Our paper attempts to deal with these questions through an examination of the relationships between Palestinians on either side of the Green Line since 1967. First, we relate to the contact and images that developed right after the Israeli occupation, which brought about a renewal of the encounter between the two groups after 19 years of separation. Then we address the increasing national identification after ‘Land Day’ in 1976. Special emphasis is placed on the impact of three main landmarks in the Palestinian national movement and the Israel–Palestinian conflict: the first intifada (1978–92); the peace process (since 1993); and the present el-Aqsa intifada since October 2000. We conclude with a discussion of the dynamics of the relationship between the ‘external’ Israel–Palestinian conflict and the internal conflicts within Israeli society.

Our analysis shows that the relationships that developed between the Palestinians in Israel and the territories are complex and contain not a little contradiction. Despite the common national and cultural attachment of the two groups, there are clear differences in social and political milieu, forms

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of identification and future orientation. However, since the events of October 2000, the existence and meaning of the ‘Green Line’ differentiating between the two groups have been considerably challenged. However, our analysis shows that the political meaning of the Green Line goes beyond the outcome of the orientation of the Palestinians in Israel and the nature of their relationships with their brethren in the territories. These latter issues are also affected by developments in the Israel–Palestinian conflict, on the one hand, and by the political culture of Israel, on the other. In this sense, we witness two contradictory trends occurring at one and the same time: while the Jewish majority and its leadership are becoming increasingly open towards a territorial compromise regarding the ‘external’ Israel–Palestinian conflict, they are pushing towards the intensification of the ethno-national, Jewish-Zionist character of Israel at the expense of its civil-democratic character. Whereas the first trend strengthens the Green Line, the second trend, paradoxically, leads to its weakening and, in turn, to a blurring of the differences in the orientations of the Palestinians on both sides of this line.

BEGINNING OF THE ENCOUNTER WITH PALESTINIANS IN THE TERRITORIES: CONFUSION AND STEREOTYPES

In 1967, following the defeat of Arab armies and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel, the Palestinians in these territories came into contact with Israeli Palestinians after 20 years of separation and a lack of communication. During that period, the Palestinians in Israel had gone through an accelerated process of social, economic and political changes. Be they voluntary or imposed changes, they exposed the Arab population in Israel to new patterns of life economically, socially and politically. They also faced this population with a new value system, which was apprehended in part as a threat to the traditional value system. The exposure of the Arabs in Israel to their brethren in the territories added to this difficulty in that the encounter between the two groups produced new dilemmas and influences.

The prevailing conditions during the initial encounter between the two groups only strengthened their reciprocal negative images. The first Israeli Arabs with whom the Arabs of the territories came into contact were Druze, Bedouin and Circasian soldiers, who spoke Arabic and so served as intermediaries between the local population – which was in shock – and the Israeli administration.

For their part, the Palestinians in Israel passed quickly from holding a positive image of the territory Palestinians to a negative one. The very defeat suffered by the Arab armies and the lightning conquest of the territories by Israeli forces engendered a deep disappointment among Israeli Palestinians. Instead of the victorious Arab coming to the aid of his
brother in Israel, they met a defeated, bewildered Arab who was without salvation and was expecting them to help him.  

The encounter between Palestinian labourers from both sides of the Green Line was not one between equals. The first territory Palestinians with whom Israeli Palestinians came into contact were labourers of low socio-economic background and education. The labourer from the territories was inferior, a stranger to Israeli society, and apparently also somewhat of a stranger to modern life. A short period after the war, however, thousands of labourers from the territories started to go to work in Israel as temporary wage labourers. In 1986 (before the start of the first intifada), such labourers numbered some 90,000 and constituted 40% of the labour force in the territories.

The labourers from the territories suddenly offered competition to the Israeli Arab labourers, which had the effect of lowering wages and affecting the latter’s competitive ability. Indirectly, though, this development also contributed to pushing the Israeli Arab worker upward on the social ladder. Consequently, some Israeli Arabs became job foremen and subcontractors or held other administrative position at various construction sites.

**TRANSITION TO A POSITIVE IMAGE AND NATIONALIST IDENTIFICATION, 1976–87**

The negative stereotypes, which were based on a certain type of encounter and which resulted from the superficial knowledge that each group had of the other or from a lack of knowledge, weakened in the course of time; a large proportion of these stereotypes gave way to more positive opinions and to mutual identification. This trend started in the 1970s, but gained momentum after 30 March 1976 – ‘Land Day’: a general strike of the Arab population in protest against land expropriation. It was also an expression of the strengthening of nationalist feeling. In the course of clashes with Israeli security forces, six Arabs were killed, and they became symbols of an ongoing struggle for and the attachment to the land.

The Palestinians in the territories were favourably surprised by the stand of the Israeli Arabs. It was proof that the latter were not entirely a ‘hopeless case’. The identification of the PLO with the events of Land Day also spurred Palestinians in the territories to identify with Israeli Palestinians. The first anniversary of Land Day became a national holiday, marked by Palestinians in various localities both within and outside Israel. This was the first time that Israeli Arabs had exported an ideology and not just served as consumers of ideological influences imported from the Arab world or from the Palestinian leadership.

