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Allah and the Armalite: The Origins, Religiosities and Material Conditions of Anti-State Terror-Nationalist Groups in Belfast and Gaza

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**Allah and the Armalite: The Origins, Religiosities and Material Conditions of Anti-State
Terror-Nationalist Groups in Belfast and Gaza**

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HIS 490 History Honors Thesis**

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For my Mom, Dad, Sister, Grandma and dog, Kobe, for raising, loving and aiding me every step along the way.

For my Professors, Erginbas and O'Malley, who allowed me to study my two great historical loves.

For my Pa, Kenneth Thomas Loiselle, for it was only through his example of good work ethic that I ever finished this.

Quite typically, violence reflects the means of violence. ... State terror is almost always much more extreme than retail terror. Everyone's worried about stopping terrorism. Well, there's really an easy way: Stop participating in it.

- Noam Chomsky

Anyone born and bred in Northern Ireland can't be too optimistic.

- Seamus Heaney

History laughs at both the victim and the aggressor.

- Mahmoud Darwish

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INTRODUCTION

WAGING WAR FOR GOD

Irish Unionist Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote in his 1996 book, *Ancestral Voices*, that the “blood feuds” between the Protestant English and the Catholic Irish held “a striking resemblance to those between Arabs and Jews.”¹ Indeed, when discussing such infamous and storied conflicts as the Troubles in Northern Ireland or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict they are often framed as “bitter religious war”.² These characterizations portray said conflicts as the inevitable outcome of ancient hatreds between disparate ethnic groups. Such simplistic readings of the conflicts portray religion as helping to fan the flames of sectarianism, violence and misery in each of the conflicts. These readings of the conflicts also confer a kind of “legitimacy” to said religious sectarian groups, as to participate in a “bitter religious war” one must be a true representative of one’s own faith. This thesis will examine the histories of nationalism and religion in two conflicts where religion is thought to be a major cause of conflict, Israel-Palestine and the Troubles in Northern Ireland. It will explore relationship between religion and both Irish and Palestinian nationalism. It will examine the use of religion in the propaganda, actions and organizational culture of Hamas, the “Old” IRA and the Provisional IRA. Additionally, it will examine said groups’ relations with the religious and political traditions that said groups have in order to understand how said groups

¹ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Ancestral Voices: Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 11.

² Anshel Pfeffer, "The Israel-Palestine Conflict Is Not Just about Land. It's a Bitter Religious War," *The Guardian*, November 20, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/20/israel-palestine-conflict-religious-war>.

conform and divert from established religious orthodoxy. Lastly, this thesis will survey the material conditions of the populations that both the IRA and Hamas rose from, the Palestinians of Gaza, the West Bank and the Catholics of Northern Ireland will be covered. I will challenge the simplistic framing of both of these conflicts as wars driven only by religion or feelings of ethnic and sectarian hatred, rather than complex conflicts driven by poverty, political repression and historical injustices on both sides of each conflict. In summation, the claim that the Troubles and the Israeli Palestinian conflicts are naught but “Holy Wars” will be tested.

CHAPTER 1
RELIGION AND NATIONAL MOVEMENTS
FENIANISM AND CATHOLICISM

Since the 16th century Protestant Reformation, many rebellions against English rule, like Red Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neil, had a distinctly Catholic aspect. However, for the purposes of this study, the “modern” Irish nationalism’s relationship with Catholicism and its hierarchy begins with the Papal appointment of Paul Cullen to the position of Archbishop of Armagh on December 19, 1849. Upon his appointment as Archbishop, Cullen infused the Irish church with a renewed and all-encompassing emphasis on devotions. Devotions such as forty hours of prayer, novenas to the Sacred Heart and the Stations of the Cross were only some of the many rituals that Cullen emphasized to return the people of Ireland to a more active and orthodox Catholic faith.³ A proponent of Ultramontaniam, Cullen sought to bring the Irish Church more into line with Rome. Cullen’s “Devotional Revolution” ended the semi-independent nature of the Irish Church, which until his arrival had been one of the most independent branches of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe.

Cullen’s politics was heavily influenced by his own experiences as the Rector of Propaganda in Rome during the first Italian War for Independence in 1848. The war saw the Papal States in the heart of Italy briefly overthrown and Pope Pius IX forced to flee the Vatican disguised as a lowly priest. When he arrived on the shores of his homeland in 1849 Cullen was firmly against

³ Oliver P. Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster: 1603-1983; an Interpretative History* (London: Hurst, 1994), 136.

any form of advanced nationalist or revolutionary politics. Additionally, his appointment as Papal Legate from the Holy See to the Irish Church made Cullen into the supreme head of the Catholic Church in Ireland and the dominant figure in all Irish politics until the rise of Irish Parliamentary leader Charles Stewart Parnell in the 1870s.⁴ Generally, Cullen believed that “the state existed for the benefit of religion.”⁵ Cullen sought to place the church at the epicenter of Irish life and “standardized” the Church throughout Ireland by putting an end to then practices such as holding communion and baptism in the private homes of Irishmen and women.⁶

Cullen’s loyalty throughout his career as Archbishop remained entirely committed to the Church and not Irish nationalism. Many Bishops were under pressure from the Holy See to prevent priests from supporting Irish Revolutionary politics, so as to preserve good relationships between Holy See and the British Empire. However, Cullen made his rejection of the British and Protestantism clear. In a letter to a friend dated June 1859, Cullen enumerated a number of irksome qualities that he felt English Catholics and Protestants alike possessed, at the top of the list was “their Englishness.”⁷ Yet in terms of Irish politics, Cullen was especially opposed to the idea of violent revolution, the kind that Irish Republicans such as the Fenian Brotherhood advocated for. From the pulpit, Cullen had many priests denounce the Fenians and he himself was instrumental in getting the Fenians condemned by Pope Pius IX in January 1870.⁸ In the Papal Bull, *Apostolicae Sedis Moderationi*, Pius, at Archbishop Cullen’s behest formally excommunicated:

⁴ Donal McCartney, "The Church and the Fenians," *University Review* 413 (1967): 203.

⁵ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 137.

⁶ *Ibid*, 139.

⁷ *Ibid*, 138.

⁸ *Ibid*, 163.

“those sects called Freemasons, Carbonari, or any other kinds of sects which either openly or privately plot against the Church or legitimately constituted authorities, together with those who in any way favour the same; as also their secret heads or leaders, so long as they shall not have denounced them.”⁹

Cullen went one step further in his war against the Fenians by mandating that during the sacrament of Penance, that priests ask those who would come in to receive the sacrament whether or not they had taken the Fenian oath. ¹⁰ Naturally, this tension point between church leaders and the Fenians created a crisis of conscience in loyal Fenians who were nevertheless committed to their Catholic faith.

The solution to Cullen’s crusade against Fenianism for those Catholic Fenians was one would that their ideological descendants in the IRA would repeat during the Troubles. Those Fenians that also wished to remain obedient Catholics simply found ways around the hierarchy’s condemnation of Irish Republicanism. One popular method for reconciling a Fenian’s faith with his politics was to visit priests that were either sympathetic to the Fenian cause or otherwise did not ask the question concerning the oath.¹¹ Cullen himself also could not fully stamp out support for the Fenian cause amongst his bishops and priests either.

The most prominent case of Fenian support from members of the Church hierarchy during Cullen’s tenure as Archbishop was the 1861 burial of Terence Bellew McManus. McManus, a veteran of the 1848 rising and a native of County Fermanagh had died in California. Archbishop of New York, “Dagger” John Hughes, originally from County Tyrone, gave McManus’ funeral oratory. At a high mass in New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Hughes addressed the many Fenians

⁹ Arthur Mitchell, *Fighting Irish in the American Civil War and the Invasion of Mexico* (McFarland & Company, 2017), 46.

¹⁰ Donal, “Fenians”, 206.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 209.

and veterans of the 1848 Rising in attendance. Invoking Thomas Aquinas, the Bishop spoke at length about the qualities of a just rebellion: That the people's grievances be genuine, that the resistance have popular support and that the rebellion has a reasonable chance of success.¹² Archbishop Hughes said "some of the most learned and holy men of the church had laid it down with general sanction and authority that there are cases in which it is lawful to resist and overthrow a tyrannical government."¹³ Once the rebel's body had returned home, Archbishop William Keane of Cloyne defied Cullen's dictate that no Church grounds or church funds should go to the burial of a Fenian and allowed McManus' coffin to rest in his church. The next morning the parish's curate said a litany of hymns for the repose of McManus' soul. Controversy again erupted when McManus' body was sent to Dublin for a funeral mass, which Cullen denied. One Priest, Father Patrick Lavelle who was under the Archbishop of Tuam, attacked Cullen as a servant of British Imperialism, saying "In Poland, there is the strong hand of the Czar that closes the church against the patriotic priest... here the church again closes herself against the Patriotic Dead."¹⁴ Another sympathetic priest, Father John Kenyon even attempted to secretly have McManus buried on church grounds, but his plot was stopped by local police before it could be put into action. Ultimately, McManus' body was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery, yet the McManus controversy did much to reinvigorate the Fenian cause and further deepened the divide between Irish Republicanism and the Church hierarchy's incremental reformism.¹⁵ Even at the height of Cullen's power, there was a substantial minority of neutral Archbishops and sympathetic local priests who

¹² Thomas J. Brophy, "On Church Grounds: Political Funerals and the Contest to Lead Catholic Ireland," *The Catholic Historical Review* 95, no. 3 (2009): 491.

