several of his future PIJ associates. He came to the United States on a student visa to attend North Carolina State University in 1975. After obtaining his bachelor’s degree in computer engineering, he earned a master’s degree in 1980 and a doctoral degree in 1985 in the same field. In 1986, he was hired as a professor in the Computer Sciences Department at the University of South Florida in Tampa. During his tenure at USF, he expanded his academic activity to include other, less auspicious endeavors.¹⁰³

While living in Florida, al-Arian functioned as the leader of the PIJ in the United States as well as the secretary of the group’s *Majlis al-Shura* (Consultative Council) globally. In his role as the U.S. cell’s leaders, al-Arian established two front organizations that were responsible for allocating funds for the PIJ’s cause and distributing the group’s propaganda to Muslims in the United States. He used the two fronts, as well as his position at USF, as the base of his operations in the United States. In his capacity as a PIJ *Shura* Secretary, he also

¹⁰⁰ Barsky, p. 25.

¹⁰¹ “Indictment: Count 1, #32, c” (20 February 2003): pp. 11-2.

¹⁰² The first tier of PIJ infrastructure included founders Shiqaqi and ‘Awda, the second tier included cell leaders al-Arian, Shallah, and Nafi, and the third tier included cell members and indicted co-conspirators Hatim Fariz, Ghassan Ballut, and Sameeh Hammoudeh. See Indictment.

¹⁰³ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 24; “Indictment: Count 1, #7,” 3; and “Sami al-Arian Fact Sheet,” *Site Institute*, 20 February 2003.

directed the audit of all moneys and property of the PIJ throughout the world.¹⁰⁴ Al-Arian was assisted in these endeavors by Ramadan Abdullah Shallah and Bashir Musa Nafi. As a result of the federal and media attention that his activities have attracted, elaborated on below, al-Arian has been a controversial figure in the United States since the early 1990s.

Ramadan Abdullah Muhammad Shallah was born on January 1, 1958 in Gaza's Saja'iyyah neighborhood.¹⁰⁵ Shallah, who joined the Muslim Brotherhood during high school, attended Zaqaziq University in Egypt from 1977-81 and received funding for his tuition from the Ikhwan. While there, Shallah came into contact with other Palestinian students from the Gaza Strip, including Fathi Shiqaqi, all of whom were anxious to imitate the militant jihad movements that were abundant in Egypt at that time.¹⁰⁶ Shallah became one of the secondary founders of the PIJ, working initially as editor of its internal political journal.

Upon return to the Gaza Strip in 1981, Shallah began working as a lecturer in the Economics Department of Gaza's Islamic University. In 1986, he moved to England to pursue a Ph.D. in economics at Durham University. Shallah worked closely with another PIJ founder, Bashir Musa Nafi, who was also in England at the time, editing the group's journals and facilitating communication among the cells. In 1988, Shallah moved to the United States and began lecturing at University of South Florida. He worked closely with al-Arian in his endeavors relating to the two PIJ front groups. However, Shallah's time in the United States ended abruptly when, in October 1995, he was chosen to succeed Shiqaqi, who was killed in Malta, as Secretary General of the PIJ. Shallah remains the leader of the PIJ to this day.¹⁰⁷

Bashir Musa Mohammed Nafi was born in 1952 in Egypt. As previously mentioned, Nafi was one of the founding members of the PIJ. In addition, he was a member of the group's *Majlis al-Shura* and served as the PIJ's leader in the UK. Nafi, like his associates, maintained a legitimate cover, working as a university professor. Prolific in his writing, Nafi wrote scores of articles in the PIJ publications *al-Mukhtar al-Islami* and *al-Tali'a al-Islamiyya*, serving on the editorial boards of both. At times, Nafi wrote under the pseudonym Ahmad Sadiq. In the late 1980s, Nafi traveled to the United States on several occasions to participate in PIJ fundraising events organized by al-Arian. By the early 1990s, he moved to the United States to assist al-Arian in his activities related to the PIJ fronts fulltime. After spending only a few years in Florida, Nafi was deported in 1996 due to visa violations.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ "*al-Amin al-Am Lil-Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami fi Filastin: Duktur Ramadan Abdallah Shallah, al-Sira* (Secretary General to the PIJ: Doctor Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, Biography)" (henceforth "Shallah bio"). *Falestiny Online: Ramadan Abdullah Shallah's Website*, www.falestiny.net/sira.htm.

¹⁰⁶ "Palestinian Islamic Jihad," *IICC*.

¹⁰⁷ Shallah bio; Barsky, 18; and "Indictment, Count 1, #8," 4. Al-Arian sponsored Shallah's visa to the United States, an act which he later denied until presented with the original INS paperwork in his own handwriting.

¹⁰⁸ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 25; "Indictment, Count 1, #9," 4.

Modus Operandi

On the whole, the leadership of the PIJ in the United States performed management functions that included determining the group's organizational structure, strategies and policies, administering its financial affairs, accounting for PIJ monies and property, and settling disagreements with other terrorist organizations. In addition, they attempted to recruit new members. U.S. cell members based their modus operandi on a model for forming a think tank laid out in a document entitled, "The Charter of the Center of Studies, the Intelligence and the Information." This document provides a detailed description of the structure and operation of a "hostile intelligence organization" and includes "the organizational structure, duties, responsibilities, espionage methods and targets, counterintelligence and precautionary measures, methods of reporting, as well as a cipher system to make the hostile intelligence organization appear to be affiliated with a university."¹⁰⁹

Al-Arian and his associates followed this manual dutifully in establishing their cell. Examples of this include the founding of the Islamic Committee for Palestine and the World and Islam Studies Enterprise, the cell's front groups. Through the fronts' conferences, cell members roused attendees, calling for and praising past violence against the "enemy." This incitement, which drew upon some of the major themes from al-Banna, Qutb, and Khomeini, quickly translated into donations for the "cause" during the conferences' fundraising sessions.

The Islamic Committee for Palestine (ICP), also known as the Islamic Concern Project,¹¹⁰ was a nonprofit organization incorporated in Tampa, Florida in 1988 by al-Arian and his brother-in-law and PIJ associate, Mazen al-Najjar.¹¹¹ ICP maintained two distinct facades: that of a legitimate charity whose purpose was to raise funds for poor, injured, or orphaned Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza; and the other as an arm of the PIJ whose purpose was to fund raise for jihad against the Israelis. This is evident, for example, in the disparate texts of its English and Arabic official documents. In its official incorporating document submitted to the State of Florida, the ICP defines its purpose as:

Charitable, cultural, social, educational and religious in which the concept of brotherhood, freedom, justice, unity, piety, righteousness and peace shall be propagated. In addition the organization shall take human projects of helping the poor, the refugees, the displaced, the orphans, the sick, the handicapped and the homeless.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ "Indictment," Count 1, nos. 35, 41.1, and 185.1. These duties refer to the overall PIJ organization unless otherwise specified. The Charter was confiscated in an FBI raid of the premises of PIJ's front organizations, ICP and WISE.

¹¹⁰ Al-Arian created an official alias for the Islamic Concern Project in order to provide an innocuous cover for the group which did not belie its purpose. See "IRS certificate of lack of records for ICP." *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit 37-A.

¹¹¹ "Indictment, Count 1, #17," 6.

¹¹² "Articles of Incorporation of the Islamic Concern Project, Inc.: Article III," *Florida Secretary of State*, 14 October 1988. *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit 430.

In contrast, ICP's Arabic-language charter, which was most likely reserved for internal use, makes clear that perhaps "justice, piety, and peace" were not at the fore of its agenda:

The Zionist Project in Palestine is the center of the global Western attack on the Islamic homeland that was topped [sic] by the fall of *Dar al-Islam*, the political and cultural receptacle of the Nation, and imposed partition, colonialism, and the cultural collapse of all the countries of Islam...that lay the foundation of the Western and Zionist hegemony on all the axis from one ocean to the other.¹¹³

These two distinct facades existed on all levels of the group's operations. Because the ICP was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, it could avoid revealing its spending records to U.S. authorities.¹¹⁴ This lack of transparency enabled it to conduct its terror financing almost completely unhindered.

Al-Arian incorporated the World and Islam Studies Enterprise (WISE) in Tampa in February 1991. Its incorporating documents state that it was organized "exclusively for education and academic research and analysis, and promotion of international peace and understanding."¹¹⁵ As evidenced by its activities, this stated goal is far from the truth. Though separately incorporated, ICP and WISE essentially constituted the same entity. In addition to having similar goals and methods, the two had overlapping boards and at one time shared the same mailing address.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the aforementioned activities carried out by the ICP were jointly sponsored by WISE. Shallah served as the director of WISE until he left the country to head the PIJ. Likewise, Bashir Musa Nafi served as the director of research at WISE until his deportation.

Fundraising Activities

Conferences

In line with the scheme set out in the Center of Studies Charter, Shallah established a working relationship with the University of South Florida on behalf of WISE. Aside from providing cover, USF was utilized by PIJ as the vehicle through which they "could bring other PIJ members and associates into the United States under the guise of academic conferences and meetings."¹¹⁷ In 1992, Shallah established a formal partnership between the think tank and the university, which called for cooperation in "programming research,

¹¹³ "The Chart[er] for the Islamic Committee for Palestine," trans. Federal Bureau of Investigations. Confiscated during FBI raid of ICP and WISE; The Investigative Project on Terrorism maintains a copy of this document.

¹¹⁴ Steven Emerson and The Investigative Project on Terrorism, *Jihad Incorporated: A Guide to Militant Islamic in the United States* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2006), 243. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code exempts nonprofit organizations from the federal income tax.

