

A Sociological Approach to the 1987 Intifada

Established-Outsider Relations and the Rise of Palestinian Resistance

Michael C. Hughes

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Prof. Stephen Vertigans

Robert Gordon University

Chosen Prompt:

Examine the reasons for the emergence of ONE conflict and establish the causes for the use of violence. Apply sociological concepts and/or theoretical contributions that can help to improve levels of understanding about the chosen conflict and the extent to which religion is influential.

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Introduction: A Framework for Understanding Conflict

Conflict between powerful and marginalized groups is a prevalent feature of modern times. Perhaps the best known example is the seemingly continual violence erupting between Israelis and Palestinians. Making sense of this conflict requires a deep exploration of the history and politics on both sides, as scholars the world over would undoubtedly agree. However, all too often in conflict analysis the *human* factors that lead individuals to commit violence get washed away amidst explanations based on impersonal economic or diplomatic events. While these are doubtlessly important, sociology – the study of human groups and interactions – can also provide crucial insight about how individuals come to perceive, condone, and participate in violence.

Sociologist Norbert Elias transformed the study of group conflict in his 1976 work *A Theoretical Essay on Established-Outsider Relations*. According to Elias, the focus of conflict analysis should be on understanding how the balance of power between groups changes (or remains static) over time. Crucially, he argued that *human* features of a group - its level of unity, its collective identity, and its shared values - can be as important as economic imbalances or other material features in explaining shifts in power and associated changes in violence (Elias 1976 p. xviii).

In cases of violent conflict, two concepts of Eliasian theory become especially relevant. First, Elias explained that broad changes in group relationships can lead to increased confrontation through a process called *functional democratization*. During functional democratization, groups become increasingly interdependent, and this transformation pushes the balance of power toward outsider groups and empowers previously marginalized classes. Elias notes that it is often as groups become interdependent, forced to interact and engage with each other on a daily basis, that conflict becomes overt and violent (Elias 1976 p. xxxi). To explain why this happens, Elias emphasized a second concept, the emotional attachment group members feel toward a sense of shared virtue – which he called *group charisma*. A shared virtue lets group members perceive themselves as somehow superior to non-members (Elias 1976 p. xvi). When a group member must interact with the “inferior” other, the emotional stain created by group charisma can assist in legitimizing force and violence, as the object becomes somehow less than human. Thus, Elias predicts an onset of violence will follow functional democratization when group unity is strong enough and group charisma is well established.

But how well does this framework explain modern conflict? After all, Elias based his work on a case study of a small English village where violence was rather limited. In this work, we examine the rise of conflict within the Palestinian territories that occurred following Israel’s 1967 occupation and culminated in the 1987 widespread national protests and violent uprising known as the *intifada*¹. The intifada marked a watershed in the conflict as sporadic and local resistance coalesced into a unified, national uprising. We find that Elias’ theory of established-outsider relations illuminates key human

¹ Of course, this focus is not without limitations. In concentrating on the Palestinian side of the conflict, this work will likely fail to emphasize the dynamic, complex, diverse nature of Israeli groups involved in the intifada and the occupation. Additionally, this trace of Palestinian charisma neglects the longer history of Palestinian activist resistance (e.g. the protests of the 1930s, the militant actions of the 1960s and 70s, etc.) in shaping resistance attitudes and values. Unfortunately, space constraints and narrative clarity preclude this vital discussion.

mechanisms, such as increasing interdependence, group unity, and group charisma, that profoundly shaped how and why Palestinians across the territories condoned and participated in violent conflict during the intifada.

Applying the Framework to the Intifada

Before embarking on detailed analysis of the intifada, we first must understand some of the finer mechanisms of Eliasian theory and then adapt these to the features of Palestinian society.

Elias explained how group charisma could come to influence an individual's perceptions and behavior in great detail. According to Elias, groups with a strong charisma tend to pass judgments on the entire other group based on the qualities of the minority of its "worst" members, while founding its own collective virtue on the minority of its "best" members (Elias 1976 p. xix). This distorted frame of reference, which combines both reality and fantasy, allows a charismatic group to continually reinforce to its members what makes it superior (Elias 1976 p. xliii). Elias discovered that intra-group communication, especially in the form of gossip, played a key role in regulating behavior in his original case study. Originating from a group's most assimilated members, gossip can both communicate ideals and stigmatize transgressions to influence member behavior. Elias termed messages that praise the best qualities of insiders "*praise-gossip*" while speech that stigmatizes the worst qualities of the other as "*blame-gossip*".