¹³ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 163.

¹⁴ Brophy, "Church Grounds," 499.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 502.

allowed militant Irish Republicanism to hold to its Catholic roots in spite of the hierarchy's general disdain for them and their revolutionary position.

The next major rift between the Catholic hierarchy and Irish Republicans occurred during the height of the Land War. The Land War was a decades long campaign by Irish farmers throughout the 1870s to the 1890s to redistribute land from large estates, mostly owned by absentee landlords who squeezed Irish peasants into grinding poverty. Irish tenants en masse joined the Land League which was headed by former Fenian Michael Davitt and championed by leader of Irish Parliamentary party, Charles Stewart Parnell. The Land League represented a rare time in Irish politics where constitutional reformists, militant republicans and even Catholic bishops united into a single political front. The most popular method of protesting unfair rents, was the "Boycott:, the tactic was named after a hated landlord's top agent, Charles Boycott, who was effectively ostracized by the County Mayo farmers whose rents he collected. By 1886, the Land League drafted a "Plan of Campaign," which encouraged tenants to donate their rents to the Land League if their landlord refused to lower their rent. Yet to the surprise and anger of many Bishops, Pope Leo XII condemned the plan in his encyclical, *Saepe Nos*, saying

"Since there are many who seem to seek out means of escaping from even the plainest obligations, take all necessary steps that no room be left for doubt as to the force of this Decree. Let it be understood by all that the entire method of action, whose employment We have forbidden, is forbidden as altogether unlawful. Let your people seek to advance their lawful interests by lawful means, and most especially, as is becoming in Christians, without prejudice to justice or to obedience to the Apostolic See, virtues in which Ireland has in all times found comfort and strength."¹⁶

The most significant repercussion of Pope Leo XII's encyclical was that it demonstrated that even the Catholic Hierarchy could do what the Irish Nationalist tradition so often did, selectively

¹⁶ Pope Leo XII, "Saepe Nos," Catholic Library: Sublimus Dei, Accessed January 14, 2019, http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_le13sn.htm.

ignored the Pope's direct command. The Land League's Plan of Campaign proved to be a major victory for Parnell's party and a series of land acts passed the British Parliament, which culminated in the Wyndham Land Act of 1903 which allowed many Irish tenants purchase their lands.

The next three decades saw the Church and the Irish nationalist movement form an uneasy coexistence. On some issues, the Church and Irish nationalism worked together. Many priests and bishops supported the various Gaelic cultural revivals, as it not only allowed them to support Irish patriotism in a somewhat apolitical manner, but it also allowed many Catholic clergyman to be seen as opposing "modernism." Anti-modernism was a major ideological plank of the Roman church in the decades preceding the Easter Rising of 1916, with Pope Pius X branding "modernism" as the "synthesis of all heresies" in a Papal decree in 1907.¹⁷

The Church hierarchy was largely critical of the doomed Easter Rising of 1916, and in Cardinal Logue, Prelate of all Ireland, justified the British execution of the leaders of the Rising on the grounds that the British state was within it's rights for "moderately punishing within the laws of humanity" those who had violated the law.¹⁸ The reaction amongst the Irish people to the Rising was the opposite however, as the brutal executions of the rebels galvanized public support behind the "martyrs of Easter Week." The Easter Rising itself is symbolic of Irish nationalism's use of Catholic themes and iconography, as the rising "invested itself with the symbols of the Christian religion, martyrdom and resurrection."¹⁹ The fact that the rebels poignantly choose the Easter season as the a "rebirth" of the longtime Irish aspiration for a more advanced repeal of the Act of Union was not lost on the Irish people. The bishops later regained the support of the Irish

¹⁷ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 178.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 195.

¹⁹ Donal A. Kerr, "The Catholic Church and National States in the 19th and 20th Centuries: The Case of Ireland," *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 14, no.1 (2001): 98.

nationalist community when they came out strongly against the British conscription act of 1918. Yet, the main political victor of the fight against British conscription was undoubtedly Arthur Griffith's Sinn Fein, which through aggressive campaigning and propaganda, appeared to the Irish people to be the strongest voice against conscription. In a decisive 1918 election, Sinn Fein took 78 of the Irish Parliamentary Party's 84 seats and became the most influential party in Irish politics. In January 1919, those Sinn Fein MPs refused to sit in the Parliament and instead declared themselves the First Dáil Éireann or "Assembly of Ireland" and declared an Irish Republic. The new republic would naturally need an army if it had any hope of achieving independence from Britain. Thus, the many disparate Irish volunteer militias that would form the Irish Republican Army gradually united after the declaration of the Irish Republic. Throughout the Anglo-Irish War, the IRA fought a brutal guerrilla campaign against British rule across Ireland. Ireland's Bishops remained officially neutral during the conflict, condemning violence on both sides of the war. With the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 ending one Irish war and starting another, the Bishops largely supported the "Pro-treaty" faction of the Irish Civil War, while the bulk of the IRA backed the "anti-treaty" faction. Yet it would be in the newly created statelet of Ulster where Catholicism and Irish Republicanism would again enter into a complicated alliance.

CHAPTER 2
THE CATHOLICISM OF THE IRA?
ROSARIES AROUND ARMALITES

The relationship between the Catholicism of the “old” official IRA of the Irish war for independence and the Catholicism of the Provisional IRA or the “Provos” of the late 20th century is as profound as the distance between the two organizations themselves. The “Old” IRA and the Provos both viewed their struggle as matters of “political, cultural and religious survival.”²⁰ The Old IRA held that to be a Catholic in Northern Ireland was constantly persecuted by the Unionist state that built upon an even older, multigenerational Irish nationalist belief that to be a Catholic in Ireland was to be under threat at all times.²¹ By contrast, although most Provos identified with the Catholic community, many Provos did not attend mass and were generally not observant Catholics. What motivated the Provos was a sense that they were defending their homes and communities from a state that was “fundamentally undemocratic.”²² Nevertheless, although both groups held varying degrees of religiosity, what is clear is that both groups saw themselves as, and in many cases were, the only lines of defense for a community that was under attack from all organs of the Unionist state.

²⁰ Martin Dillon, *God and the Gun* (London: Orion, 1997), 151.

²¹ *Ibid*, 153.

²² Timothy Patrick Coogan, *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace* (Palgrave, 2002), 32.

The first actions of the IRA in Ulster during the Anglo-Irish conflict are indicative of the organization's relationship with both the Catholic community of Ulster and more generally Catholicism as a whole. Unionist leaders often targeted Catholics as a way of building camaraderie with working class Protestants. In July of 1920 for example, over five thousand Catholic workmen at Belfast's shipyards were expelled from their jobs without notice or given cause. Although the summary firing was originally reported as a "spontaneous outpouring of working-class Protestant invective" it was in fact a target and controlled plan that was approved by Unionist leaders.²³ None other than James Craig, Northern Ireland's first prime minister, said of the expulsion of Catholic workers to a crowd of Orange Order men, "I think it only fair that I should be asked a question... Do I approve of the action you boys have taken in the past? "Yes."²⁴ Such was the official Unionist opinion of Catholics during the formation of the Northern Irish state.

What followed for the next two years were routine campaigns of violence against the Catholic population in Ulster. Catholic Churches were bombed, convents and other monastic centers were burned and parishioners exiting church on Sunday were even shot by snipers. It is important to note that it was not just Orange Order militia men conducting murderous raids against Catholics in Ulster. Police in Northern Ireland would routinely conduct "revenge raids" against random Catholic families in Ulster. On April 1st, 1922, the "Arnon Street Massacre" saw several Northern Irish policemen of the Royal Ulster Constabulary break into the home of a Catholic family in Belfast. The policeman shot several men in the home, including a seventy-year-old grandfather and his seven-year-old grandson and bludgeoned one man to death with a

²³ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 211.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 211.

sledgehammer.²⁵ Upon exiting the house, police then shot another Catholic on Skegoneill Avenue. In total six people were murdered by the Ulster police that day. The motivation for the policeman's actions was said to be in retaliation for the murder of a police constable earlier that morning by the IRA. Such killings of high-ranking police officials was a favored tactic of Michael Collin's guerilla campaign against entrenched Crown forces in the North of Ireland. Yet although the work of Collin's "Murder Gang" was effective in the short term, it led to reprisals that further harmed the already persecuted Catholic population of Ulster.

It was into this violence that the Old IRA first emerged unto the streets of Belfast and other Northern Irish cities. With the security force, parliament and irregular militias of the state actively persecuting them, the IRA became to be seen by the Catholic population of Ulster as their sole defenders. Yet the role of the IRA in the early years of the Northern Ireland was to be short lived, as by 1922, the majority of the Old IRA was waging war against Michael Collin's Free Staters as part of the Irish Civil War. By 1925, The United Kingdom, The Irish Free State and Northern Ireland had accepted the partition of Northern Ireland. According to the Government of Ireland of 1920. Throughout the next two decades the Catholics of Northern Ireland had seemingly become "content to play the part of the hard pressed and powerless minority."²⁶ A direct consequence of Catholics being denied significant representation in any state apparatus was that the Catholic Church gained dominance as the sole representative of the Catholic community of Northern Ireland.

The Old IRA remained largely dormant during this time, as they faced not only attacks from Unionist officials in the North, but their erstwhile commander Eamon De Valera also turned

²⁵ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 214.