¹¹⁵ "Articles of Incorporation of the World and Islam Studies Enterprise, Inc.," *Florida Secretary of State*, 21 February 1991. *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit 301.

¹¹⁶ Emerson, p. 245.

¹¹⁷ "Indictment, Count 1, #16," 6.

conferences, and enrichment of graduate students.”¹¹⁸ It was by means of this relationship that ICP and WISE were not only able to organize their conferences, but also to sponsor visas for some of its militant speakers.

Between 1988-1992, ICP and WISE organized a series of conferences and rallies. Among the most prominent figures sponsored by al-Arian to speak was Sheikh ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahman (“The Blind Sheikh”), who served as the spiritual leader to the 1993 World Trade Center bombers and was convicted in 1995 for his involvement in a plot to blow up New York area landmarks. Rahman was listed as an invited guest to the ICP’s Third Annual Conference in 1990 titled, “The *Intifada*, the Gulf Crisis, and the *Umma*’s Problems” and was a key speaker at its Fourth Annual Conference in 1991 titled “Islam, Palestine, and the West.” Al-Arian also sponsored ‘Awda’s three consecutive visits to the United States in which he was featured as a speaker at these two conferences, as well as ICP’s Second Annual conference in 1989 titled “Palestine, Intifada and the Horizons of the Islamic Renaissance.” (All three conferences were held in Chicago.) Aside from his role as founder and spiritual leader of the PIJ, ‘Awda was named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Other radical individuals either invited as guests or speakers include Sheikh Rashid Ghanushi, leader of al-Nahda, the Islamic Revival Movement of Tunisia; Muhammad ‘Umar of Hizb al-Tahrir of the Islamic Liberation Party; and Hasan al-Turabi, a fundamentalist Sudanese leader.¹¹⁹

While later chapters of this study will analyze the rhetoric espoused at these conferences, a few excerpts from the fundraising sessions are worthy of mention now. The ICP organized a roundtable in Cleveland, Ohio in 1991 featuring various lectures followed by a fundraising session conducted by Fawaz Damra.¹²⁰ Damra, the Ohio-based leader of the Islamic Center of Cleveland and PIJ member, was primarily responsible for all conference-related PIJ fundraising efforts in the United States. He was also implicated as an additional unindicted coconspirator in the 1993 World Trade Center attacks.¹²¹ In this particular session, Damra did not mince words about the true nature of ICP and its leader. He introduced al-Arian as follows:

He has come to us tonight as a guest and as a speaker, to talk about the reality of the Jihadist Uprising... Dr. Sami Al-Arian was born in Jerusalem and has sacrificed and continues to sacrifice for Palestine. He is the head of the Islamic Committee for Palestine. A brief note about the Islamic Committee for Palestine; it is the active arm of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine. We prefer to call it the “Islamic Committee for Palestine” for security reasons.¹²²

¹¹⁸ “World and Islamic Studies Enterprise and University of South Florida Cooperative Agreement,” 11 March 1992, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit 27.

¹¹⁹ “*Islam wa Filastin* (Islam and Palestine),” Issue 34 (1 December 1990), *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-42 O; and “Indictment, Count 1, #43.” For conference flyers and photographs from these ICP conferences, see *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibits 443-53B and 457A-463B1.

¹²⁰ Damra was arrested and charged with illegal procurement of U.S. citizenship on January 13, 2002 and on June 18, 2004, was convicted for lying about his association with the PIJ on his citizenship application. He was deported to the West Bank in January 2007.

¹²¹ Emerson, pp. 253-4.

¹²² “Transcript of Roundtable Discussion in Cleveland, Ohio.”

Following presentations from al-Arian and others, Damra begins his fundraising efforts. He says,

Your brothers in Palestine are struggling with their beings, so let us struggle with our money...I ask you to donate to Islamic Jihad. Nidal Zalloum, who stood...Nidal Zalloum of Islamic Jihad grabbed a dagger and stabbed four Jews in the courtyard of the Holy Sanctuary. Nidal Zalloum from Islamic Jihad is saying to you, 'Be compassionate upon my blood. Avenge my blood.' And that *mujahid*, who took the bus and killed more than twenty Jews, he is from the Islamic Jihad. This is the Islamic Jihad Movement. I say to you to donate, so that this money will serve you with god...Who would like to donate for the *Intifada*? For Islamic Jihad, I say it frankly, for Islamic Jihad. This *Jihad*, which is still blazing in Palestine, from village to village. I am telling you, not for the organizations of anything else, with due respect to everyone. But only for *Jihad*...and whoever wants to write a check, he can write it in the name of the Islamic Committee for Palestine, ICP for short.¹²³

In a similar vein, Damra closed the fundraising session by leading the chant, *Khaybar Khaybar ya Yahud, Jaysh Muhammad Sawfa Ya'ud*, which translates to "Khaybar, Khaybar oh Jews, the army of Muhammad will return" and refers to the expulsion of the Jewish population of Khaybar in the seventh century. Damra's incitement at this particular event yielded several thousand dollars for the PIJ.

Publications

ICP distributed *al-Mujahid* and *al-Islam wa Filistin*, both official mouthpieces of the PIJ, via a post office box in Tampa it shared with ICP and WISE. These publications were used not only to expand its platform, but also to claim responsibility for terrorist attacks, incite violence, provide details for upcoming ICP events, and include donation information for the PIJ. For example, the same violent attack used by Damra to solicit funds was mentioned in an issue of *Islam and Palestine*:

Occupied Jerusalem, Wednesday, May 3, 1989. The city has never witnessed an event since the occupation forces entered it on May 3rd, 1967. A young Muslim Palestinian man went out in Jaffa Street attacking Zionists gatherings with a knife. Before he was surrounded and arrested by the police forces, he killed two and wounded four. The following day an Israeli spokesperson announced that this young man is Nidal 'Abd al-Razak Zalloun from Al-Biri...and that he belongs to the Islamic Jihad Movement. Also from Jerusalem, a spokesperson for the Islamic Jihad Movement said: "The Islamic Jihad Movement of Palestine confirms that *mujahid* Nidal Zalloum is one of its members and one of the toughest strugglers."¹²⁴

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ "*Islam wa Filistin* (Islam and Palestine)," Issue 14: Second Year, 16 May 1989: p. 2, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-42 H.

At the Beit Hanina Fundraiser in Cleveland titled “The Intifada: the Revolution in Palestine and the Challenge of International Conspiracies,” Damra stated, “I know with near certainty that we were able, with God, the Glorious and Sublime’s assistance, to mail the flyers that you hold to some 800 to 900 Muslims living in Cleveland. Those who we consider truthful in their good wishes, jihad, and love for Palestine have responded.”¹²⁵

ICP also distributed its own English-language publication, *Inquiry*, which was issued periodically under the editorship of al-Arian and featured frequent articles by Nafi. However, this publication served to legitimate ICP’s facade because its articles are only controversial within the framework of the traditional right-left spectrum in the United States.

Solicitation

At times the U.S. cell raised funds in other ways. In 1995, al-Arian wrote to Ismail al-Shatti in Kuwait soliciting money for the PIJ. In the letter, al-Arian bragged about the 1995 Beit Lid bombing and cited it as an example of what PIJ could do. He wrote,

The latest operation, carried out by the two *mujahideen* who were martyred for the sake of God, is the best guide and witness to what the believing few can do in the face of Arab and Islamic collapse at the heels of the Zionist enemy and in keeping the flame, steadfastness, and defiance glowing. “Preserving the spirit of jihad against the enemy is a general Islamic responsibility and cannot be left to rest upon the shoulders of the few among our nation... I call upon you to try to extend true support of the jihad effort in Palestine so that operations such as these can continue, so that people do not lose faith that Islam properly responded to the circumstances despite a difficult stage in time, and a terrible era... I would like to hear from you concerning the feasibility of assistance from benevolent people and institutions whom you know to the jihad in Palestine.”¹²⁶

Most of the money raised by the PIJ went to fund terrorist attacks. In certain cases, funds were used for the families of “martyrs.” Engaging in a now common practice, PIJ would offer future terrorists money to be given to their families upon completion of a martyrdom attack. The same is offered to those individuals who are imprisoned, injured, or suffer the loss of their home at the hands of the Israelis resulting from their involvement in terrorism.

In one such incident, al-Arian himself distributed these funds. In February 1992, members of the PIJ entered an Israeli military camp in the vicinity of the West Bank and murdered three Israelis. All four of the participants in the attack—Ibrahim Hassan Agbarya, Muhamid Saed Agbarya, Yahya Mustafa Agbarya and Muhammad Taufik Suleiman—were caught and confessed to being members of the PIJ. In June 1, 1993, al-Arian wrote a \$5,000

¹²⁵ “Transcript of Fundraiser at Beit Hanina Club in Cleveland,” 27 September 1991, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-566.

¹²⁶ “Appeal Letter to Ismail al-Shatti from Sami al-Arian,” 10 February 1995, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-516.

check from an account he had at USF Federal Credit Union to another account, and then made four wire transfers of \$2,000 each to his account at Bank Leumi in Israel. Then on June 3, he made four wire transfers of \$1,944 each from that account to accounts at Mercantile Discount Bank in the West Bank in the names of spouses or other relatives of the four terrorists convicted in connection with the February 1992 attack.¹²⁷ This incident illustrates not only one complete cycle of terror financing, from conference fundraising, to the distribution of bribe money to family relations of imprisoned PIJ members, but also the senior role the U.S. cell played in the organization's overall activities.