Several features of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories make the Eliasian study of group unity and charisma especially relevant. Due to limitations placed by the occupational authority, Palestinians² have very little geographic mobility. Thus, social networks are generally "restricted to their [local] area and consist of family and friends who share similar experiences and life chances" (Vertigans 2008 p. 34)³. This restriction allows strong attachments to form between the individual and the local community, making the impact of praise-gossip or blame-gossip especially powerful as most Palestinians have a large emotional stake in community values and norms. Another crucial fact is the lack of contact most Palestinians have with Israeli citizens outside of positions of hostile authority (as employers, military officers, or settler militias), making the "worst of the worst" of the established the most visible perception of the occupied population.

Of course, Elias' original template does not fit perfectly into the Palestinian conflict. Several features of the conflict require different focus than Elias' original study.

First, the geographic and political scale of the Palestinian conflict is much greater than that of the small English village where Elias grounded his original work. Looking at this wider scale requires some

² We use the term Palestinians here to denote residents of the West Bank and Gaza. Certainly many more individuals would claim this label, such as those who took refuge in Jordan and other neighboring Arab countries and the diaspora community abroad following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war in which Israel won its independence. But it is those individuals within the territories actually involved with the protest and violence of the intifada that concern us here.

³ Interaction with other Palestinians is also inevitable, as most Palestinians live in dense urban areas or packed refugee camps. In fact, Gaza contends for the most densely populated region on earth (Smith 2007 p. 417).

rethinking of the concepts of praise- and blame-gossip, which initially referred to actual verbal gossip between tightly integrated people. As Sutton and Vertigans indicate, at the national and international level “ideologies and everyday gossip are interrelated, with political ideologies lending ‘official’ support to the valuations of established groups, while everyday gossip keeps political ideologies alive and pertinent” (Sutton and Vertigans 2005 p. 148). In this analysis we understand the term “gossip” in this broader sense that includes both institutionalized and member-to-member communication.

Second, while Elias emphasized how outsider groups could absorb stigmatization of the powerful established, we recognize that Palestinians have likely never thought themselves inferior to Israelis despite a wide power differential. Thus, this work will ignore Israeli charisma and focus instead on how Palestinian charisma evolved from quietism to activism and became mainstream. Central to this analysis is the rise of the Palestinian youth movement and the change in collective virtue it inspired. Recent work on established-outsider figurations by Hogenstijn et al. (2008) reminds us that mobilizing ambivalent groups can be a successful strategy to gain power⁴. As later analysis will reveal, the mechanisms of praise-gossip and blame-gossip within Palestinian groups were instrumental in provoking ambivalent groups to become activists.

Armed with an adapted Eliasian framework, we can now begin to analyze how functional democratization and charismatic virtue combined to inspire the widespread protests and violence of the first intifada.

Functional Democratization: Tensions Escalate as Palestine Unites

According to Elias, economic necessity often fosters a growth in interdependence between established and outsider groups. This process of functional democratization usually coincides with an escalation in overt conflict as the balance of power shifts toward outsiders (Elias 1976 p. xxxi). This is certainly the case with the first intifada, as the uprising was preceded by (and probably could not have happened without) the economic boom in the Palestinian territories following the 1967 Israeli occupation. The boom had two primary effects. First, it empowered marginalized Palestinian groups to rise from abject poverty and seek a political voice. Second, it fostered economic interdependence that brought many Palestinians into humiliating daily contact with Israeli employers. These shifts forged a unified Palestinian national consciousness and helped push the balance of power towards Palestinians. The increasingly oppressive and pervasive Israeli occupation further solidified this trend, which led to the violence of the intifada predicted by Eliasian theory.

Palestinian Empowerment and Unification

Crucially, the economic boom allowed many Palestinians to rise from abject poverty, which Elias notes is necessary to form the interdependencies that make a power struggle possible (Elias 1976 p. xxxiii).

⁴ Of course, Hogenstijn et al. (2008) refer to groups that are truly indifferent. The various Palestinian actors in this analysis certainly claim some stake in the conflict. Regardless, the notion that a group can change the strength of its identification or the source of its collective virtue remain central to Elias’ dynamic, diachronic interpretation of established-outsider figurations.