²⁶ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 227.

against the organization during the 1930s and 1940s once they became a political liability. Yet, there were sporadic campaigns by the Old IRA during this time. One illustrative example of the fusion of religion and nationalism that the Old IRA practiced during this time is the case of Thomas Williams. Thomas, who was a Catholic from outside of Belfast, was the only one of his unit of six men to be hanged for the shooting of RUC constable Patrick Murphy, who also a Catholic. On Easter Sunday, April 5th 1942. Williams and his five cohorts were sentenced to death for their crime. However, petitions for clemency eventually allowed all death sentences to be commuted to life imprisonment save for Williams, who was the trigger man of the operation. William's death took on a Christlike passion, with supporters of his praying decades of the rosary outside of William's prison. Additionally, the prison chaplain said that prior to his hanging, William's went to his death with "the name of Jesus on his lips."²⁷ The conflation of martyrdom for Ireland and the passion of Jesus Christ would continue to be a key way that the IRA invoked its Catholic heritage in the decades to come.

While the Old IRA was left to running sporadic attacks in the North, even prior to the troubles, the older generations of Northern Irish Catholics forged a unique identity in the face of overwhelming persecution that combined a religious zeal and a defensive form of nationalism. Eileen Caughey, a veteran of Cumman Na Mban, the IRA's women's organization, smuggled guns and supplies to various IRA cells throughout the North of Ireland during the IRA's 1950 Border and later, Northern campaigns. Eileen's life shows that the older generations of the IRA and its supporters brought their Catholicism with them to their various guerilla activities. Born sometime before the partition of the Northern Irish state, Eileen described her childhood as being filled with stories told by her grandmother. Such stories included how the IRA "protected us from

²⁷ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 241.

the Protestants and the Specials” or how that the Republic of Ireland “left us to the mercy of the Prods.”²⁸ Like the Fenians of the past, Eileen justified her Catholicism by putting her identity as a Catholic as part of her fight to resist Protestant, Unionist and British tyranny. Saying of the IRA of the Irish Independence War and their faith, she claimed.

“The republicans of my time were churchgoers and the two things were separate. There was no question that being a republican was a sin or fightin’ for Irish freedom was a sin Y’ must remember that we’d be fighting the British hundreds of years...they persecuted us because we were not only Irish but also Catholic... so to be a republican was to be someone who was prepared to defend your faith and your culture. Those two things were one in the same.”²⁹

The mixing of Eileen’s Catholic faith and her membership in the IRA, was similar to the relationship that earlier Republicans had to Catholicism during the Fenians era. Like the Fenians of old, Eileen also relied on the sometimes-lax enforcement of anti-IRA directives given to local priest. Eileen herself said that if she were to meet a priest who knew and disapproved of her membership in Cumman Nbann, that she would simply leave the church and find another priest who was sympathetic to the rebel cause.³⁰ At the time of her 1972 interview, Eileen did not fear even the threat of excommunication. She had no fear of even official denouncement from the pulpit because it was not only impossible to excommunicate all the members of a closed society like the IRA. Clearly in 1972, during the height of the Troubles, the word of the Irish Bishops and Cardinals mattered less than it once had.

Also like many members of the IRA, Eileen’s devotion to her Catholic faith did not mean that she was obedient to the Church hierarchy. Eileen like many Republicans saw the Bishops as

²⁸ Dillon, *God*, 148.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 150.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 152.

compromised at best and servants of the British or the Unionists at worse. In her interview, she said of the Bishops that “the Church has always shilly-shallied, playin’ politics when it suited them.”³¹ Eileen’s statement summarizes neatly how the IRA of her generation, the IRA of the Anglo-Irish War and the later the Northern and Border campaigns, both claimed to be fighting for Catholics but also against what they saw as a religious hierarchy that was complicit in the subjugation and persecution of Catholics by Unionist state. This rhetorical point, can again be seen in a letter written by IRA secretary Patrick Fleming to the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Bernard Griffin, who during the IRA’s 1940 bombing campaign threatened to excommunicate all members of the IRA. The letter reminded the Archbishop of his silence on the Catholics of Ulster, who were “subjected to campaigns of murder, arson and despoliation.”³² The IRA of the era of Collins and De Valera was a sectarian militia that framed their struggle as both a religious and national war. They were as much fighting for the safety of the Catholics of Ulster as they were fighting for the Republican sympathizers in Northern Ireland.

It was the IRA’s movement away from Catholic and Republican nationalism that weakened it as an organization. Beginning in 1962, after the largely ineffectual Border Campaign failed to rekindle any kind of nationalist movement in Northern Ireland, the IRA underwent a period of organizational and ideological restructuring. It was during this time that the ideas of Anthony Coughlan and Roy Johnston, a pair of Marxist academics who advocated for a broad proletarian movement across Britain and Ireland began to gain purchase in the IRA’s Army Council. It would be this attempt to reframe the IRA as a Marxist front, one that largely ignored the pious Catholicism that formed a traditional cornerstone of Irish Republicanism. It would be this ideological gulf

³¹ Dillon, *God*, 149.

³² Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 241.

between the two factions of Irish Nationalist Republicanism and the more Marxist “Old” IRA that caused the 1969 IRA split. The Provisional Irish Republican Army or Provos would form as a splinter group that once again violently challenged the Unionist state through campaigns of guerilla warfare.

The Provisional IRA or “Provos” as they came to be called, became the dominant Republican faction during the Troubles. Like the IRA of old, the Provos saw themselves as the defenders of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. For over thirty years the Provos waged a brutal guerilla war against not only rival Loyalist militias, the Ulster Defense Association and the Ulster Volunteer Force, but also against Northern Irish Police and even members of the British Army. The Troubles claimed close to four thousand lives and injured an estimated forty thousand more.³³ Common tactics used by multiple sides in the war included; bombings, torture of prisoners, the execution of civilians and vicious gun battles in the streets of Belfast, Derry and other major Northern Irish cities. The Troubles only came to an end with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 which brokered a peace between both sides of the sectarian divide.³⁴

While the Provos themselves were not as overtly as Catholic as the predecessors in the Old IRA were, there were elements of Provos that certainly retained the fusion of Catholicism with Irish Nationalism that the Fenians pioneered. Yet Roman Catholicism remained politically and organizationally useful for the Provos even if many members did not practice the faith themselves. Most basically, being thought of a Catholic organization allowed the Provos to rely on the local

³³ Coogan, *Troubles*, 51.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 432.

population of Ulster as refuges should the British Army or Unionist Militias be conducting searches in the area.³⁵

Another reason for the otherwise secular Provos to champion Catholicism was that the religion provided an umbrella which bound the various competing factions amongst the Provos and even rival rebel groups together. Regardless of whether or not a given IRA member was a leftist who saw the Provos war as one against imperialism or a rightist who wanted to a United Ireland, a shared commitment to defending the Catholics of Ulster was a rallying cry that all could unite around. It was said that even though the Provos in the city of Belfast were divided on issues of tactics or leadership, it was the banner of religious identity that “united all of the republican factions.”³⁶

Some in the IRA even did directly turn their cause directly into a Holy War. Jimmy Steele, a leader of the Provos in their 1969 split from the IRA held an intense loathing for the Marxism of the 1960’s the Old IRA, calling it “anti-Catholic and anti-God.”³⁷ A founding member of the Provos, Steele championed their struggle as “Good and Holy Men for Good and Holy Causes.”³⁸ Steele was responsible for various rituals and pieces of Catholic iconography being added into the yearly rituals and commemorations of the Provos, such as decades of the rosary being said during the IRA’s initiation ceremony. The Provos use of Catholic ritual was so extreme that other rebel factions, such as the Irish National Liberation Army, a left-wing Republican militia group that had

³⁵ Coogan, *Troubles*, 203.

³⁶ Dillon, *God*, 130.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 131.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 131.

also split off from the “Official” Old IRA, accused the Provos of being “bedfellas” with the Catholic Church according to one former member.³⁹

The most overt expression of the political Catholicism of the Provos are the many hunger strikes that were conducted by IRA prisoners to protest ill treatment in British prisons and gain attention for the Irish cause in global media. Like Eileen, the story of Bobby Sands is illustrative of how even the mostly secular and nationalist Provisional IRA maintained a sense of uniquely Catholic identity in their war against the Loyalist Westminster State. Born in a Protestant section of Belfast, Bobby Sands from a young age suffered under intense persecution from Unionist gangs and the hated members of the “B” Specials, units of the Ulster Constabulary’s Special B Branch. Sands was arrested in October of 1976 after being part of an IRA unit that planned to bomb a furniture warehouse in a Belfast neighborhood. Despite finding no evidence of explosives on him, Sands and four of his comrades were sentenced to fourteen years in the Maze Prison for possession of an unloaded revolver. By 1980, Sands was elected to be the commanding officer of all IRA prisoners in Long Kesh, as the Maze Prison was informally called. It would be from jail that Sands successfully ran for Westminster Parliament in the 1981 special election, beating Ulster Unionist candidate Harry West by over a thousand votes. Gerry Adams, a future leader of Sinn Fein and a member of Sands’ electoral campaign described the feeling of campaigning for Sands, a champion of the will for the Catholics of Ulster to survive despite political repression. Adams said of the campaign,

“It was educational for us. We learned about presiding officers, impersonation officers, how to campaign. It was exhilarating. Sometimes we would come into a little town with the Catholics corralled away at the top as usual, the loyalists living along the main street with the businesses and so on. We would have the tricolor flying, the music blaring

³⁹ Dillon, *God*, 213.