One final chain in the terror funding apparatus consists of specific funds set up by the PIJ to facilitate the transfer of moneys from the U.S. cell to the West Bank and Gaza. Two such funds include the Islamic Fund for Palestine (IFP) and the Muslim Women's Society (MWS). These U.S.-based funds essentially functioned as nothing more than shell companies. An ICP pamphlet titled "Informational Guide" states that IFP "handles the collection and distribution of financial contributions in occupied Palestine," and directs donations to the same post office box address used by ICP, WISE, and the PIJ publications.¹²⁸ In several instances, the IFP account was utilized in al-Arian's wire transfers. The MWS functioned in roughly the same way, only in its literature, it portrayed itself as "a nonprofit organization working with our Muslim sisters and brothers to provide education, improve health care, and help the orphans, blind and needy children in Palestine."¹²⁹

The PIJ, as illustrated above, operated in a sphere much larger than just the Palestinian territories. With its leadership exiled to Lebanon (subsequently having relocated to Syria), its ideological, military, and financial support coming from Iran, and significant propaganda and fundraising efforts being conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom, it has managed to violently assert itself in historic Palestine. In addition to fundraising, the U.S. cell members also promoted the movement's ideology through their speeches and written material. The following chapters will focus on several recurrent themes within this material, analyzing them in the context of the ideologies examined in the first chapter.

¹²⁷ "Indictment, Count 1, #11, p. 17-19"

¹²⁸ "Islamic Committee for Palestine (ICP) Informational Guide," *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit 437.

¹²⁹ "Muslim Women's Society Solicitation Letter," *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit 480.

Chapter 4: Israel, the Colonial Oppressor, and Palestine, the Islamic Imperative

The PIJ focused the dissemination of its ideology on slogan-based propaganda to finance its jihad against Israel. Seeking to act as a mouthpiece for the *umma*, it attempted to rouse a sense of militancy among the people by playing on certain sentiments. As such, its U.S. cell focused on a combination of key themes to win over its target audience. These themes were based on the patchwork of concepts merged by PIJ founders in its earliest days. Drawing from the ideas of the four major figures discussed in Chapter 1, the PIJ primarily centered its ideology around two concepts: a) Israel as an installation of the oppressive, colonial West, and b) the centrality and Islamic character of Palestine. The latter notion also included a deep-seeded anti-Jewish element that traced its roots to the supposed ongoing historic conflict between Muslims and Jews based in the Qur'an.

Israel as an Installation of the West

“The origins of the Palestine problem, in this narrative,” explains Hatina, “goes back to a Western offensive that began with Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt (1798) and reached a climax with the disbanding of the Ottoman Empire (1918), which had symbolized the ‘unity of the Islamic nation.’”¹³⁰ The collapse of the Ottoman Empire not only turned Muslims into strangers in their own land but also caused “the ideological and political displacement of Islam” at the hands “of liberal and socialist Arab regimes” seeking to emulate the West.¹³¹ These developments “enabled the West to implant the Zionist entity in the heart of the Muslim world,” since in PIJ’s view, “Palestine was always the focus of Western imperialist designs and was meant to serve as a launch pad to take over other Muslim territories.”¹³² The correlation between the Jewish state and Western influence on the region was essential to PIJ logic. The PIJ was distinct in both its call for immediate armed struggle against Israel and for forming a new dichotomy that “projected the Jewish presence in Palestine as a Western bridgehead in the heart of the Muslim world.”¹³³

The PIJ looked to its ideologues for inspiration when emphasizing the need to eject the so-called foreign, colonial presence from within their midst. A major theme that emerged from the statements and writings of Hasan al-Banna dealt with the defense of Islam against both internal and external threats.¹³⁴ Al-Banna gave the struggle of Muslims against Western imperialism a decidedly Islamic emphasis, focusing on a triumphant, collective rise of the *umma* “to throw [off] the Western yoke, to recover its lost

¹³⁰ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 48. “Arab nationalist historiography had been critical of the Ottoman Empire as an oppressive state responsible for Arab decline. By contrast, Palestinian Islamist historiography stresses the Ottoman restoration of Islamic political unity to the region after the disintegration of the Abbasid Caliphate, and the Ottoman protection of the region from Western encroachments for several hundred years.” See Litvak, “The Islamization of Palestinian Identity,” p. 16.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 7 and Litvak, “Palestinian Islamic Jihad.”

¹³³ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 20.

¹³⁴ Gershoni and Jankowski, p. 64.

independence, and to return to a golden age of unity and splendor.”¹³⁵ Contrasting the glory of the past vis-à-vis the misery and inferiority of the present was a common theme for Islamists from al-Banna to Shiqaqi. The Muslim Brotherhood viewed the threat from the West as an evil, unified front, seeking to destroy Islam and humiliate its followers. Al-Banna lamented that Muslim society was being systematically corrupted,¹³⁶ by “their half-naked women ... together with their liquors, their theatres, their dance halls, their amusement arcades, their stories, their newspapers, their novels, their whims, their silly games, and their vices.”¹³⁷

These sentiments deeply influenced the PIJ’s view of its own colonial oppressor, for it perceived Israel to be the newest manifestation of the imperialist presence in the region. Hence, the presence of such an entity in the “heart of the Muslim *umma*” would bring with it the same degradation and corruption to the Arabs and Muslims as had its predecessors. Abu Amr notes that for PIJ theoreticians, the danger of Israel lied in its occupation of Palestine, “which is part of *Dar al-Islam*,” as well as “the humiliation of its people” and “the spread of Jewish corruption in it.” Israel was “a central part of the plan to fragment the Islamic *umma*, to westernize it, to subjugate it, to enslave it, to paralyze its will, and to cast an eternal yoke over its neck...”¹³⁸ This perception of Israel is the result of the unabating, deeply felt sense of victimization that existed within Palestinian society due to the Israeli presence in Palestine. Stemming from historic enmity felt against the century-long foreign presence in the region, such sentiments were echoed in almost every statement and slogan issued by the group.

A statement by the PIJ leadership elaborates on this idea, arguing that, “One of the goals of Israel’s existence is to serve as a base for imperialist forces that seek to prevent an Islamic revival in the Arab and Muslim countries.” The principal reasons behind the presence of such an “imperialist base” include the desire to keep these countries under foreign control and the intention “to prevent Islam from resuming its universal historical role.” The author of the statement therefore reasoned that, “the move toward the liberation of Palestine by Islamic means will damage not only Israel and its imperialist allies, but all the false forces that stir up hostility to the Islamic revival in the Arab-Muslim world.” Obviously, these statements reveal that the PIJ does not perceive Israel as having any of its own aspirations. Rather, it simply serves as an arm of the imperialist West, seeking the “distancing from Islam in the Muslim lands” and the prevention of “Islam from resuming its universal historical role.”¹³⁹

Integrating the notion of Israel’s existence as an installation of the West to Palestine’s religious significance, the PIJ posited that “the existence of a Jewish entity in Palestine under the protection of the West constitutes nothing less than the axis of an imperialistic scheme to maintain a state of divisiveness among Muslims.” The fate of Islam, according to PIJ, hangs in the balance based on the outcome of the struggle in Palestine,

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 90.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 47.

¹³⁷ Hasan al-Banna, “Between Yesterday and Today (*Bayna al-Ams wa al-Yawm*),” *Young Muslims – Canada Website*, www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/byat/index.htm.

¹³⁸ Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 102.

¹³⁹ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 20. See also *al-Sabil*, (5 May 1989).

which “therefore, will determine the fate of the entire mission to revive and unify the Muslim nation.”¹⁴⁰

Focusing on what Hatina describes as the “‘us–them dichotomy,’ typical of dualistic politics with a worldview of irreconcilable contrast between two forces or ideas,” the PIJ sought to glorify the Palestinians’ historic, and specifically Islamic, struggle against colonialism by demonizing its enemy; an enemy that smoothly transitioned, in PIJ’s view, from the British to the United States by means of the Zionist presence in Palestine.¹⁴¹

At the 1991, Fourth Annual ICP Conference, al-Arian made use of this dichotomy when he declared that, “We are in a battle of life and death, in a battle of fate and future against the Western hegemony and tyranny wanting to control the capabilities of the nations in order to enslave, steal and control them.” Explaining that, “Islam and Westernization cannot unite in the heart of a man at all,” al-Arian deduced that “the result is either that man becomes a Muslim or a ‘Westerner.’” This characterization pits Islam and the West against one another in an uncompromising battle of civilizations; seeking to alienate Muslims from Western society and provoke them to rise up against it through provocations and instigating fear. Speaking at the same conference, ‘Awda added further fuel to the fire when he proclaimed that, “The contradiction between us and the Zionist enemy is a fundamental contradiction, which stands on one side annihilating the other.” ‘Awda goes on to predict that “nothing will resolve this contradiction but the armed jihad based on a total adherence to Islam as a religion, a doctrine, a law, and a way of life.” It is important to emphasize that al-Arian and ‘Awda’s core audience was American Muslims and that their rousing speeches illustrate a concerted effort to drive a wedge between that community and their country of residence, or in some cases, citizenship.¹⁴²

Fittingly, one of the stated “Characteristics” the PIJ applies to itself in its bylaws is being “humanistic,” giving “back the human being his value that was violated by the West and the Zionists.” This is, of course, to be achieved by means of jihad, but it also takes into account al-Arian’s efforts to alienate the Muslim community from the West. As he elucidated this in an issue of *al-Islam wa Filastin* when he wrote,

Our struggle with the Zionist enemy is not only a struggle for the land or for a country [Palestine] instead of a country [Israel] unclear or for water resources and borders, rather it is a struggle of our people and our whole *umma* against the Zionist-Western coalition for the sake of Palestine and the revival project and full liberation of our homeland... The struggle will never be accomplished without a complete defeat of the Zionist-Western coalition... [Accordingly,] The only way to resolve this struggle is to escalate the confrontation against the Zionist project and their supporters politically, militarily, culturally, and publicly ... until complete expulsion of the enemy

¹⁴⁰ Meir Hatina, “Theology and Power in the Middle East: Palestinian Martyrdom in a Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 10, No. 3 (October 2005): p. 246.