Before 1967, large segments of Palestinian society lacked basic resources like electricity and running water, and economic power distinctions between refugees and non-refugees or urban and rural residents stratified Palestinian society. However, as Neve Gordon documents, Israeli's attempt to normalize the occupied population in the years after 1967 led to an economic boom in the occupied territories that raised standards of living in almost all sectors⁵. In this time unemployment in Gaza and the West Bank fell to low single digits, and Israeli-instigated infrastructure changes brought electricity and running water to a majority of Palestinians (Gordon 2008 p. 66).

Improvements to Palestinian quality-of-life resulted mostly from Palestinians finding work in Israel. Israeli industries, especially construction, sought low-wage labor and found many Palestinians willing to work⁶, especially refugees in Gaza and rural residents of the West Bank. By 1983, more than a third of the Palestinian labor force crossed into Israel proper every day for work, and by 1987 this number was nearly 50% (Wasserstein 2002 p. 60, Gordon 2008 p. 152). According to Gordon, "The fact that Palestinians from different segments of society, and not just the lower classes, were integrated into the Israeli workforce, and that all the workers were treated with equal contempt, helped alter social stratification within Palestinian society" (Gordon 2008 p. 89). As Palestinian workers gained wages, they demanded a say in local politics and helped weaken traditional village leadership (Gordon 2008 p. 55). The net effect was an increased empowerment among Palestinians that helped erase perceived inter-class differences and heighten confrontation with the Israeli occupation.

Increasing Interdependence and Interaction Spark Daily Confrontation

The economic boom in the territories was catalyzed by a significant move toward *interdependence* between Israelis and Palestinians, as Israeli industry could no longer find Israeli workers willing to work at acceptably low wages and Palestinians desiring higher standards of living could not find quality employment within the territories. Elias predicts this *functional democratization* trend to escalate open conflict. When outsider groups are needed by the established and must interact on a regular basis, the internal conflict between wanting to exclude the other but needing to interact is most exaggerated and can lead to emotional confrontation (Elias 1976 p. xxi).

The daily interactions between Palestinians and their Israeli superiors were a primary fuse for the intifada. Laborers often reported being cheated of wages or suffering verbal or physical harassment by Israeli employers (Gordon 2008 p. 152). Palestinians crossing border checkpoints also suffered abuse. This happened frequently, especially to younger workers and students, and often occurred for no reason other than to "demonstrate who was in charge" (Tamimi 2008 p. 13). This created an atmosphere of fear and anxiety for many Palestinians which compounded with the humiliation of working on

⁵ Despite this dramatic rise in living conditions, we must be careful to recognize that while the situations of individuals were improving economically speaking, economic institutions in the territories suffered at this time. Both agriculture and industry declined as the labor force left for work in Israel and occupation policy favored Israeli rather than Palestinian goods (Gordon 2008).

⁶ The chance for a 10 to 100 percent increase in wages compared to the occupied territories enticed many to make the commute (Gordon 2008 p. 66).

construction projects for the occupying power⁷. It should not be understated that a great majority of those arrested after the outbreak of the intifada had held jobs in Israel and listed associated grievances as major factors in their involvement (Gordon 2008 p. 152).

Settler Encroachment and Harsh Reprisals Further Stoke Tensions

In addition to daily patterns of confrontation for the Palestinian workforce, the occupied population as a whole felt increasingly under attack throughout the years leading to the first intifada. The right-wing Likud party took control of the Israeli government in the late 1970s, and the years under its rule saw a distinctly more invasive and overt Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza. This sparked resistance whose common Israeli response was to target Palestinians aggressively and indiscriminately.

Before 1977, Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza were located away from population centers and had a slight rate of growth. However, after the regime change, the number of Israelis who lived in the settlements exploded from 5000 to 55000 by 1987 (Smith 2007 p. 413-415). Many new settlements were constructed⁸, and these were deliberately planned to encroach upon Arab villages⁹. Moreover, the Israeli government provided weapons to the settler population and tacitly endorsed the harassment of the local population. Documented acts of settler violence include vandalism, ambushes, and invasions of armed militias into Palestinian schools and refugee camps (Gordon 2008 p. 140-142).