– and the Catholics up on the top of the hill would come out to us as though we were the relief cavalry.”⁴⁰

A month prior to his campaigning for Parliament, Sands began to refuse food on March 1st, 1981, with nine other men from both the IRA and INLA following their sixty-six-day long hunger strike that would claim Sands life and garner media attention for him and the Irish Republican cause around the world.

The particularly Catholic dimension to the Sands’ hunger strike was not lost upon Father Denis Faul, a visiting Catholic priest who worked closely to persuade the IRA hunger strikes to end. Faul said of the hunger strikers

“we saw these men acting out before our very eyes the scene that was really our scene, the total ascetic denial... they were making the very sacrifices that Jesus had done and that Catholic priests and Catholic people were called upon to do. There was a religious motif in it... they were doing it for their people.”⁴¹

Faul remembered Sands on the eve of the hunger strike making a clear comparison between his own passion and Christ’s own agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Sands, quoting the Gospel of John, 15:13, said to Faul that “greater love than this no man hath, than one who lays down his life for his friends.” Faul concludes that although he himself and many Church officials opposed the hunger strike on the grounds that it was suicide, the Provos themselves saw it as an essential Catholic duty. Unlike the “Pagan” English, Faul notes, the Irish Republican tradition and the Catholic tradition are both replete with stories of martyrs dying for the faith.⁴² Thus, in a syncretism of nationalism and their ancient faith, many of the Irish Republicans committed

⁴⁰ Coogan, *Troubles*, 279.

⁴¹ Dillon, *God*, 89.

⁴² *Ibid*, 90.

martyrdom for their people, believing that they were following Christ up to Golgotha each step of the way.

Tactics such as Sand's hunger strike that would lead to Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein to rise again to political prominence. It was the Provisional IRA's blending of Catholic nationalist and Irish Republican traditions that would give it the political and ideological strength that it needed to remain as a political force throughout the violent years of the Troubles.

CHAPTER 3
ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN PALESTINE PRE-INTIFADA
THE QURAN AND RIFLE IN EACH HAND

The birth of Islamic Fundamentalism in Palestine begins with the life of Sheik Izz ad-Din Al Qassam. Qassam was born in rural Ottoman Syria in 1884. His father was a Sharia court judge and his grandfather being the head of the Qadariyya Order of Sufis or Islamic mystics. Once he came of age, Qassam went to Cairo where he studied theology at Al-Azhar Madrasa. Sources differ on which teachers Qassam studied under specifically, but he was known to be familial with the ideas of both proto Salafist thinkers as Rashid Rida and more reformist ulema like Muhammad Abduh.⁴³ After completing his studies at Al-Azhar, Qassam returned to his native Syria where he worked for several years. In 1911, the Italian invasion of Libya so angered Qassam that he began to speak out against “western colonialism” and even penned several poems in support of Ottoman troops against the Italian army. Beseeching God for aid, Qassam wrote “Most Merciful, Most Compassionate / Make our Lord the Sultan victorious / And defeat our enemy the Italian.”⁴⁴ Qassam even raised money and planned to lead an expedition of Mujahedeen fighters to aid Ottoman forces in Palestine, but was turned away by Ottoman troops, who cited a need for men to crush revolts in Rumelia.

⁴³ Ziad Abū Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2002), 98.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 99.

Qassam's next foray into anti-colonial warfare would be when he led a small army against French forces as they entered Syria in 1919. Once again calling for Jihad against Western Colonial forces, for two years Qassam led a guerilla war against French and Alawite forces. Qassam's campaign again ended in failure, with superior French numbers and a lack of support from local elites forced Qassam to retreat to Palestine. Settling with his wife and family in Haifa, Qassam taught Islamic theology at a *madrassa*, his message of an Islamic revival that could allow the Muslim world to resist the encroachment of colonial powers proved popular to many. In Haifa, Qassam proved an adept local leader, preaching an "Islamic social gospel" to the poor and needy in Mandate Palestine. It was also during this time that Qassam began a political alliance with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, who provided the Sheik with funding and political support which Qassam used to grow his following.

Beginning in 1930, Sheik Qassam founded the Black Hand, a group to whom he preached that "the Palestinian people must depend on themselves first" to free themselves from British rule. ⁴⁵ Throughout the early 30's the Black Hand waged a sectarian war not dissimilar from that of the Provos. The assassination of British constables, attacks on Zionist settlers and the bombings of both civilian homes and British military installations. By 1935, Qassam had recruited a sizeable force of close to a thousand men, it was then he called a "Jihad against Britain and its Zionist Agents." ⁴⁶ With the slogan of "God's book in one hand, and the rifle in the other." Qassam led attacks against British and Zionist forces, until he was eventually killed in a last stand near the village of Sheikh Zeid. His funeral saw the Jerini Mosque packed with thousands of mourners and

⁴⁵ Amr, *Fundamentalism*, 101.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 102.

from all across the Arab world, Islamists and secular nationalists alike showered the Sheik with praise. His would not be the last death of a political Islamist for the Palestinian cause.

The next fourteen years saw the failure of the Arab Revolt, which lasted from 1936 to 1939 against both continued Zionist immigration and continued British rule in Palestine. Guerilla warfare continued for the next nine year between Zionist militias, Palestinian militias and British troops. Then in 1948 following the full-scale British evacuation from Palestine, the State of Israel was founded during the Israeli War for Independence. Alternatively called the Nakba or “Catastrophe” by Palestinians, the war saw Israel soundly defeat Arab Armies from Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan and an estimated 800,000 Palestinian flee from their homes to settle in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. In response, 700,000 Jews who previously lived for centuries in the Arab world were forced to flee to Israel due to persecution and violence that they received after Israeli victory in the war.⁴⁷ The war left Israel in control of all of the territory it would have received as part of the United Nations partition plan along with substantial portions of proposed Arab territory. Those portions of Palestine that Israel did not claim were ruled by Jordan, which occupied the West Bank and Gaza, which was governed by Egypt, leaving the Palestinian people stateless.

It was into this volatile environment that the Muslim Brotherhood first became active in both the West Bank and Gaza. Originally founded in Egypt in 1928 by a schoolteacher named Hasan al-Banna, the *Ikhwan* or “Brotherhood” began life as a social organization, whose mission involved preaching Islamic revivalism and aid to the poor in equal measure. In both the West Bank and Gaza, the Muslim Brotherhood gained many followers by being the primary source of aid and

⁴⁷ James L Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 47.

education for the many poverty-stricken Palestinians. By collecting *Zakat* or alms from the local community and abroad, the Brotherhood poured money into various *Waqfs* or charitable ventures for the Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza. Muslim brotherhood schools taught countless thousands of Palestinian children. The Brotherhood was also generous with moneylending, giving out interest free loans so that young Palestinians might study in universities in Cairo, Istanbul and Damascus, or if a farmer need money to purchase a plot of land.⁴⁸ It was during this time that the Brotherhood forged alliances with the Hashemite monarchy in Jordan, which proved to be both a blessing and a curse for the Brotherhood's future political fortunes. In its native Egypt, the Brotherhood suffered a major set back when in 1956, a suspected brotherhood assassin attempted to kill then President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser. The assassination attempt led to the Brotherhood being persecuted by the Egyptian state, which in turn hampered the Brotherhood's efforts in Egyptian Gaza.

The political stance of the Muslim Brotherhood during their time as the dominant politically Islamist group in the Palestinian territories can be described as Pan-Islamist. On Israel, the Brotherhood both openly denied the legitimacy of the state and preached anti-Semitism, calling the Jews "the dirtiest and meanest of all races."⁴⁹ The Brotherhood says the Jews are guilty of "defiling the most sanctified and honored spot on earth... where Muhammad made his night journey,"⁵⁰ in the case the spot being referred to is the Al-Aqsa Mosque, where according to Muslims, The Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven.⁵¹ Yet despite both opposition to the state

⁴⁸ Ibid, 14.

⁴⁹ Amr, *Fundamentalism*, 32.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 33.

⁵¹ Amr, *Fundamentalism*, 42.

of Israel and the Jewish people, the Brotherhood did not advocate for armed war against Israel. To be clear, the Brotherhood did not espouse blanket pacifism in regards to the issue of Palestinian nationalism. Rather

“the *jihad* for Palestine will start after the completion of the Islamic transformation of society, the completion of the process of Islamic revival, and the return of Islam to the region. Only then can the call for Jihad be meaningful because the Palestinians cannot alone liberate Palestine without the help of others Muslims.”⁵²

Thus the Brotherhood was left in a politically precarious position when it came to the question of Palestinian nationalism. There rose the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the secular and nationalist wing of the Palestinian cause founded in 1964 and led by Yasser Arafat. For instance, while the Brotherhood chastised the PLO for seeking a political settlement by occasionally negotiating with Israel, the PLO also conducting military raids against Israeli civilians and military sites, whereas the Brotherhood was effectively uninvolved with the armed struggle for Palestine.

The Brotherhood’s lack of involvement with the armed struggle in the Palestinian territories come from the influence of one of the Brotherhood’s leading intellectuals, Sayyid Qutb. Born in Egypt in 1906, Qutb believed in Islamic revivalism and a violent Jihad against what he saw as the decadent Western World. In his work of Quranic exegesis, *Fi Zilal al-Quran*, Qutb outlined that the Muslim world was in a state of “*Jahiliyya*” which in traditional Islamic discourse referred to the time of Pagan ignorance that defined the religion and culture of pre-Islamic Arabia, but which Qutb reinterpreted as “any time at which God’s laws are neglected by society and it’s rulers.”⁵³ Thus according to Qutb and his followers, many governments and movements in the Muslim world are *kafir* or unbelievers. Qutb also used the Quranic term *Hakimiyyat Allah* which

⁵² Ibid, 24.