¹⁴¹ Hatina, “The ‘Ulama’ and the Cult of Death,” p. 33.

¹⁴² “Transcript of Fourth Annual ICP Conference.”

from our homeland and all the countries within an expulsion operation to this attack on the Islamic World.¹⁴³

The message is simple: Israel is an installation of the evil West and must be fought by all means necessary. The movement clearly defines the forces of good and evil in its efforts to solidify the alienation between the two.

As such, the “us-them” characterization of the conflict not only reinforces the exclusivity of the PIJ religio-nationalist identity, but also bars the way for political compromise. As stated in its bylaws, the PIJ demands “the rejection of any peaceful solution for the Palestinian Cause.”¹⁴⁴ ‘Awda reinforced this sentiment at the Fourth Annual ICP Conference when he declared that “The first issue among our basic principles in our struggle with the Zionist enemy is that: There is no peace with Israel.” Explaining to the crowd that he was well aware of the pressure “aimed at inflicting psychological defeat on us,” ‘Awda urged his listeners not to yield to “this pressure and siege,” even when told, “it is inevitable that you become realists, you have to be moderate, you must abandon terrorism, you must abandon extremism. Israel is a reality we must all recognize.” So as to further solidify his contention and in an attempt to guarantee “the continuation of the resistance against the Zionist enemy,” he explained that “Peace with Israel is an unlawful agreement, a sin and unlawful. An agreement will establish unlawfulness because it gives the enemy the power over the land of Muslims.”¹⁴⁵ This statement not only impresses upon the crowd the necessity to resist against the heralds of compromise and peace, but also emphasizes the negative religious connotations of such a move—specifically, that peace with the Jewish state, and therefore the Jewish people, is prohibited in Islam.

This brings us to the second theme utilized by the PIJ’s U.S. cell in its propaganda and fundraising schemes: the centrality and Islamic character of Palestine within the context of the larger clash against the tyrannous West.

The Centrality of Islamic Palestine

The idea of Palestine’s centrality in PIJ speeches and writings is linked to a) the Ikhwan and Islamic Revolution-inspired notion that Islam is the only force that can liberate the nation from tyranny, b) the religious importance accorded to Palestine based on the movement’s reading of the Qur’an, and c) the belief that the struggle towards Palestine’s liberation is part and parcel of the enduring historic conflict between Muslims and Jews. Thus, PIJ sought to emphasize the “Islamic essence” of the Palestinian problem (*Islamiyat al-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya*) by depicting the Arab-Israeli conflict “as a religious-cultural struggle against the most blatant form of Western aggression against Islam.”¹⁴⁶ In arguing that the Palestinian problem was an entirely Islamic issue and that it inherently provided the key “to every serious strategy aimed at the liberation and unification of the Muslim nation,” it tried to impress upon its adherents that in order “to restore the inner balance to

¹⁴³ *al-Islam wa Filastin* (Islam and Palestine), Issue 18: First Year, 25 October 1988, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-42 D.

¹⁴⁴ “The Political Constants of the Movement, 4,” Bylaws.

¹⁴⁵ “Transcript of Fourth Annual ICP Conference.”

¹⁴⁶ Litvak, “Islamization of Palestinian Identity,” p. 6.

Muslim society and liberate it from its inferior status vis-à-vis the West,” Palestine must be “the highest priority of the Islamic movements.”¹⁴⁷ PIJ’s bylaws state that “The Palestinian Cause is the central cause of the modern Islamic movement and is the pivot of today’s global conflict.”¹⁴⁸

In fact, what this effort to promote Palestine as Islam’s number-one priority signifies is that the Islamic and Palestinian identities were becoming totally intertwined within PIJ ideology and propaganda. Since the Islamic path was seen as a remedy for the national predicament, radical Islamic groups, including Hamas and the PIJ, embraced Palestinian national symbols, but endowed them with Islamic meaning.¹⁴⁹ Citing Ernest Gellner’s *Postmodernism*, Litvak adds that Islam was able to provide a national identity; specifically in the context of the struggle with colonialism. Looking to the Islamic past, the PIJ identified countless instances in which Islam had ushered the way to salvation. Of course, PIJ theoreticians only employed examples that involved waging jihad to attain this goal. Nevertheless, this effort led them to seek out a specifically Islamic significance for Palestine.

While groups like the Egyptian and Syrian Muslim Brethren justified their local patriotism by reference to the roles their countries had played in Islamic history, groups such as the PIJ and Hamas were unable to do so since Palestine, in its present borders, had never been an administrative unit or housed a major political center under Muslim empires. To compensate, both groups “articulated a spiritual Islamic meaning for Palestinian identity and patriotism, which stems from the sanctity of Palestine as a holy Islamic land.”¹⁵⁰ Specifically, the sanctification of Palestine was based on the traditional Islamic belief that Jerusalem is the third-holiest city in Islam after Mecca and Medina. Jerusalem “derives its religious prominence from being the first *Qibla*, the initial direction toward which the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslim community turned their faces in prayer” and “its association with Prophet Muhammad’s miraculous nocturnal journey to the city and then his ascension to Heaven” known as *al-Isra’ wal Mi’raj*. These factors not only linked the city with Islam, but also made its defense an Islamic imperative.¹⁵¹ The sanctity of Jerusalem and the al-Aqsa Mosque was extended, accordingly, to the whole of Palestine. As Shiqaqi’s website affirms, “Palestine is the sacred land [which contains] al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and is the land of *al-Isra’a* and *al-Miraj*.”¹⁵² The PIJ bylaws state that, “The peaceful solution based on recognizing the right of Jews in Palestine or in part of it is a solution that contradicts the logic of the Qur’an. It is a forfeiture of an endowed Islamic land that no one has the right to renounce.”¹⁵³

Furthermore, the fact that *Dar al-Islam* is encroached upon by Jews poses even graver implications, considering that in Islam, Jews are known as People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*) and are accorded inferior status for rejecting the final revelation of God and his messenger, the Prophet Muhammad. Consequentially, PIJ sought to make the status of

¹⁴⁷ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, pp. 49-51.

¹⁴⁸ “Principles and Basic Thoughts of the Movement, 1,” Bylaws.

¹⁴⁹ Litvak, “Islamization of Palestinian Identity,” p. 6, 8.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 10-1. See also Gershoni and Jankowski, pp. 89-90.

¹⁵¹ Ziad Abu Amr, “The Significance of Jerusalem: A Muslim Perspective,” *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture* 2, No. 2 (1995), www.pij.org/details.php?id=646.

¹⁵² “*Qalu fi al-Shahid* (Sayings about the Martyr),” *Shikaki Online*, www.shikaki.net/klfch_033.htm.

¹⁵³ “The Position vis-à-vis the Peace Plan,” Bylaws.

Palestinian territory the center of the confrontation between Muslims and the Judeo-Christian world. Within this framework, Muslims represent the forces of truth (*haqq*) while Jews (and Christians) embody apostasy (*batil*). Portraying the struggle as a religious-historical one over control of the sacred places, the PIJ argued that this conflict was even more critical than the twelfth-century Crusader occupation.¹⁵⁴

The PIJ's perception of Palestine as a venue for the ongoing, historic confrontation between Muslims and Jews was significantly inspired by Khomeini's development of the subject. Khomeini argued that Islam had been afflicted by the Jews from the outset, accusing them of anti-Islamic propaganda and of engaging in various plots against the Muslims. He utilized passages from the Qur'an describing the Jews as being sinful and incessantly chastised by God for their evil doings as proof of their so-called wickedness.

This tactic was mimicked by 'Awda in several of his speeches on behalf of ICP. In particular, 'Awda often relied on Qur'anic quotes relating to the Jews (especially in *al-Isra'* and *al-Baqara* suras) in which he claimed that God had "warned the Muslims of the great danger personified by the Jews, who are enemies of the Islamic civilization."¹⁵⁵ Al-Arian also emphasized the dangers of the Jews at a 1991 ICP event held at Currie High School in Chicago, asking,

Did we forget the Jews and the sons of Jews? God warns us in the Qur'an of the sons of Israel and cursed them in the holy Qur'an. He cursed those who are the sons of Israel through David and Jesus, the son of Mary, because they disobeyed and assailed, and they were not held back by any prohibition they committed. Those people, God made monkeys and pigs.¹⁵⁶

Anti-Semitic rants like these are framed as religious doctrine and aimed at inciting listeners to rise-up and carry out jihad against the Jews, who "control us and control our land." This facilitates the previously mentioned goal to create "a psychological barrier between Jews and the Muslim Palestinian people" and "a conviction that coexistence is impossible." Al-Arian's comments should therefore be understood as working to further this goal. But it is not Jews or Judaism alone that are to blame.

Khomeini attacked Zionism and Judaism alike, arguing at times that they were inextricably related. Accordingly, "Khomeini maintained that the most overt manifestation of the Jewish-Christian conspiracy against Islam was the establishment of Israel by Western imperialism in order to oppress the Muslims." He also depicted the success of Zionism "as a direct consequence of the crisis of Islam in the modern era, as a sort of punishment for the abandonment of religion."¹⁵⁷ It is based on this logic that the PIJ portrayed its conflict with "them" as "the symbol of devotion to the faith and upholding the religion."¹⁵⁸ Similarly, the PIJ drew from Khomeini in emphasizing a direct link between Zionism and the processes of secularization and cultural Westernization that has taken

¹⁵⁴ Hatina, "Theology and Power," 246; Litvak, "Palestinian Islamic Jihad."