This harassment inspired an increase in demonstrations as well as violence by Palestinians in the territories, especially by the young. Protests were met by aggressive Israeli retaliation. Arrest and detention¹⁰ were common Israeli responses, and could often include beating or torture (Smith 2007 p. 421). As Charles Smith reflects, the most influential factor in spreading Palestinian resistance from a movement of disaffected youth to a collective endeavor of the middle classes was the Israeli response that was equally aggressive toward the entire population. According to Smith, “you were beaten because you were a Palestinian, regardless of your status or what you happened to be doing at the time a demonstration began” (Smith 2007 p. 422). Even advocates of a two-state solution to the conflict found themselves arrested¹¹, as the Israeli authorities reacted with impunity to any criticism of its occupation.

⁷ Additional points of contention resulted from the recession and inflation that struck Israeli economy in the mid-1980s. When employers faced hard times, Palestinians were often first to be laid off (Gordon 62).

⁸ As more settlers poured into the territories, aggressive land acquisitions occurred to make space for the Israeli settlements. Palestinian land owners frequently saw military authorities fence off their land as Jewish property, with no legal recourse available. Using this practice and others, Israel expropriated 42% of Arab land in Gaza and similarly large portions of the West Bank (Smith 2007 p. 414).

⁹ Often hilltop locations were chosen so that settlements were continuous visible reminders to the Palestinians of Israeli authority and surveillance (Gordon 2008).

¹⁰ While detained, many Palestinians conducted key work for the resistance. Incarcerated Palestinian activists often used their prison experience to connect to others in the resistance and formulate strategies (Smith 2007 p. 416). Prison served both as an education system and a unification system, allowing activists to contact and coordinate with those from other regions towards more successful strategy.

¹¹ See Smith (2007 p. 422) for a detailed account of two Palestinian lawyers incarcerated after a presentation in Tel Aviv.

It should be clear now that functional democratization trends heightened a sense of collective identification among Palestinians, empowering marginalized groups while forcing daily confrontational interaction with Israeli employers and officials. Under further pressure from increasingly hostile Israeli settlements, many young Palestinians instigated protests and violence. In response, Israeli forces met Palestinians with collective, indiscriminate punishment that further unified the population. As an increasingly politically-motivated population in the territories faced this repression, young Palestinians in the territories became activists and their example forged a new group charisma for uniting this collective resistance.

Constructing New Charisma: The Rise of Heroism as Palestinian Virtue

Stephen Mennell, a noted disciple of Norbert Elias, contributes further to understanding functional democratization by examining how groups gaining power can refashion internal structures and group charisma. Significantly, during social upheaval, Mennell notes the possibility that “even the balance of power between children and adults has become noticeably less unequal” (Mennell 1994 p. 183). This shift in generational empowerment was highly visible in the Palestinian territories during the years leading up to the intifada, and in fact led to a dramatic redefinition of the key virtues of Palestinian group charisma as the older generation’s passive endurance was replaced by the heroic activism of the youth movements in the territories. As the resistance progressed, this new charisma spread to wider society through praise- and blame-gossip that consolidated Palestinian activism as a desirable virtue.

Rejecting the Old Quietism

In the midst of the turmoil of the 1980s, “a new generation of Arabs was emerging in the territories” (Smith 2007 p. 414). The older generation at the time, born under Egyptian or Jordanian rule before the Israeli occupation, faced the occupation with patient quietism. These Palestinians viewed the proper response to Israeli aggression to be endurance without aggressive reprisals. Most held out hope that either neighboring Arab states or Yasser Arafat’s PLO would eventually find a solution to the occupation (Smith 2007 p. 414). For many Palestinian youth born and raised under Israeli rule, however, the daily harassment and increasing presence of the occupation signaled that the time for patience was over. They witnessed the capitulation of neighboring Arab states¹² and questioned the efficacy of a PLO that looked increasingly weak¹³. For these youth, endurance and fortitude amounted to nothing more than submission and capitulation to the Israeli authority (Smith 2007 p. 414). Seeing no other viable options for salvation, these youth organized a resistance movement based on heroic activism that brought some limited results and, more importantly, a newfound sense of hope for the Palestinian people.

¹² For many, Anwar Sadat’s 1977 voluntary speech to the Israeli Knesset (parliament) and his corresponding peace treaty with Israel marked the final blow to the dream that Egypt might liberate Palestine (Tamimi 2008 p. 11).

¹³ The PLO in the mid-1980s had been banned from operating in the Palestinian territories and had been driven out of Lebanon by the Israeli military. It took up office across the Mediterranean at this time and appeared weaker than ever (Smith 2007 p. 407).