⁵³ Andrea Nusse, *Muslim Palestine: The Ideology of Hamās* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1998), 14.

translates to “sovereignty of God” to refer to an ideal society which follows God’s laws as expressed through the Quran and authentic hadith.⁵⁴ To Qutb, *Hakimiyyat Allah* referred to the reign of God on earth, an ideal Islamic society that was free from exploitation, greed and want. Like other Islamists, Qutb said that Islam alone could save the Muslim world from foreign exploitation and domination. Qutb also viewed Islam as the sole source of legitimate government and that an Islamic government would guarantee an end to inequality because Islam is inherently socially just. A pan-Islamist, Qutb viewed individual national struggles as either active impediments to the cause of Islamic revival or he found it trivial to dedicate time a specific national cause when it was the entire Muslim world that need to be under *Hakimiyyat Allah*. Thus, Qutb had no love for Palestinian nationalism, as Muhammad ali Qutb, Said’s brother is quoted as saying “it a matter of obscured version or shortsightedness or treason for Arabs and Muslims to be preoccupied with the Palestinian issue and to make it the pivotal point of the struggle between them and the Zionist.”⁵⁵ Ali Qutb further condemned Palestinian nationalists as being selfish and uncaring toward the fates of their fraternal Muslim brethren, saying “They also forget, or pretend to forget, the disputes that have occurred, and are occurring, in Kashmir, Cyprus, Afghanistan, Somalia, Eritrea and Moroccan (Spanish) Sahara.”⁵⁶ Under Qutb’s influence, the Muslim Brotherhood was uninvolved in the armed struggle for Palestine and largely absent from the Palestinian nationalist cause. Throughout the years until the first Intifada in 1987 the Brotherhood was absent in Palestinian politics beyond their *Waqfs* and other charitable initiatives. This earned

⁵⁴ Ibid, 15.

⁵⁵ Amr, *Fundamentalism*, 26.

⁵⁶ Ibid 26.

them scorn from members of the PLO and even other Islamists. The Egyptian Islamist Fahmi Huwaydi said of the Brotherhood's activities following the 1967 Arab Israeli War:

“Where was the Muslim Brotherhood throughout the 20 years that followed the 1967 defeat? Why did their *Jihad* stop during those years? Why did not their cadres defend Palestine, which is considered *Waqf* land, in order to fulfill the individual duty (*jihad*) and embark on the armed struggle throughout that period.”⁵⁷

The Muslim Brotherhood would finally respond to the call from Palestinian nationalists to wage armed war for Palestine. Yet to do so, the Brotherhood would need to go about a profound political and ideological shift from a pan-Islamic welfare organization along Qutbian Islamist lines and reform itself into an Islamic militia that would fight for Palestine and Palestine alone. The Muslim Brotherhood did just that with the founding of *Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-ʿIslāmiyyah* or the “Islamic Resistance Movement” known by acronym, Hamas.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 40.

CHAPTER 4
HAMAS AND ISLAMIC NATIONALISM
SACRAMENTAL NATIONALISM

Hamas was born as an offshoot of the Gaza branch of the Muslim Brotherhood shortly after the first Intifada, the first of two mass uprisings by Palestinians against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Founded by Sheik Ahmed Yassin in 1987, Hamas represented a new phase of Palestinian Islamism which greatly diverged from the previous Islamist tradition as authored by Said Qutb. Unlike Qutb, Sheik Yassin was not especially well versed in Islamic law, “and his prominence cannot be attributed to any significant theological or doctrinal contributions.”⁵⁸ Hamas, through both its armed wing, the al-Qassam martyr brigades and its political wing represents a fusion of Islamic rhetorical devices and distinctly religious language to effectively advocate for a secular cause, the establishment of a Palestinian state. It represents a divergence from the secular, left wing populism of PLO, whose political wing Fatah is Hamas’ primary rival in Palestinian politics, but also a marked change from contemporary Islamic groups such as ISIS or Al-Qaeda.

⁵⁸ Amr, *Fundamentalism*, 65.

Hamas' main rhetorical tactic is using Islamic language and phrasing to advocate for the Palestinian nationalist cause. Article 12 of the Hamas Charter defines Hamas' view of nationalism as follows;

“Nationalism, from the point of view of the Islamic Resistance Movement, is part of the religious creed. Nothing in nationalism is more significant or deeper than in the case when an enemy should tread Moslem land. Resisting and quelling the enemy become the individual duty of every Moslem, male or female. A woman can go out to fight the enemy without her husband's permission, and so does the slave: without his master's permission. ... If other nationalist movements are connected with materialistic, human or regional causes, nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement has all these elements as well as the more important elements that give it soul and life. It is connected to the source of spirit and the granter of life, hoisting in the sky of the homeland the heavenly banner that joins earth and heaven with a strong bond.⁵⁹

In the original Arabic, this section of Hamas' departure from Islamist tradition is made even more apparent. The use of the terms *watan* or fatherland and *wataniyya* or nationalism and then to claim that “they are part of the Islamic creed” is simply false if the creed Hamas' is referencing is the Qutbian creed that it claims ideological descent. Additionally the Quranic verse that Hamas cites as proof of its nationalist aims as being Islamic, verse 2:256, “Now is the right direction manifestly distinguished from deceit: whoever therefore shall deny Tagut, and believe in Allah, he shall surely take hold with a strong handle, which shall not be broken; Allah is he who heareth and seeth,” is a general verse that has little to do with nationalism. Ultimately however, through this simple stretching of what is deemed “Islamic,” Hamas can effectively present itself as both a nationalist front and a deeply religious organization, despite the fact that its religious roots are less deep than Hamas claims.

One rhetorical tactic that Hamas continues from the Ikhwan/Qutbian tradition is the framing of the Palestinian struggle as a struggle between Muslims and Jews and using anti-

⁵⁹ The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement, 1988." The Avalon Project - Laws of War: Laws and Customs of War on Land, accessed January 10, 2019, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.

Semitism to paint all Jews as oppressors of the Palestinian people. Hamas' charter, Article 28, says "Israel, Judaism and Jews challenge Islam and the Moslem people. "May the cowards never sleep."⁶⁰ Yet, paradoxically, there also seems to be a backward form of respect for the "*al-kiyan al-sabyuni*" or Zionist Entity. Hamas journals mention how "the Israeli Army uses military tactics taught by the Torah" and how "food also must conform to religious rules."⁶¹ Hamas essentially credits Israeli military success against Palestinians to the Israeli dedication to their religion. This once again directly contradicts of the anti-Semitism of Qutb, who uses Quranic verses to make the claim that the Jewish people as "straying from the godly path"⁶²

Another way in which Hamas departs from the Qutbian Islamist tradition for nationalist ends is how Hamas frames its justification for Jihad. To Qutb, Jihad was an offensive war that meant that Muslims should fight to expand the Islamic call or *da'wa*. However, Hamas' journal *Mithaq* speaks of a call to Jihad in defense of the Palestinian nation, referencing the Nakba, *Mithaq* says "the expulsion from the homeland is a kind of killing."⁶³ Hamas blames the burden of its Jihad on the "Zionists" who "expelled people from their homes" and committed other crimes against the Muslim population of Palestine.⁶⁴ "For Hamas... the winning back of the lost homelands dominates all throughout and represents in a way its *raison d'etre*."⁶⁵ Again, Hamas abandons and retools its Qutbian roots to suit its present day political and ideological needs.

⁶⁰ Ibid, Article 28

⁶¹ Nusse, *Palestine*, 31.

⁶² Amr, *Fundamentalism*, 14.

⁶³ Nusse, *Palestine*, 68.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 71.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 71.

Another example of Hamas' flexible use of Islamic terms and rhetoric is their definition of the word *Waqf*. In a traditional understanding of the *Waqfs* of Palestine, only select parts of the city of Jerusalem and the area surrounding the *haram al sharif* or Temple Mount were considered to be *Waqf*. Yet Hamas in its charter defines the whole of modern day territory of Palestine "from river to sea" as a *Waqf* endowed "to all Muslims generations until the day of resurrection."⁶⁶ Hamas quite literally makes the secular into the sacred, because it states that the entire nation of Palestine is a sacred endowment given to the people of Palestine. It is this sacralization of the land of Palestine that then gives Hamas the justification to wage Jihad in the name of "recovering what was stolen" from the Muslim Palestinians.⁶⁷

Hamas' views on democracy and its participation in several of the Palestinian National Congress' elections is another sign of how Hamas "islamizes" un-Islamic concepts to suit its political needs in the Palestinian territories. In Hamas' journal *Mithaq*, Hamas states that it is the "real nature" of the Palestinian people is to seek democracy. Thus, once again Hamas departs from its Qutbian roots, as by placing the "real nature" of the Palestinian people on equal footing with the Qutbian concept of *Hakimiyyat Allah*, which proposes that Islamic law provides all that Muslims will need to provide stable and just government.⁶⁸ Likewise, though it condemned the 1996 Palestinian Legislative Council elections, it still covertly participated in them so as to preserve its "principled" stand against the Oslo Accords.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Issam Aburaiya, "Islamism, Nationalism, and Western Modernity: The Case of Iran and Palestine," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 22, no.1 (2009): 64.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 65.