¹⁵⁵ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 48.

¹⁵⁶ "Transcript of ICP Event at Currie High School in Chicago, Illinois," 29 September 1991, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-567.

¹⁵⁷ Litvak, "The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Holocaust," pp. 269- 70.

¹⁵⁸ *al-Islam wa Filastin*, Issue 7: First Year, 1 September 1988. *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit 42-C.

place in Palestine (and the Muslim world) during the modern age. Litvak explains that, “Since secularization is the greatest threat to Muslim societies, Zionism was directly responsible for the greatest predicament that had befallen Islam and the Muslims in the modern age;” namely the creation of Israel.¹⁵⁹ This tragedy is contrasted with what the PIJ perceives as equaling a Zionist victory. Al-Arian wrote an article that was featured in ICP’s *Inquiry* magazine titled, “The Handquake: Peace or Surrender.” In this article, which incidentally referred to the handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat in Washington D.C. as a “handquake,” al-Arian explained that the Zionist Movement’s ultimate goal was achieved with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 but that “this objective was achieved at the expense of the wholesale robbery of Palestinian land and rights.”¹⁶⁰

The significance of the Islamization of Palestine is that, if it, as an Islamic land, is violated, a defensive jihad is obligatory based on the principle of defending *Dar al-Islam*. In this spirit, an article in *al-Islam wa Filastin* stated that, “The Palestinian Cause is an Islamic Cause and Palestine is Islamic; the jihad for the sake of liberating it is an Islamic duty that is a must for the Muslims of Palestine.”¹⁶¹ By marketing the struggle for Palestine as an Islamic imperative, the PIJ can then claim that it is the duty of every Muslim to defend it.

In considering the Jewish presence in Palestine to be a foreign occupation of Islamic lands and arguing that the elimination of Israel is preordained by God’s words in the Qur’an, jihad becomes the only legitimate and religiously sanctioned way to liberate Palestine.¹⁶² Awda’s message on the subject was even more forceful, arguing that “They [the Jews] only understand one language; the language of jihad, the language of confrontation, the language of struggle.”¹⁶³ It is on the foundation of these themes that the PIJ built its rhetorical repertoire regarding jihad, which it successfully used to fundraise for its direct implementation against Israel and its citizens.

¹⁵⁹ Litvak, “The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Holocaust,” p. 270.

¹⁶⁰ Sami al-Arian, “The Handquake: Peace or Surrender,” *Inquiry* 3, No. 9 (Spring 1994): 6. *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit 512.

¹⁶¹ *al-Islam wa Filastin*, Issue 2: First Year, 3 March 1988, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-42 A.

¹⁶² Litvak, “Palestinian Islamic Jihad.”

¹⁶³ “Transcript of Fourth Annual ICP Conference.”

Chapter 5: Jihad and *Shahada*

“The Qur’an is our constitution; Jihad is our path; Victory to Islam; Death to Israel; Revolution, revolution until the victory.”¹⁶⁴ –Sami al-Arian

With Palestine’s liberation as its central goal, rooted both ideologically and culturally in Islam, PIJ main force comes from jihad, its battle cry, and *shahada*, its ammunition. Both are seen as a means to an end, which according to its bylaws and frequent decrees, will not be abandoned under any circumstances. However, the sanctification of jihad not only drives the movement, it also provides for it. The glorification and promotion of jihad, martyrdom operations, and martyrs have proven to be the primary tactic of PIJ recruiters and fundraisers alike. By capitalizing on events such as the Intifada, PIJ members brought new blood to the cause while also raising thousands of dollars to fund its attacks. Having developed a theology of jihad, it was able to offer alternative ways to wage jihad for those living abroad. In short, the proliferation of Islamic fundamentalism fueled by the conflict has reached vast new borders and helped further the goals of the PIJ.

The Intifada

While it is important to understand the ideological inspiration that the PIJ derived from various sources relating to jihad and *shahada*, it is also important to recognize the historical context through which these concepts gained prominence; namely, the first Intifada. The Palestinian uprising that took place against Israeli rule between 1987 and 1993 has come to be known as the First Intifada. This event stemmed from several inter-related causes, beginning with Palestinians’ growing sense of frustration at the lack of progress in finding durable solutions for their humanitarian and nationalist aspirations after Israel’s establishment in 1948. These sentiments were exacerbated by, among other things, the fall of Jerusalem and the “humiliation” of the Six-Day War in 1967, the loss of faith in Arab nationalism, and the bitter disappointment with the failures and compromises of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).¹⁶⁵ According to Abu Amr, “The combination of the PLO’s military weakness in Lebanon and its subsequent exile to Tunisia contributed to the Palestinian sense of disappointment in the secular-nationalist trend to produce results.”¹⁶⁶

Later, the Iran-Iraq War and the preoccupation of key regional actors with this event resulted in Palestine’s losing its primacy as the region’s number-one problem and also engendered a sense of abandonment in Palestinians vis-à-vis their “Arab brothers.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ “Transcript of ICP Event at Currie High School in Chicago, Illinois.”

¹⁶⁵ Rekhess, “The Iranian Impact on the Islamic Jihad Movement,” p. 189, 193.

¹⁶⁶ Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 56.

¹⁶⁷ Erika G. Alin, “Review: Dynamics of the Palestinian Uprising: An Assessment of Causes, Character, and Consequences,” *Comparative Politics* 26, No. 4. (July 1994): p. 487. This was most strongly reflected in the November 1987 Arab Summit in Amman in which the Palestine issue was accorded a low priority vis-à-vis the Iran-Iraq War, which displaced Palestine as the first issue on the agenda.

Economic inflation in Israel and the economic downturn experienced in the Gulf States also took their toll on Palestinians. These conditions translated into a dramatic decrease in the standard of living and a lack of jobs for both Palestinians living in the Gulf and college graduates coming out of the newly created Palestinian universities, among other symptoms.¹⁶⁸ Traditional Palestinian dependence on agricultural work was replaced with migrant work, making the population even more dependent on Israel. In parallel, Israel took measures to destabilize the PLO's formal leadership through a series of moves including the removal and/or deportation of most of the Arab, pro-PLO mayors by the early 1980s.¹⁶⁹ As a result, there was a reconstitution of PLO leadership comprising mostly mid-level activists. These factors proved a volatile mix; one which the PIJ was ready to ignite.

Similar to other major confrontations, a single "spark" (*al-sharara*), or event, ignited the onset of the Intifada and, aptly enough, it was carried out by the PIJ. According to Hatina, "the Islamic Jihad extolled its own distinguished role in paving the way for its [the Intifada] outbreak," about which Shiqaqi proclaimed that, "the Intifada broke out with blood shed by Islamic Jihad martyrs. Later, other forces joined it."¹⁷⁰ PIJ's role in inciting the riots illustrates the extent to which religious revival was fueling the revolt.¹⁷¹ Shiqaqi provides an account of the outbreak of the Intifada, first clarifying that, "According to the official date, the Intifada began on December 9, 1987, but every observer who understands the Palestinian arena well and follows it well is aware that it began on the sixth of October 1987." He went on to explain,

On this day, a group of struggling [for the sake of jihad] youth carried out a courageous martyrdom operation in Gaza in none other than the al-Shuja'iyah neighborhood. This martyrdom operation, which was the culmination of a number of heroic military *jihadi* operations, woke the nation to this new struggling [for the sake of jihad] blood, which colors the rich of the country, woke the nation to see this great act incite energy inside of it that nobody anticipated. Since that day and until December 1987, a specifically limited or preliminary *Intifada* erupted, demonstrations here and there and strikes here and there.¹⁷²

The event Shiqaqi described is known as the Battle of al-Shuja'iyah, in which six high-ranking PIJ members, who were imprisoned in Gaza's central jail, managed to escape prison and carry out a series of planned attacks against Israeli targets. These attacks, which killed or wounded several Israeli military personnel, not only encouraged Palestinians in the Territories to emulate such activities, but also enhanced the prestige of the PIJ in their eyes. Ultimately, al-Shuja'iyah neighborhood was the scene of a final armed confrontation

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 482 referencing Aryeh Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1991), pp. 19-20.

¹⁶⁹ Yezid Sayigh, "Struggle within, Struggle without: The Transformation of PLO Politics Since 1982," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 65, No. 2 (Spring 1989): p. 264.

¹⁷⁰ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, pp. 58-9.

¹⁷¹ Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising-Israel's Third Front* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), p. 227.

¹⁷² Fathi al-Shiqaqi, "Maqalat: Al-Intifada (Articles: The Intifada)," *Shikaki Online*, (26 August 1988), www.shikaki.net/mklt_06.htm.

between Israeli soldiers and members of the prison break. Misbah al-Suri, the band's leader, was shot and killed, as were most of his associates. Al-Suri became one of PIJ's first and most celebrated martyrs, further contributing to the status of the PIJ among Palestinians. Likewise, al-Suri's veneration became an accepted tool in its repertoire of resistance. The PIJ used these individuals and their actions as both an example of what the group was capable of and as a recruiting tool to continue its efforts.