The Rise of the Youth Movement and its New Monopoly on Group Norms and Charisma

As increasing members of the younger generation sought power and encountered humiliation, they organized to provide a forum for issues of political, economic, and social concern. In the early 1980s, the youth of the Balata refugee camp in the West Bank founded the Shabiba youth movement that became instrumental in refashioning group charisma. Significantly, in addition to leading protests and organizing strikes, members of Shabiba also took on efforts to “preserve public and national morals” by curtailing drug dealing, prostitution, and similar issues in Balata (Collins 2004 p. 28). The youth thus not only inherited the mantle of the resistance but the power to enforce societal norms, a role scarcely imaginable decades before. The success of the youth movement’s activism turned the Balata camp into a “liberated zone”, where fierce resistance kept IDF forces away throughout the mid-1980s (Collins 2004 p. 28). Most interestingly, Collins describes how older residents of Balata took up the mantle of activist resistance when an IDF round-up of camp instigators caught the Shabiba off-guard in late 1987. As IDF troops cornered suspects in the schoolyard, local women assembled and began confronting the troops en masse. Inspired, handcuffed suspects began rising and pressing their chests into Israeli rifles in defiance. Frightened by this collective uprising, the Israeli command recalled the troops (Collins 2004 p. 29). This victory provides a dramatic example of how the youthful defiant charisma became adopted successfully and willingly by the wider Palestinian society during confrontation with Israeli forces.

Praise-gossip Spreads the Fantasy-Laden Virtue of Heroic Resistance

As Elias might have predicted, this transformation of charisma was accompanied by an increase in Palestinian praise-gossip. Narratives among Palestinians began to glorify the youth as harbingers of national salvation and imbued them with heroic, larger-than-life qualities (Collins 2004 p. 40). Local legends circulating at the time demonstrate how praise-gossip can harness the illusory “best of the best” of the Palestinian group charisma to mobilize members. On November 25, 1987 a young Palestinian PFLP commando used a hang-glider to carry out a suicide operation on an Israeli camp that left six IDF soldiers dead. Collins describes how this “story of the flying boy” spread through Palestinian schools as a dramatic example of youthful courage and ingenuity overcoming tremendous obstacles. Significantly, in reality the mission was not a solitary operation but instead one carried out alongside an older, less-successful commando. However, the legend that schoolchildren told emphasized the solitary glory of against-all-odds youthful heroism (Collins 2004 p. 42). Here we can see how praise-gossip naturally tends to selectively mix reality and fantasy to promote the key virtue of the resistance, as Elias undoubtedly would observe.

Blame-gossip Stigmatizes Quietists and Compels Ambivalent to Resist

In addition to praise-gossip, blame-gossip also helped inspire the intifada, stigmatizing the older charismatic value of passive endurance and mobilizing ambivalent members toward resistance. This was especially valuable in motivating Islamists into militant action against Israel. As Tamimi (2008) chronicles, through the early 1980s the Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood), the largest and most popular Islamic group in Palestine, had shunned direct military and political resistance. However, at this time many youth began to question this passive stance as the occupation grew more oppressive. Militant

leftists and secularists frequently taunted Ikhwan students for their inaction, and this stigma stuck¹⁴ (Tamimi 2008 p. 48). Many young Ikhwan members internalized this blame-gossip, recast the Islamic struggle for justice as compatible with the new heroic charisma, and began advocating open resistance. A crucial turning point came as the Islamic faction at Birzeit University organized a protest rally in 1986. At the rally, demonstrators clashed with IDF troops, leaving 22 casualties and 2 dead. According to Tamimi, “at last, the Islamic movement had martyrs to take pride in and to boast about” (Tamimi 2008 p. 49). For the young Islamists in this case, activist charisma held a monopoly over the emotional reward that comes from being Palestinian. Blame-gossip thus played a key role in forcing ambivalent members of Palestinian society to feel shameful for old belief systems, internalize the new values of the Palestinian resistance, and use this charisma to actively confront the occupation.