⁶⁸ Nusse, *Palestine*, 76.

⁶⁹ Are Knudsen, "Crescent and Sword: The Hamas Enigma," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 8 (2005): 1380.

One tradition that Hamas does continue from its Muslim Brotherhood, Qutbian roots is that of Islamic social welfare. Hamas is the key provider of social welfare in the Occupied Territories. Like many Islamist movements, Hamas funds comes both from local alms taxes or Zakat, which amounts to about 15% of Hamas' budget. Yet the majority of Hamas' funding comes from networks of influential Islamist clerics and business leaders from nations like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Dubai.⁷⁰ An estimated ninety five percent of Hamas' budget goes to some *Waqf*, including loans for struggling families, scholarships and education for many poor Palestinian Children. Hamas' charter supports its welfare efforts, Article 21 states "Mutual social responsibility means extending assistance, financial or moral, to all those who are in need and joining in the execution of some of the work."⁷¹ Hamas vast network of Waqfs serve to not only help the organization appear sufficiently Islamic, but also allows it to gain support from the more disadvantaged Palestinians that rely on Hamas for essentials such as food, education and even employment.

In terms of tactics, Hamas introduced the specter of suicide attacks to the Palestinian national struggle, including explosives and self-immolation as early as the first Intifada. Hamas, much like the Provos, uses the death of their operatives as part of a sophisticated propaganda network to encourage support for the Palestinian Islamo-nationalist cause. When a Hamas suicide bomber successfully fulfills his mission, Hamas publishes three documents relating to the bomber. First, a *wasiyya* or a two to three-page ethical treatise outlining the ethics of the bomber and his message to his family, loved ones and to the Palestinian people. Second, a *sira* or a short biography of the bomber. Said *sira* extoll the virtues of the bomber and typically include lines that canonize the bomber in Hamas' religious and nationalist framework. Lines such as "his primary concern

⁷⁰ Ibid, 1382.

⁷¹ The Avalon Project, "The Islamic Resistance Movement."

was Jihad and drawing a weapon in the face of the Israeli aggression that denied him his homeland.”⁷² Lastly, a public eulogy for the martyr is written and distributed to the public. The names and stories of martyrs are often used as moral examples during Friday prayers in Palestinian Mosques across the West Bank and Gaza. Since 1989, 171 recorded suicide attacks have been done by Hamas, Islamic Jihad which is another Islamist group and even the secular Fatah. Said attacks have claimed eight hundred Israeli and Palestinian lives.⁷³

Hamas also differed at its outset from its earlier Muslim Brotherhood contemporaries in its treatment of Fatah, its primary secular and nationalist ally. Hamas' 1988 charter, originally spoke positively of Fatah and promised

“all the nationalist trends operating in the Palestinian arena for the liberation of Palestine, that it is there for their support and assistance. It will never be more than that, both in words and deeds, now and in the future. It is there to bring together and not to divide, to preserve and not to squander, to unify and not to throw asunder. It evaluates every good word, sincere effort and good offices. It closes the door in the face of side disagreements and does not lend an ear to rumours and slanders, while at the same time fully realising the right for self-defence.”⁷⁴

Yet by 2006, the relationship between Hamas and Fatah was much more frayed. With the disappointing results of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the death of beloved Fatah leader Yasser Arafat in 2004, Fatah's general corruption, mismanagement and lack of political improvement for many Palestinians led to Hamas “winning 76 of 132 seats in the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections.”⁷⁵ When Fatah disputed the election results, Hamas moved with its al-Qassam Martyr

⁷² Eli Alshech, "Egoistic Martyrdom and Ḥamās' Success in the 2005 Municipal Elections: A Study of Ḥamās Martyrs' Ethical Wills, Biographies, and Eulogies," *Die Welt Des Islams* 48, no. 1 (2008): 30.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 32.

⁷⁴ The Avalon Project, "The Islamic Resistance Movement."

⁷⁵ Beverley Milton-Edwards, "The Ascendance of Political Islam: Hamas and Consolidation in the Gaza Strip," *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 8 (2008): 1587.

Brigades and swept aside what few Fatah forces opposed them. Yet, this rivalry may have outside actors involved, as in UN report released shortly after the June 2007 Hamas coup, stated “The US clearly pushed for a confrontation between Hamas and Fatah.” One unnamed American official was quoted as saying “I like this violence” because “it means that other Palestinians are resisting Hamas.”⁷⁶ Once in power, Hamas seized control of Fatah offices and began to run the Occupied territories as a one-party state. Under Hamas rule, the visible markers of Islamic identity, such as the hijab, became more heavily felt, and the women of the West Bank and Gaza consequently feared “reprisals” and “increased their conformity to custom on Islamic dress.”⁷⁷ Yet despite such outwardly Islamic actions, Hamas did not attempt to promote Sharia law, nor did it persecute its Christian population and instead was more gradually focused on consolidating its rule over Gaza. After a unity agreement signed between the two in 2008 and a unity government agreement reached between the two parties in 2014, there exists a fragile peace between Hamas and Fatah. Fatah rules the West Bank while Hamas continues to rule the Gaza Strip, the future of Palestine and its people remains uncertain.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 1590.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 1595.

CHAPTER 5
THE SITUATION OF CATHOLICS IN ULSTER
“A FUNDAMENTALLY UNDEMOCRATIC STATE”

Even prior to the formation of the statelet of Ulster in 1921, Catholics of Ulster were a people perpetually under attack from a hostile Unionist majority that used the organs of the state to effectively disenfranchise, murder, suppress and keep them in grinding poverty. The population of Catholics in Ulster ballooned from a mere 2,000 in 1800 to over 40,000 thousand by 1861.⁷⁸ Yet this increase in population also greatly magnified the persecution that Catholics received from the Protestant sections of Ulster, who feared that any gain for Catholics meant an existential threat to their lives. Throughout the 19th century “Catholicism remained a socially unacceptable phenomena.”⁷⁹ This distrust and even at times outright hatred of Catholicism manifested itself throughout the political offices of Ulster. In 1880 there was only a single Catholic magistrate out of a total of seventy-four in the province.⁸⁰ Poverty was rampant, with the majority of Ulster Catholics being unskilled laborers or tenant farmers. Violence was also commonplace from both Protestant civilians and the Orange Order, with anti-Catholic riots breaking out in 1857, 1864, 1872 and 1886.

Protestant domination of all the organs of Ulster did not cease as the new century dawned. The January 2, 1904 edition of the *Irish News* said of the town of Dungannon, County Tyrone, whose 1901 Census indicated that of it’s 4,000 strong population, over 2000 were Catholic, “The

⁷⁸ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 154.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 121.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 132.

Chairman of the board is a Protestant, the vice-Chairman is Protestant, the town surveyor is a Methodist, the sub-sanitary officer is Protestant, the factory inspector is Protestant, and the rate collector is a Presbyterian.”⁸¹ Conditions for Catholics in Ulster would only worsen with the birth of the statelet of Ulster following the Irish war for Independence.

Seminal Irish historian Tim Patrick Coogan gives a powerful summary regarding the creation of the state of Ulster in 1921. In the introduction to his history of the Troubles, he says of the Unionist State

“What was created was a fundamentally undemocratic state specifically designed to prevent power from changing hands or to allow reform to take place from within by the normal democratic processes of education, organization, and the ballot box. In many ways the God-fearing fundamentalists of the Six Counties resembled the Boers of South Africa. They developed the same laager mentality and a system of apartheid, based on religion instead of colour.”⁸²

This apartheid system manifested itself in numerous ways throughout the various organs of the state of Ulster. For instance, gerrymandering by Unionist legislators meant that even heavily Catholic areas such as Dungannon sent a Unionist M.P to Stormont, the seat of the Ulster Parliament. Said Unionist and Protestant control of Stormont was blatant, with the first Prime Minister of Ulster, James Craig, saying with pride that Stormont was a “Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people.”⁸³

How suffrage was determined in Ulster was decided by housing, with only the male and later, female heads of the household being granted the right of suffrage at the creation of the Ulster state. Housing was another major channel through which Unionist ascendancy maintained power.

⁸¹ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 176.

⁸² Coogan, *Troubles*, 29.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 27.

In 1968, close to fifty years after the founding the Ulster State, a small council housing in the town of Caledon had been for sale in a Protestant neighborhood there for over a decade. Close to three hundred Catholic families, eager to escape the grinding poverty of Catholic ghettos, had applied for the housing lottery. The house was finally won in late 1968, not to any Catholic family, but to the young secretary of the town's Unionist mayor as an engagement gift, upon her announcement that she was to marry a local "B" Special.⁸⁴ In 1970, discrimination against Catholics in Ulster was so rampant that they were only 15 Protestant families on waiting lists for housing, but over 2,000 Catholic families.⁸⁵ It is telling that the beginning of the Irish Civil Rights protests began over housing allotments.

Another way that the Unionist State helped to incite violence against Catholics is by openly allowing bigotry and discrimination to be the norm of Northern Irish politics and society through the work of men such as Ian Paisley and organizations such as the Orange Order. The Orange Order was a Protestant fraternal order founded in 1795, the Orangemen as members of the order are called, were a virulently anti-Catholic organization that long had heavy influence over the workings of the Ulster State. By contrast Ian Paisley was an Evangelical Protestant minister and Unionist political leader who in 1951 founded his Presbyterian Church of Ulster as a front for thinly disguised bigotry. In terms of influence on Northern Irish politics both Orangeman and Paisley not only routinely stirred up anti-Catholic violence by leading parades of armed men through Catholic slums, but also gave political cover to Unionists who wished to maintain their stranglehold on power. For instance, during the height of the Northern Irish Civil Rights Movement, Paisley in his capacity as an M.P in Stormont, led the legislative bloc that defeated

⁸⁴ Coogan, *Troubles*, 39.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 43.