As Shiqaqi described, the Battle of al-Shuja'iyah ushered in a host of similar attacks that culminated in the start of the Intifada.¹⁷³ PIJ's publication, *al-Islam wa Filastin*, noted that, "One of the most important factors that explain the emergence of the Intifada is the effect of the massive confrontation between the Israeli authorities and the PIJ in Gaza in the weeks preceding 12/9/1987."¹⁷⁴ Although tensions were already high and small-scale acts of violence were increasingly common, December 6, 1987 serves as the official date of the start of the Intifada. On this day, an Israeli citizen was stabbed to death while shopping in Gaza. Two days later, a car crash took place in which an Israeli vehicle killed four Palestinians. It is significant to note these events because they are disputed by the PIJ as having triggered the Intifada. Following these incidents, chaos ensued. Hundreds of Palestinians turned on Israeli troops and demonstrations and riots spread like wildfire throughout the Gaza Strip and the more affluent and secular West Bank. What began as mass rioting and civil disobedience escalated to include weapons attacks, thousands of Molotov cocktails, hand grenade attacks, and attacks using guns or other explosives.¹⁷⁵ In his excitement over the escalation of the Intifada, Shiqaqi said that he did not believe that any force on earth was "capable of stopping the march of the Intifada until it achieves what our people strive for." To clarify, Shiqaqi added "what our people strive for is the liberation of their homeland...to raise our banners all over the country from the river to the sea."¹⁷⁶

For the PIJ, the Intifada was seen as yet another phase in "a line of historical continuity leading from the Palestinian jihad organization of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam of the late 1920s" to their present struggle against Israel.¹⁷⁷ In this vein, Shiqaqi described the dual "catastrophes" of 1948 and 1967 being met with "a long history of Palestinian struggle and jihad," which include al-Qassam's "jihad and revolution" in 1929, the Arab Revolt in 1936, the 1979 uprising against the signing of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, and the Intifada itself in 1987.¹⁷⁸ Hatina argues, "By emphasizing historic continuity and using religious anti-Jewish terminology, the movement sought to highlight the religious content of the conflict in Palestine, which for many years had been overshadowed by the dominant nationalist-secular stance."¹⁷⁹ Evidence of this exists in Shiqaqi's argument:

Over the course of this century, and before the fall of Jerusalem into their hands, the attack of the Zionist Crusades stretched and expanded until it contained the Islamic Nation. The Crusader attack spread from one axis to

¹⁷³ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 37.

¹⁷⁴ *al-Islam wa Filastin*, Issue 12: First Year, 3 September 1989, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-42 F.

¹⁷⁵ "Israel and Zionism: The First Intifada, 1987-1993." *JAFI Center*, www.jafi.org.il/education/100/maps/fintifada.html.

¹⁷⁶ al-Shiqaqi, "Maqalat: *Al-Intifada*."

¹⁷⁷ Rekhess, "The Iranian Impact on the Islamic Jihad Movement," p. 194.

¹⁷⁸ al-Shiqaqi, "Maqalat: *Al-Intifada*."

¹⁷⁹ Hatina, *Islam and Salvation*, p. 58.

another through expulsion, through division, and through the establishment of orphaned states, implementing the colonial enterprise, the Western onslaught finally materialized in the establishment of the usurper Hebrew entity upon the dearest spot in this Nation...¹⁸⁰

Evident from this comment, as well as the previous chapter's exposition of the subject, the anti-Zionist rhetoric in Shiqaqi's statement clearly echoes Khomeini's sentiments vis-à-vis Israel and strengthens the claim of a historic and cultural anti-Jewish enmity that has existed in Islam. Likewise, it illustrates PIJ's Islamization of the Intifada; a stated agenda recorded in its bylaws.¹⁸¹ For instance, Shiqaqi argued that while the Intifada "confirms that it occurred in the context of the struggle and continuing jihad of our people," it simultaneously "progressed in the context of the jihad of the Arab and Islamic peoples against the colonial enterprise since the early nineteenth century to the present."¹⁸² It is evident that while Shiqaqi affirms the Intifada is a national struggle of the Palestinian people linked historically to the activities of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam, it is also historically linked to the age-old, regional struggle against colonial imperialism currently embodied by Israel. He infuses an Islamic element in his argument to strengthen the ongoing religious implication of both historical struggles; i.e. Muslim versus Jew. In short, the PIJ promoted jihad in the Intifada context as both a historic and religious imperative. This move helped stimulate the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Palestinian society and politics, and beyond.¹⁸³

Although located in the United States, al-Arian and fellow cell members made ample use of the Intifada for propaganda as well as for fundraising. This agenda is in accordance with the methods set forth in their bylaws, which stipulates, among other things, a) "Presenting the tragedy of the Palestinian people and the utilization of all platforms for that," and b) "Concentration on spreading the thoughts of the movement and the use of all available means, especially in mosques, schools, universities, and institutions." Fittingly, at the Fourth Annual ICP Conference, al-Arian declared, "The *Intifada* started when the Palestinian people, in the Occupied Land, realized that there was no way other than struggle, resistance, and defeat of the enemy, from the [Mediterranean] Sea to the [Jordan] River." He added, "The *Intifada* brought new values to the sons of Palestine...New generations began perceiving the glory and honor of Islam embodied in the confrontation of the occupier."¹⁸⁴

Implicit in al-Arian's comments is the notion that waging jihad in the context of the Intifada will both achieve the goals of liberation and restore the Palestinian and Muslim people's honor. Accordingly, al-Arian reminded conference attendees and potential donors that, "We have no choice but the choice of continuation, the choice of perseverance, the

¹⁸⁰ al-Shiqaqi, "*Maqalat: Al-Intifada*."

¹⁸¹ "The Islamization of the struggle of the struggle against the Zionist enemy, and the rejection of national and domestic claims to curtail or marginalize the struggle." See "The Political Constants of the Movements, 3," Bylaws.

¹⁸² al-Shiqaqi, "*Maqalat: Al-Intifada*."

¹⁸³ Rekhess, "The Iranian Impact on the Islamic Jihad Movement," p. 200.

¹⁸⁴ "Transcript of Fourth Annual ICP Conference."

choice of jihad, the choice of settling ourselves to the pursuit of our enemies, and to support the Intifada until the balance of power is altered.”¹⁸⁵

It should be noted that while al-Arian and others were generating their own propaganda, they were also distributing speeches and interviews of the PIJ’s leadership, including the previously quoted record of Shiqaqi’s view on the Intifada. This plethora of available material and determined indoctrination effort by the cell members in the United States greatly contributed to the PIJ’s standing among American Muslims as well as their tendency to support the movement financially.

The Theology of Jihad and *Shahada*

First and foremost, according to PIJ dogma, jihad and *shahada* are “backed by two scriptural commands—death for the sake of Allah, and the duty to forbid wrongdoing (*nahy ‘an al-munkar*).”¹⁸⁶ For instance, the group relies on the Quranic passage of Sura al-Baqara 2:190, which says to “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors,” in order to justify jihad and *shahada* as an Islamic imperative. Likewise, PIJ promises that its martyrs will have great reward bestowed upon them based on Sura al-Imran 3:169-70, which says “Think not of those who are slain in Allah’s way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance from their Lord. They rejoice in the Bounty provided by Allah...the (martyrs) glory in the fact that on them is no fear, nor have they (cause to) grieve.”

The PIJ’s promotion of these concepts is based on the central position of jihad in Islamic theology and law. As some of the movement’s primary slogans make clear, “Islam is the only solution to the conflict” and “jihad is the way to liberation and to unity.”¹⁸⁷ Hatina avers, “self-sacrifice became a moral code justifying ‘suicide attacks’ against Israel.” This idea is embodied in another of the PIJ’s official slogans, “Martyrdom awards life.” Again, it is important to remember that, as Rekhess states, “Palestinian Islamic Jihad members adopted views on the principles of jihad, martyrdom (*shahada*) and self-sacrifice (*istishhad*) in a way which attested to the strong influence of Shi‘i symbolism and the slogans of the Iranian revolution.”¹⁸⁸ Accordingly, the glorification of martyrs, in this distinct manner, became a part of the PIJ’s fundraising and recruitment efforts.

Hatina explains, “The production of a large body of hagiographical literature entrenched martyrs in the public memory, depicting them as vital to the nation’s past and future while paving the way for the martyrs’ movement to gain communal influence.” Appropriately, Shiqaqi declared, “Without the martyrs we have no life or history, no past, glory or value. It is they who pave the way for us for the future.” This sentiment was heightened by “an ethos of self-sacrifice in Palestinian historiography and terminology.” In fact, the religious notions of jihad and *shahada* were closely intertwined with such “modern secular symbols of struggle as *thawra* (revolution) and *fida’* (sacrifice), forming a broad semantic reservoir familiar to all Palestinians regardless of ideological inclination.” The PIJ

¹⁸⁵ “Transcript of Fundraiser at Beit Hanina Club in Cleveland.”

¹⁸⁶ Hatina, “Theology and Power,” p. 244.

¹⁸⁷ “General Goals, 3, 4,” Bylaws. PIJ’s bylaws were discovered among al-Arian’s belongings in the 1995 FBI raid of ICP, WISE, al-Arian’s USF office, and home.