Conclusions: Elias and Palestinian Charisma Today

The 1987 intifada provides a fascinating example of a multi-layered power struggle between established and outsider groups. A close examination of the trends leading to the widespread Palestinian protest and violence finds much to resonate with Norbert Elias’ theory. We observe functional democratization in the Israeli-inspired economic boom in the territories following 1967, which empowered previously marginalized Palestinian groups and bound them into interdependent economic relationships with Israeli employers. Daily employment interactions often turned hostile and, alongside increasingly oppressive settlement activity in the occupied territories, unified the occupied population in resistance and ignited widespread youth protest and violence in the territories. Studying this rise of youth resistance more closely, we see that Elias’ notion of group charisma helps explain the transition from quietism to activism in Palestinian society. A new heroic charisma motivated ambivalent groups to join the conflict through Eliasian mechanisms of praise-gossip and blame-gossip. As Elias would likely conclude, the role of human group dynamics in inciting the intifada should not be understated.

But what does this analysis have to say about the twenty years of conflict following the intifada? While the widespread unity among Palestinians in 1987 has since wavered and largely disappeared¹⁵, the uprising’s heroic charisma remains a prominent theme in Palestinian collective identity. In contrast to its youthful origins in the first intifada, however, this charisma now spreads from the old to the young through both social institutions and personal experience.

¹⁴ Tamimi vividly highlights how many Ikhwan students felt ashamed for running from the street-fighting of the militants and taking the quickest route home, “hiding indoors like the harem” (Tamimi 2008 p. 48). Their self-reported association with the harem, probably one of the lowest possible social associations in Arab culture, provides important evidence of how much social stigmatization was at work here.

¹⁵ The Oslo agreements in 1993 and 1995 granted a limited form of self-rule to Palestinians in parts of the West Bank and Gaza. However, the goals of the new Palestinian Authority often directly conflicted with groups continuing armed resistance to the occupation, especially when Israel would withhold vital tax revenues during periods of violence. Throughout the 1990s, the 150,000 Palestinians employed by the PA thus had a direct interest in opposing militant resistance (Gordon 2008 p. 186). A similar clash continues today between PA president Mahmoud Abbas and the democratically-elected Hamas leadership over whether to accept limited peace offers or strive for full sovereignty.

As Vertigans (2008) catalogs, today's Palestinian children are exposed to the heroism of resistance and martyrdom through many outlets, including family, peers, classroom lessons, and media. Youth martyrdom, either an unintentional death during confrontation or a deliberate suicide operation, receives celebration in many segments of Palestinian society. Funerals for martyrs often take a partially celebratory tone to maintain the sense of victory associated with continued resistance. Martyrs become iconic symbols extolled in graffiti, posters, and pocket-sized cards (Vertigans 2008). Burdman (2003) describes how some Palestinian television commercials targeting a child audience glorify resistance and emphasize heroic agency¹⁶. These forms of cultural praise-gossip provide continual reminders of the value of the resistance and allow militants to simultaneously mobilize children to action and stigmatize deviation from the group cause.

Amidst these reports, however, we must not be convinced that this charisma is forced upon the youth of Palestine through brainwashing. Children are neither totally helpless nor totally passive in developing interpretations of the occupation and the resistance. As Vertigans (2008) explains, the legitimization of heroism and violence is a complex process that requires the individual, even the child, to interpret messages within the context of politics, history, and personal experience. Suffering humiliation at Israeli roadblocks or security walls, feeling trapped in poverty and unemployment, and watching fellow group members fall victim to Israeli military action doubtlessly can be more important in legitimizing violent resistance than television commercials. What the reports confirm, however, is that against-all-odds heroism remains a primary virtue of the Palestinian resistance charisma. Attempts to understand Palestinian violence will likely fail without a detailed knowledge of the underlying human mechanisms. While the future of the conflict remains unclear, the work of Norbert Elias can provide crucial insight to light the path ahead.

¹⁶ In several commercials Burdman studied, the agency of the child is a prominent message. One commercial features crowds of Palestinian children crying "We must all get together, we the children, to expel the enemy Israel" (Burdman 2003). The heroic character of youthful resistance is also emphasized. The legend of child martyr Muhammad al-Dura is frequently portrayed in ways that make his death look purposeful and meaningful rather than tragic and unexpected. One commercial shows al-Dura in heaven encouraging Palestinians to confront the occupation "with no fear, with no tears" and "follow me" to martyrdom. This fantasy-laden reinterpretation highlights those aspects of the resistance charisma – purposeful action and heroic possibility, especially of the young – that most effectively bind individuals to the cause and ensure its success.

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