Civil Rights legislation that would've addressed the demands of the NICRA and possibly averted the Troubles.⁸⁶ In 1934, the head of the Orange Order said of the Catholics of Ulster, that they are “ninety-nine percent disloyal” and recommended firing any Catholic that a member of the Order employed.⁸⁷ Paisley meanwhile regularly both in print media and at his church regularly accused Catholics of plotting with the Pope to murder Protestant children and that nuns and priests ran scandalous sex cults and other absurdities. Paisley founded and led the Unionist Democratic Unionist Party from 1971 until his death in 2014 and had close ties with members of various violent Ulster Militia groups, such as the Ulster Defense Association and Ulster Volunteer Force. Likewise, the Orange Order also held a vast amount of political power as “the order was the keystone of the arch of Unionist Patronage and political advancement, it’s role in the Six County Government and ethos.”⁸⁸ The Northern Irish state’s first Prime Minister, James Craig is even quoted as saying “I have always said that I am Orangemen first and a politician second.”⁸⁹ Thus, both Paisley the man and the Orange Order both made sure that various Unionist cliques controlled the levers of state power in Ulster, actively worked to incite violence against Catholics and blocked reform of the state to maintain their power and influence.

It was the actions of the various security forces employed by the Ulster state, along with the British intelligence apparatus who routinely collaborated with Unionist militias that made life for many Catholics in Ulster untenable. Perhaps the most infamous actions by Ulster paramilitaries against Catholic civilians were the Shankill Butchers. The Shankill Butchers were a gang of men

⁸⁶ Coogan, *Troubles*, 72.

⁸⁷ Rafferty, *Catholicism*, 220.

⁸⁸ Coogan, *Troubles*, 41.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 41.

from the Ulster Volunteer force who from 1975 to 1982 would regularly roam the loyalist neighborhood of Shankill in Belfast, kidnap lone Catholics, beat them and slit their throats with butcher's carving knives. Attacks on civilians such as these occurred regularly throughout the Troubles, yet the key difference is that the Unionist Militias routinely received aid from both Unionist Politician, the British Army and even MI5 and British Army intelligence. One of the most damning ties between Ulster extremists and British intelligence apparatchik was the case of William McGrath. McGrath, a senior member of Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church, The Democratic Unionist Party and the Orange Order acted as a intelligence asset of MI5 and British Army intelligence.⁹⁰ What made McGrath's employment especially heinous was that he was a known pedophile to his handlers, who protected him "because he worked for the intelligence community" and because "he knew powerful people."⁹¹ McGrath is representative of the larger strategy that the British intelligence apparatus employed throughout the Troubles, that using Unionists to do the dirty work of combating Irish Rebels was a favorable exchange even if it meant that the various crimes that the Unionists committed would remain ignored.

Lastly, a final factor when considering the creation and long-term longevity of the IRA would be the actions and strategies that the British Army employed throughout its campaign in Ulster. Ironically, when units of the British Army first landed in Ulster at the request of Stormont following the disastrous riots of August 1969, they were greeted with cheers and cups of tea from the Catholics of Ulster, who saw them as saviors from hostile Unionist paramilitaries. Yet Ulster Catholics quickly turned against the army due to its heavy-handed policies against suspected rebels. The most infamous army policy was its suspected "shoot to kill" policy, in which soldiers

⁹⁰ Dillon, *God*, 174.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 177.

could fire on suspected rebels with impunity. The most infamous consequence of this “shoot to kill” was “Bloody Sunday”, where on January 30, 1972, in the city of Derry members of the British Army’s 1st Battalion parachute regiment fired on a peaceful march held by the Northern Irish Civil Rights Alliance. In total twenty eight marchers were shot by British troops, with the British Army claiming that any marcher that had been shot had been handling weapons or explosives, The Widgery Tribunal, the military tribunal that investigated the shooting, acquitted the soldiers of any wrongdoing, despite characterizing the soldier’s marksmanship as “bordering on reckless.”⁹² Events such as Bloody Sunday characterize the attitude that the British Army held towards the Catholics of Ulster; of a colonial population that needed to be subjugated by force. The Army’s brutal treatment of Ulster’s Catholic population was due the circumstances under which the British Army had entered Ulster. The British Army

“had come to Ireland against an operational background that included Aden, Cyprus, Kenya, Malaya, all foreign, post-colonial insurgency theatres. The techniques which it had acquired along the way could be, and were, profitably deployed on behalf of Sultan’s friendly to Britain, away from the cameras ... a strain of frankly racist condescension, influenced by the colonial experience elsewhere, was encapsulated in a term frequently used in military circles to describe the Irish: bogwog.”⁹³

In addition to Army high command treating Ulster with the same, brutal and repressive tactics that dominate anti-insurgent colonial wars, individual British soldiers similarly looked upon Ulster Catholics with the same condescension that accompanied their deployment in other areas colonized by Britain. A Belfast Catholic priest described the attitudes of the Scottish, Welsh and English troops stationed in Northern Ireland thusly;

“They were coming from a history since the Tudor times when Britain became a power state as well as Scotland and Wales.... They (Britain) had wiped out the psychology and the mind of the Welsh and Scots to a great extent and having destroyed them, having pulled

⁹² Coogan, *Troubles*, 172.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 126.

their into armies to do their work abroad in imperial expansion... They created a new tradition of a kind of shallow imperialism in the British Empire. All that came apart but they assumed Ireland still fit into that.⁹⁴

Thus, the British Army that entered Ulster in 1969 and treated U.K citizens like they would treat suspected insurgents in a foreign brushfire war was but the final piece in creating Ulster sectarianism and the horrors of the Troubles.

⁹⁴ Dillon, *God*, 161.

CHAPTER 6
THE SITUATION OF PALESTINIANS AND DIASPORA
“A LAND WITHOUT A PEOPLE.”

The Nakba is in many ways the defining event for the Palestinian people and the wounds that it inflicted, both physical and emotional, reverberate to the present. Throughout 1948, some 700,000 Palestinians, an estimated half of the Mandate of Palestine’s Arab population, fled their homes, fleeing advancing Israeli forces. Although violence between Israeli settlers and Palestinians had occurred since the establishment of the British mandate of Palestine following World War 1, there also existed many instances of Palestinian and Israeli coexistence. Um Khalil, born in the village of Anabta, near the town of Tulkarem, said of relations between Jews and Palestinians prior to the Nakba “prior to 1948, we never felt that the Jews were our enemies.” Khalil speaks of how she even had Jewish nephews, saying we “used to love them, sleep with them, eat with them, share presents.”⁹⁵ Yet for Khalil, the Nakba soured those relations and permanently changed his opinion of Jews, as he says “But these were the Jews before they started to swallow our lands.”⁹⁶ Some Palestinians do not place the blame of the Nakba on all Jewish people. Salah Ta’ mari, a native of Bethlehem and a Palestinian Christian member of Fatah loathed the Israelis for their occupation of Palestinian land during the Nakba. He says “We should draw a line between the Jewishness of those people who started coming to Palestine and their new status as occupiers. Occupation is bad. I don’t care who the occupier is, be it Muslim, be it Christian or

⁹⁵ Staughton Lynd, *Homeland: Oral Histories of Palestine and Palestinians* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1993), 27.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 27.

be it Jewish.” The enmity created by the Nakba continues to this day and is a multigenerational pain that helps to contribute to Palestinian support for such radical organizations as Hamas.

Indeed, when reading accounts of many Palestinian refugees, the central pain of the loss of their homeland to occupying Israeli forces is more a driving factor than merely hatred of the Jewish People. Take the story Khaled, who was born in 1948 in the coastal city of Jaffa. Despite the fact that he was only an infant when he and his family fled advancing Israeli forces, Khaled still held a deep reverence for the literal land of his birth. Khaled went so far in his love for his homeland that although when he returned after the Six Day war, only to find an Israeli military base standing where his house once stood, he brought back dirt from homeland and in his words, “I let my kids step on the dirt so that they can be tied to the land.”⁹⁷ Or take the example of Um Ossama, who was a Palestinian refugee living in a camp in southern Lebanon. During Israel’s 1982 military incursion into South Lebanon against Palestinian guerillas as part of the Lebanese Civil War, Ossama was one of the many Palestinian refugees caught between the various armies and militias groups. When she became separated from her children due to heavy fighting, she was questioned by a Maronite militiamen on where she lived, her sole response was “I am a resident of Ein El Hilweh, but my home is in Palestine.”⁹⁸ The dedication that Palestinians have to their land, and the sense of anger at having it taken from them is a strong motivation for anti-Israeli sentiment amongst the Palestinian people. Take this exchange that Ossama recalls between her and an Israeli soldier in southern Lebanon.

“An Israeli soldier asked me, “What are you?” I said, “Palestinian.” He said. “Say youre an Israeli and maybe life will be better.” I said. “I will never tell you that I am an Israeli. I am a Palestinian and I’m proud to be Palestinian.” They get mad at us, but we will tell:

⁹⁷Lynd, *Homeland*, 33.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 105.