¹⁸⁸ Rekhess, “The Iranian Impact on the Islamic Jihad Movement,” p. 192.

began its veneration of martyrs with Misbah al-Suri and continues to do so today in the form of hundred of pages on PIJ's various websites dedicated to the wills, pictures, and accounts of the PIJ's martyrdom attacks.¹⁸⁹

As the first movement in the Palestinian arena to mold Islam into a theology of liberation against Israel and to legitimize the ethos of self-sacrifice, the PIJ canonized these notions in a formative manifesto titled "Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom" (*Qira'a fi Fiqh al-Shahada*), which laid down the ideological foundations of martyrdom in Palestine. The PIJ disseminated this as an appendix to a 1988 issue of *al-Islam wa Filastin*. Whereas jihad is linked, for the PIJ, "to the ultimate goal of reaffirming the moral superiority of Islam over other cultures," it seeks to sharpen the division between the Muslim and the infidel through this manifesto.¹⁹⁰

Of similar importance, one of the first subjects discussed in the manifesto deals with the differences between self-immolation (*intihar*) and martyrdom. According to the manifesto, the former "lacks any religious purpose and is motivated solely by a desire for relief from personal distress," while the latter "occurs in the battlefield and represents the pinnacle of faith." According to Hatina, "Self-immolation condemns the perpetrator to endless torment in hell, while martyrdom grants him the pleasures of heaven."¹⁹¹ This distinction is crucial for obtaining warriors for the cause, considering that even the slightest negative inclination in one's heart transforms the act of martyrdom from an act of worship to one of sin. It is worth mentioning that despite PIJ's adamant attempt to distinguish between *intihar* and *shahada*, it is a modern invention. In classical Islam, all forms of self-inflicted death were considered suicide, no matter the motivation or the circumstances.¹⁹² Accordingly, the Islamic legitimacy of so-called "martyrdom operation" is still hotly debated, argued amongst the principal figures in the Islamic world.

The PIJ reasons in its manifesto that martyrdom, as an act of worship, exchanges transient life for eternal life and bestows the rewards of paradise, including purifying the martyr's soul from all sins, among other things. Moreover, martyrdom also serves as "collective insurance for the emancipation of the political community."¹⁹³ According to this line of reasoning, martyrdom contributes to the collective good, combining religious obligation with national considerations. In a sense, acts of martyrdom serve as a tool to empower a people who perceive themselves as weak and marginalized while also affording them a means to deal with the asymmetry of power between themselves and their enemy. Martyrdom therefore, for the PIJ, is seen as a way to fight tyranny and drive the enemy out of Palestine. Arguing that "by taking control of their lives in the time and place of their choosing, and by exposing their victims as helpless," suicide bombers were able to claim "power for the powerless in the name of a superior metaphysical authority."¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, by linking individual salvation to collective emancipation, the PIJ emphasized a second element in justifying self-sacrifice, specifically "the existential nature of the

¹⁸⁹ Hatina, "Theology and Power," p. 242, 250. See also *Riblat al-Dam al-ladbi Hazama al-Saif* (The March of Blood Which Defeated the Sword), Vol. 2, ed. Rif'at al-Sayyid (Cairo: Markaz Yafa', 1997), 1357–61.

¹⁹⁰ Hatina, "Theology and Power," p. 244.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

¹⁹² Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam* (London: Phoenix, 2004), p. 33.

¹⁹³ Hatina, "The 'Ulama' and the Cult of Death," p. 33.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

struggle in Palestine in light of an infidel, suppressive occupier.” In short, martyrdom accomplishes the militant goal of the *shahid* while also serving as inspiration for others loyal to the movement. By portraying the conflict in Palestine as a defensive jihad, the PIJ not only created a sense of urgency, but also ensured that the struggle was not subject to the traditional preconditions of the existence of a legitimate leader. By employing this technique in a similar fashion as Ayatollah Khomeini, the movement therefore promotes defensive jihad as the duty of every believer who is of sound mind and body (*fard ‘ayn*).¹⁹⁵

Ideological borrowings aside, the material origins of the phenomenon of suicide acts were directly imported from Hizballah in the form of training, funding, and at times, provision of materials.¹⁹⁶ The strategic location of PIJ’s exiled leadership in Lebanon facilitated this arrangement. Hizballah’s influence began to seep into the PIJ’s publications as well. For example, in an issue of *al-Islam wa Filastin*, titled “The *Mujahid* in the Face of Interrogation and Torture,” the PIJ prepared an entire exposé coaching future suicide bombers on how to withstand interrogation and torture in the event of a failed attack. The article ranged from urging perseverance and maintaining dedication to jihad, to the necessity of enduring various types of torture, including rape, for the sake of the cause.¹⁹⁷

Combating what it perceives as the “new crusade” embodied in the Jewish presence in Palestine, the PIJ adopted the tactic of suicide attacks from Hizballah. However, the PIJ added its own twist to the method by targeting civilians alongside military personnel and installations. Resulting in multiple casualties and public demoralization, these so-called “human bombs” not only exposed the vulnerability of the enemy’s civilian sector, but also served as an effective mode of resistance – even in times of official peace.¹⁹⁸ Following World War I, “The combative meaning of jihad was marginalized in favour of the spiritual and social thrust of good works for the benefit of the community.”¹⁹⁹ While this type of jihad clearly existed in the ideology of Hasan al-Banna, the PIJ, for its part, rejected it in favor of the Ikhwan founder’s more combative understanding of the term. As made clear in its manifesto on martyrdom, the imperative of jihad is deliberate and insistent, emphasizing, “any neglect of military jihad is tantamount to a grave sin and to *nifaaq*, or hypocrisy.”²⁰⁰ Fawaz Damra, at the 1989 Second Annual ICP Conference in Chicago, implored conference attendees to realize the necessity of jihad during a fundraising session he led. Using dramatic language, Damra shouted, “The first principle is that terrorism, and terrorism alone, is the path to liberation...the second principle is that settlement is decided by the sword.” Arguing that the only solution in the “struggle for the cause of Palestine is the military solution,” Damra defiantly cried out, “If what they mean by jihad is terrorism, then we are terrorists!”²⁰¹ In a similar vein, Sami al-Arian extolled the role of martyrs and their benefit at the 1990 Third Annual ICP Conference in Chicago, when he notoriously cried out,

¹⁹⁵ Hatina, “Theology and Power,” pp. 245-6.

¹⁹⁶ Hatina, “The ‘Ulama’ and the Cult of Death,” p. 35.

¹⁹⁷ *al-Islam wa Filastin*, Issue 7: First Year, 1 September 1988.

¹⁹⁸ Hatina, “The ‘Ulama’ and the Cult of Death,” p. 29, 33.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 31.

²⁰⁰ Hatina, “Theology and Power,” p. 244.

²⁰¹ “Transcript of Second Annual ICP Conference,” 22-25 December 1989, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-449 A.

We assemble today to stand up and pay our respects to the march of martyrs, which increases, does not decrease, and to the river of blood that gushes forth and does not extinguish. From butchery to butchery, from martyrdom to martyrdom, from jihad to jihad.²⁰²

Despite these zealous affirmations, the PIJ did offer another path. Nevertheless, this path was still one of *jihad*, employing the same line of reasoning and religious backing as noted earlier.

Categories of Jihad: *Jihad bil-Mal*

At the Fourth Annual ICP Conference, Sami al-Arian made clear to his audience that he and his comrades “want the Muslims of today to answer the call of God and go to jihad.”²⁰³ However, this was not the only jihad available to PIJ adherents. PIJ leaders were cognizant of the need to adopt varied methods of resistance, both armed and unarmed, specifically for those living abroad, who were seen as an untapped resource to fund the jihad in Palestine.

Jonathan Halevi, author of an important work on financing jihad, explains, “The definition of *jihad* in Islam, is not confined merely to waging war with arms, but includes several other aspects of support for ‘holy war.’” These aspects, or facets of jihad, include *jihad bil-lisan* (jihad of the tongue), *jihad bil-qalam* (jihad of the pen), *jihad al-nafs* (jihad of the soul), *jihad bil-sayf* (jihad by the sword), and *jihad bil-mal* (financial jihad). The first two primarily refer to preaching and calling for jihad, justifying the propaganda efforts of PIJ leaders and cell members. The second two, which were previously defined by both al-Banna and Khomeini, refer to the personal struggle to adhere to Allah's commandment and the violent, self-sacrificing struggle in the path of Allah, respectively. As stated above, the PIJ chose to ignore the former and endorse the latter of these two. Finally, the last facet of jihad refers to the idea of fundraising for needy Muslims and supporting the jihad warriors, or the mujahidin.²⁰⁴

Jihad bil-mal is essential to the PIJ's existence and forms a fundamental aspect of its doctrine. Rooted in the Islamic sources, and often intertwined with self-sacrificing jihad, financial jihad concerns individuals who cannot physically engage in *jihad bil-sayf* but instead can engage in a financial jihad by providing money, for instance, towards the purchase of weapons, training, or suicide bombings. During his fundraising session at the Fourth Annual ICP Conference, Fawaz Damra reminded his listeners that, as it says in the *hadith*, “Whoever equips a raider for the sake of God has himself raided.”²⁰⁵ Damra utilizes the *hadith* from *Sahih Muslim: Kitab al-Imara*, attributed to the Prophet Mohammad, to make a point that Muslims who donate money for jihad will receive the same reward in

²⁰² “Transcript of Third Annual ICP Conference,” 28-30 December 1990, *al-Islam wa Filastin*, February 1991. *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-42 O.

²⁰³ “Transcript of Fourth Annual ICP Conference.”

²⁰⁴ Hadith, *Sahih al-Muslim*, On Government (*Kitab Al-Imara*) Book 20, Verse 4668.

²⁰⁵ “Transcript of Fourth Annual ICP Conference.”

Heaven as the mujahidin themselves.²⁰⁶ Therefore, Damra's use of this tradition enables all those present to participate in jihad on behalf of Palestine according to their means and their situation. This ensures the financial survival of the organization and its ability to conduct future attacks while also including the largest number of people possible in this effort. As Damra assured, the duty to defend Palestine is incumbent upon every Muslim and the PIJ is ready and waiting to provide the appropriate means for everyone to do so.