“We are Palestinian. Our land is Palestine.” ... This is our right to life – to return to Palestine. If we don’t make it back, the next generation of kids’ kids’ kids will make it.”⁹⁹

This anger over homes and ancestral lands being taken from Palestinians can be seen clearly in the actions and rhetoric of Hamas. Indeed the centrality of the loss of Palestinian land gives Hamas a strong rhetorical device with which it can attract many recruits to its cause. The theme of taking back what is perceived to be “stolen” Palestinian Land is a central theme of much Hamas propaganda and figures prominently in the Hamas Charter.¹⁰⁰

Another material factor in Palestinian support for Hamas are the many Palestinian refugees that live in abysmal poverty in refugee camps in the Palestinian territories and across the Arab world. Driven from their homes from the 1948 and 1967 wars, over four generations of Palestinians have lived and died in these camps. Even from their beginnings as part of a United Nations temporary settlement program, poverty was rampant in said camps. Ali, who was born in 1957 in the Ein El Hiweh refugee camp in Lebanon, which today houses more than 120,000 thousand Syrians and Palestinians,¹⁰¹ describes his childhood growing up in the camp, where space was precious :“Eleven of us lived in one room and a kitchen: nine kids, my mother and my father... we used to sleep with my mother in the middle with four or five kids on one side and four or five kids on the other side, my dad slept outside under the tree.” Describing the poverty of his youth, Ali says “There was not enough of anything, there was not enough food. If you bought a pair of shoes, it was worn by five kids...There was no electricity in the house.”¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Ibid, 106.

¹⁰⁰ The Avalon Project, “The Islamic Resistance Movement.”

¹⁰¹ Patrick Sykes. "Impact of Syrian Unrest on Ain Al-Hilweh Camp." *Middle East Monitor*. April 27, 2014, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20140427-impact-of-syrian-unrest-on-ain-al-hilweh-camp/>.

¹⁰² Synd, *Homeland*, 42.

Violence was also a factor in the camps, Ali describes how as a child he could tell the difference between a 14.5 mm shell and a larger, 20mm artillery shell simply by the sound. The camp's position in southern Lebanon and scattered Palestinian insurgent activity originating from the camp also made it a target for Israeli forces during the Lebanese Civil War. Ali describes how his home was destroyed twice by Israeli artillery and air strikes in 1982 alone. The history of poverty and the depredations of millions of people being left stateless is a large contributing factor to Palestinian support for militant organizations like Hamas.

In the present, conditions have not improved much for the millions who still live in Palestinian refugee camps. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees "Nearly one-third of the registered Palestine refugees, more than 1.5 million individuals, live in 58 recognized Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem."¹⁰³ These Palestinians are left stateless by the countries that house them. Take the Jerash camp in Jordan, where as of 2017, unemployment is at thirty nine percent and those that are employed "are limited to low-paid jobs as welders, cleaners and agricultural labourers in farms outside the camps."¹⁰⁴ The local Jordanian population has no love for the Palestinian refugees, with kids in Jordanian classrooms and universities shunning Palestinian students. Such refugees are also denied passports and citizenship by the Jordanian government, which uses prohibitively high pricing on passes that refugee must show to be able to leave the camp. Poverty is still rampant in the camp, with 46 percent of its thirty thousand living beneath the poverty line.¹⁰⁵ Conditions in the camps are similarly horrid, with

¹⁰³ "Palestine Refugees." UNRWA. Accessed January 12, 2019. <https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>.

¹⁰⁴ Paddy Dowling. "Jordan's Palestinian Refugee Camps." *The Independent*. May 11, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/jordan-palestine-refugee-camps-photography>

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

budget cuts causing squalor to fester. A Guardian reporter described the conditions in the Jerash camps, “The smell of rotting rubbish everywhere is encouraging rats, and the camp air is thick with flies forcing many of its residents to start burning rubbish in their streets and alleyways.”¹⁰⁶ Naturally, due to the inaction of Arab governments and an absent international community leads to Palestinians suffering en masse in their many refugee camps.

Poverty for the Palestinians who live in Gaza and the West Bank is comparable to the utter poverty that their countrymen and women suffer in the refuge camps. A World report on Gaza concluded with this assessment;

“Palestinian living standards continued to decline in 2018, with aid flows no longer providing an impetus to growth. The unemployment rate was 32.4 percent in the second quarter of 2018, the highest rate in two decades, while the 2017 poverty rate was 29.2 percent. ... In Gaza, 54 percent of the labor force is unemployed, including 70 percent among youth.”¹⁰⁷

For statistical reference, the Palestinian Territories together have the highest unemployment in the world. Due to Israeli blockades around the Gaza Strip, Gaza has been reduced to a case of “profound suffering,” according to a recent UN report.¹⁰⁸ Gaza’s two million inhabitants also suffer from a lack of clean drinking water, with over 97% of Gazan water being contaminated and unable to drink.¹⁰⁹ Conditions for Palestinian workers who go into Israel are similarly poor. Take

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ "Overview of Palestinian Territories," World Bank, Accessed January 12, 2019. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/westbankandgaza/overview>.

¹⁰⁸ "Economy and Living Standards of Gaza 'eviscerated' by Crippling Blockade – UN Trade and Development Report | UN News," United Nations, Accessed January 12, 2019. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1019162>.

¹⁰⁹ Zafir Rinat. "Ninety-seven Percent of Gaza Drinking Water Contaminated by Sewage, Salt, Expert Warns." *Haaretz*, January 21, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/.premium-expert-warns-97-of-gaza-drinking-water-contaminated-by-sewage-salt-1.5747876>.

the aforementioned Khalil, who when he worked as a laborer, became accustomed to a routine of being manually fired and hired again and was paid every 30 shekels for every 50 an Israeli worker received.¹¹⁰

The final factor as to state of Palestinian people is the damage to both property and lives as a result of the many military actions undertaken by the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) and the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories since the Nakba. Since the Nakba there have been numerous Israeli military undertakings in Gaza and the West Bank. The justifications for these actions have been in retaliation for terrorist attacks carried out by Palestinian insurgents both in Israel and across the world. During the first Intifada over 1501 Palestinians were killed by Israeli military and civilian actions, versus 177 Israelis.¹¹¹ Since 2009, over 4744 Palestinians have died as a result of the Israeli occupation and various military operations, with the majority, 4348, occurring in the Gaza strip.¹¹² The billions of dollars in damage and lives lost on both sides of the conflict has also added to the considerable tensions that lead to the rise of groups such as Hamas.

¹¹⁰ Synd, *Homeland*, 32.

¹¹¹ "Fatalities in the First Intifada." B'Tselem, Accessed January 12, 2019.
https://www.btselem.org/statistics/first_intifada_tables.

¹¹² "Fatalities during and since Operation Cast Lead." B'Tselem, Accessed January 12, 2019.
<https://www.btselem.org/statistics/fatalities/after-cast-lead/by-date-of-event>.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, I will examine the case of Abu Sam, a teenage militant and member of Hizb al Tahrir, or the Islamic Party of Liberation, an Islamist group founded in 1953 that operated throughout the Gaza strip and West Bank. Joining the organization in 1955 at the age of 15, Sam did so out of the desire to his both end his own poverty and those around him. Sam said that he advocated for an Islamic government because under one “there would be no poor people, there would be free enterprise but the distribution of wealth would be handled fairly.”¹¹³ Admitting that he could not read the Quran and instead had to have it be taught to him by the organizations members, he admits in hindsight that he had no particular love for Islamism, with him admitting “If it hadn’t been the Islamic movement, I would’ve joined whatever movement came along... it was not so much Islam. If anybody else had came along and talked about justice when I was fourteen or fifteen years old, I would be grabbed it.”¹¹⁴ Upon immigrating to the United States in 1965, he lived out the rest of his life as an auto mechanic in Georgia, abandoning political Islamism as a folly of youth.

Abu Sam’s story is reflective of several trends explored throughout this assessment of the religiosity of the IRA and Hamas. Namely, that for nationalist organizations such as these, religion is almost always subordinate to nationalist or more broadly ethical needs. The rhetoric of religion, the notion of defend one’s own community from enemy assault, and the vague point of “God”

¹¹³ Synd, *Homeland*, 212.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 21.

being on the side of one's cause is employed much more heavily than any specific religious argument. Religion as used as a marker of identity certainly, but both organizations depart heavily from the orthodoxy of their respective faiths in order to justify their nakedly secular and nationalist causes. Not to mention that it is material factors such as poverty, state violence, political repression and sectarianism that lead to the formation of groups such as the IRA and Hamas more so than any notion of "Holy War."

Terrorism does not occur in a vacuum, and to understand the underlying reasons for the existence of groups such as the IRA and Hamas, one must first understand the material and political dimensions that lead to the formation of such groups. Note, that this is not an endorsement or justification of the ideologies or actions of said groups, rather an explanation of how factors such as poverty, state terrorism, employment discrimination and a lack of representation in the political process can lead to the formation of such violent militias. Additionally, to look at the Troubles and the Israeli-Palestine conflict through the hermetical lens of a material analysis does not mean that religion or religious leaders should be exonerated from the role that religion and religious rhetoric plays in encouraging violence, hatred and sectarianism. However, the main thrust of my material analysis attempts to disprove the notion that these conflicts are driven solely by ethnic and religion tension. In short, religion and ethnic signifiers are often employed by such groups as Hamas and the IRA as rhetorical tools to gain recruits and such groups are in fact, somewhat removed from their respective religious traditions.

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