At the Fifth Annual ICP Conference, Shallah explained that in addition to the necessity of jihad for the sake of liberating Palestine, "we found the lawful evidence [in the Qur'an] ... that jihad has a comprehensive concept that is an economical jihad, a political jihad, a verbal jihad, and a jihad in eloquence." Shallah further elaborates, "Pursuing jihad is the way to eradicate the tumult in all its forms and make possible for the religion of God to dominate and spread on earth."²⁰⁷ In essence, both Damra and Shallah attempt to employ religious justifications for involving U.S. Muslims in the PIJ's *jihadi* effort. By conducting this fundraising under the guise of an Islamic charity, al-Arian's Islamic Committee for Palestine, the PIJ intertwined the idea of financial jihad with that of *zakat*. Considering that *zakat* is one of the five pillars of Islam and is obligatory on every Muslim and that waging defensive jihad in the defense of Muslim lands is equally obligatory, the PIJ presented a compelling case to participate in jihad. As mentioned earlier, the PIJ often relied on a *fatwa* issued by Khomeini, which "spoke of the religious duty of bringing about the 'elimination' (*izala*) of the 'Zionist entity' and allocated income from *zakat* (almsgiving) for this purpose."²⁰⁸ The movement also made frequent reference to its followers about the financial support Palestinians received from al-Banna's organization during the 1936 Revolt and 1948 War to support the jihad in Palestine.

Islamic scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi, generally considered to be the spiritual guide of the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoot Hamas, is outspoken on this issue. He argues that the activities of the Islamic charitable societies are crucial in sustaining the flame of the Intifada. He considers this a result of "a new type of jihad, financial jihad, through which financial support is guaranteed to the martyrs' families, Palestinian prisoners and detainees, and every Palestinian whose property is damaged during the conflict." The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center explains "This fundamental Islamic concept, that has been given an Islamic authorization by radical Muslim cleric Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (and other Muslim jurists), provides, in effect, radical Islamic terrorist organizations with a legitimization to use funds donated for charitable causes to finance the activities of terrorist groups."²⁰⁹

It is based on this Islamic legitimacy that the PIJ used the donations it received from ICP and WISE endeavors in the United States to finance its terrorist attacks against Israel, and little more. The PIJ relied on an extrapolated understanding of jihad and *shahada*, and the historical role it perceived them playing, to generate a program of un-abating

²⁰⁶ See Lt. Col. Jonathan D Halevi, "What Drives Saudi Arabia to Persist in Terrorist Financing? *Al-Jihad bi-al-Mal* – Financial Jihad Against the Infidels," *Jerusalem Viewpoints*, No. 531 (1 June 2005), <<http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp531.htm>> (30 June 2007).

²⁰⁷ "Transcript of Fifth Annual ICP Conference," 25-28 December 1992, *USA v. Al-Arian*, Exhibit T-463B.

²⁰⁸ Rekhess, "The Iranian Impact on the Islamic Jihad Movement," p. 195.

²⁰⁹ "Islamic Charity and Terrorism," *The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies: Special Information Bulletin (IICC)*, (28 January 2005), www.terrorism-info.org.il.

propaganda for its fundraising efforts in the United States. These efforts became the staple of the organization locally and ensured its ability to continue to wage jihad, no matter the surrounding circumstances. The events that transpired at the end of the period in question, 1995, prove that despite numerous significant setbacks, the PIJ was able to launch one spectacular suicide attack after another; therefore continuing to fulfill, at least in part, its core mission.

Conclusion

Between 1980 and 1995, the PIJ established itself as a Palestinian resistance movement, bound, under the leadership of Shiqaqi, to struggle for the liberation of Palestine by means of jihad. Breaking off from the Muslim Brotherhood due to its lack of militant urgency towards the Palestinian cause, the PIJ drew inspiration, as well as material support, from the Iranian Islamic regime of Ayatollah Khomeini. By downplaying the traditional Sunni-Shi'ī schism, the PIJ tried to emulate the successes of the Islamic Revolution in Iran by importing, piecemeal, from its ideology and adopting its means; namely, jihad. Likewise, by drawing parallels between the erstwhile struggles of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam and the current Palestinian Islamic struggle against the Zionist entity, the PIJ was able to engender its goals with a sense of historical continuity while fueling traditional latent anti-Jewish sentiments.

With the outbreak of the Intifada and its major role in its perpetuation, the PIJ sought to act as a representative of the Palestinian people and incite them towards violence against the enemy, Israel. Its view of the Zionist entity as a continuation of the Western colonial presence in the region led the PIJ to highlight the Islamic significance of Palestine and enlist the support of Palestinians in its defense. Through its establishment of a U.S. cell, the PIJ sought to gain support in the West and raise funds for its increasingly violent activities against Israel. Its designation of various modes of jihad, including *jihad bil-sayf* and *jihad bil-mal* according to one's ability, enabled it to broaden its spectrum of followers and religiously legitimize its necessity to collect funds on behalf of the Palestinian struggle. By entrenching the *umma* in its theology of martyrdom, the movement claimed to be working toward the restoration of Palestinian honor and the liberation of their homeland, one suicide attack at a time.

Despite the fact that the PIJ did not enjoy substantial support among Palestinians due to its lack of da'wa initiative, its too-close-for-comfort relationship with Iran, and its unyielding radicalism, the movement argued that its purity of purpose depended on its small size, composed of a group of a few — but staunchly dedicated — followers. By preserving its structure as a small revolutionary vanguard as opposed to expanding into a larger movement, the PIJ maintained an uncompromising and unwavering position. The PIJ has not budged an inch in its agenda since its founding in the early 1980s, having avoided considering the plethora of external factors that groups such as Hamas have been forced to weigh on account of their widespread popularity and now governing responsibilities.

However, the PIJ was dealt a dual blow in 1995 that threatened to cripple its entire existence. First, as a result of its escalating violent attacks against Israeli civilians, the Israeli government cracked down on the group's apparatus. Accordingly, on October 26, 1995, Shiqaqi, the General Secretary, was killed, purportedly by Mossad agents, in Malta. This event was earth-shattering for PIJ members, considering that Shiqaqi had not only been the charismatic figure fueling the organization, but also had maintained a tight grip on all aspects of its management. The scrambling that occurred in the days following Shiqaqi's death gave way to the second blow experienced by the PIJ.

Needing to immediately appoint a successor to the position of Secretary General, the PIJ chose Ramadan Abdullah Shallah. Until this time, Shallah had been playing a key role in

the organization's U.S. cell. He immediately flew to Damascus to assume his new position. His abrupt departure and subsequent media coverage as the PIJ's new leader catalyzed the FBI's investigation of the U.S. cell. In parallel, President Bill Clinton issued Executive Order 12947 in January 1995, declaring a national state of emergency and designating certain organizations and individuals as threats to the Middle East peace process. Thus, the U.S. Government barred all financial transactions with these entities and individuals, which were labeled "Specially Designated Terrorists" (SDT's), including the PIJ, Shiqaqi, 'Awda, and eventually Shallah.²¹⁰

The U.S. government's investigation, which had begun several years earlier, sought to link the cell members to terrorism and terrorist financing. Consequently, in November 1995, an FBI team raided and seized all related materials from the various locations utilized by U.S. cell members, including Sami al-Arian's home, his USF office, ICP, and WISE. Having tapped the phones and facsimiles at these locations and analyzed all the data found on their computers, the 1995 raid provided the government with enough material to eventually prosecute the cell members eight years later.

At the conclusion of the five-month trial against the PIJ cell, a Florida jury acquitted al-Arian on eight counts and deadlocked on nine counts of the indictment charges. Although the evidence presented during the trial proved that al-Arian was deeply involved with the PIJ, jurors determined that the evidence was not conclusive enough to convict him of any crimes. In the end, al-Arian pled guilty to one count of "Conspiracy to make or receive contributions of funds, goods or services to or for the benefit of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad."²¹¹ He then reached a deal with prosecutors, agreeing to be deported after admitting his involvement with a specially designated terrorist organization. The verdict was considered a blow not only to the U.S. Justice Department's antiterrorism efforts, but also placed al-Arian and other PIJ members in a position to continue their PIJ activities once deported to the Middle East. Al-Arian currently remains on house arrest pending a decision on whether or not he is required to testify for a similar government trial in Virginia. Damra was deported to the West Bank city of Nablus in 2007. Shallah continues to run the PIJ from its Damascus headquarters.

The public exposure of the PIJ's U.S. cell and its subsequent termination of activities significantly endangered the movement's financial situation. However, Iran has provided it with the necessary funding to continue its jihad against Israel.

According to the PIJ, its pioneering role in sparking the First Intifada and introducing suicide attacks against Israeli civilians remain significant accomplishments in the Palestinian armed struggle. Likewise, its persistent ability to perpetrate terrorist attacks and fire rockets into Israel continues to demonstrate its commitment to its mission in the struggle for Palestine. While the U.S. cell provided the PIJ with immeasurable support from the beginning of the Intifada to the date of its raid, the organization was able to absorb its losses and adapt for the sake of its goals. The PIJ's survival in the post-Shiqaqi era illustrates that it is a durable institution, bolstered by a lasting relationship with Iran. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad remains a fixture of the Palestinian scene and continues to thrive, claiming responsibility for suicide bombings and killings, as of 2008, that have resulted in more than 150 deaths in Israel, including several U.S. citizens.

²¹⁰ Indictment, *USA v. Al-Arian*, 20 February 2003.

²¹¹ Plea Agreement, *USA v. Al-Arian*, 14 April 2006.

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