The municipal elections that were conducted in the West Bank in 1976 brought in mayors who were close to the PLO and who represented a new
stratum of intellectuals and those with a strong national orientation. Among the important mayors elected: Basam al-Shakaa in Nablus, Karim Khalaf in Ramallah, Ibrahim Attaweel in El-Bireh, Hilmi Hanun in Tulkarem, Fahid Al-Kuasami in Hebron and Muhammad Milhim in Halhoul. These leaders, especially al-Shakaa and Khalaf, began to form close relationships with part of the Israeli Palestinian leadership, particularly with the leaders of the Israel Communist Party. In the elections to the 9th Knesset, held in 1977, Palestinian leaders in the West Bank openly called for the Arab population of Israel to support the Democratic Front, at whose centre stood the Communist Party.

Following attempts on the lives of the mayors of Nablus, Ramallah and El-Bireh in June 1980, the National Committee of Chairmen of Arab Local Authorities in Israel held a special meeting to identify with those Palestinian leaders. The committee sent a telegram of protest to the Israeli Prime Minister and made these decisions:

A. to issue a bulletin to the public in which the committee condemned the ‘sinful criminal deed and the condition of occupation that fuels such actions’;

B. to call upon the members and heads of Arab local authorities to hold a one-day protest strike (which was conducted on 5 July 1980); in addition, to organize a protest assembly at the cultural centre in Nazareth.

The PLO’s rising star following Arafat’s appearance at the United Nations in 1974 and the international recognition that this organization gained, as well as the increased exposure to the Palestinian population in the territories, brought about an intensification of the process of Palestinization among Israeli Arabs. The ‘Palestinian’ component, or ‘Palestinian Arab’, became central to their national identity. In the course of time, events took place amongst the Palestinians in the Arab world that increased these feelings of identification. The central event was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the subsequent massacre by Christian Lebanese troops allied with Israel in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. A one-day protest strike was called for 22 September 1982. In Nazareth, a ‘Sabra and Shatila Fund’ was set up at the initiative of the municipality to aid Palestinians in Lebanon. This model was expanded to different Arab localities in Israel.

The start of the 1980s also witnessed the beginnings of a new pattern of encounter, that between Palestinian elites from each side of the Green Line: political leaders, businessmen, religious leaders and intellectuals. The phenomenon of Arab lecturers from Israel employed at the different West Bank universities expanded. Over time, they attained respected positions, such as department chairman and dean of faculties; one Israeli Arab even.
became acting president of the University of Najah (1982–84). This trend grew in consequence of the rise in the number of Arab university graduates with advanced degrees and the lack of their absorption into institutions of higher education in Israel.

The Islamic revival constituted perhaps one of the central developments that crystallized among the Arab population in Israel, with not a little influence from Palestinians in the territories. The crushing defeat of the Arab armies in the June 1967 war led to a retreat from secular Arab nationalism to a strengthening of pan-Islamist ideology.

Among the Palestinians in the territories, a pan-Islamic leadership began to crystallize, seeing in the return to Islam a means of changing their situation and freeing themselves from the Israeli occupation. The ‘Muslim Brothers’ began to set up Muslim and voluntary associations and religious schools in the large cities: Nablus, Jenin, Kalkilia and Gaza. In 1974, the Association of Young Moslems, ‘Ashabab Al-Muslim’, was founded in Jerusalem, and branches were later established in various localities in the territories. The success of the Iranian revolution in 1979 under the leadership of the Ayatolla Khumeini strengthened the belief in the possibility of engendering a similar revolution that would be the salvation of the ‘Islamic nation’. This success imparted added impetus to the return-to-Islam phenomenon in the territories, too, becoming prominent among the youth and intelligentsia of the West Bank. The phenomenon was manifested in the ascendant star of the Brotherhood at the universities of Hebron, Al-Najah in Nablus and the Islamic University of Gaza.

Despite the fact that the Islamic revival in Israel was still relatively restricted to the territories, there was no escaping its power. It was especially strong in the villages of the Little Triangle, which are homogeneously Muslim and therefore most open to influences passing through the territories, with which it is in geographical contiguity. Prior to 1967, there was a nearly complete socio-cultural separation between Israeli Arabs and the Arab world. There were no opportunities to obtain information on the Islamic religion from approved sources, both because of the absence of a local religious leadership and because of the lack of written sources. After 1967, Islamic newspapers and religious books started to stream into the Arab settlements in Israel via the territories. Furthermore, various preachers began expounding in the mosques, calling on the faithful ‘to take hold of the rope of God – the Koran – and keep the religious commandments and return to the roots of Islam’. Among the first religious leaders to initiate such activity was the Mufti of Jerusalem, Saad El-Din al-Alami, who went to Beersheba and led a group of Bedouin worshippers in the city’s ancient mosque, which had been turned into a museum. The Muslim Brothers’ press and informational material, which had come to the territories from Egypt, now found its way across the Green Line. Cassettes of famous Egyptian preachers became much sought-after items. The
Egyptian Muslim press also gained wide distribution among those, particularly the intellectuals in this group, who were returning to the bosom of the religion.\textsuperscript{18}

The Islamic universities that had been established on the West Bank served as a source for training a younger generation of Islamic leaders within the Green Line. These saw their principal task as fulfilling the mission of God and the prophet Muhammad in spreading the principles of the Islamic religion and in ‘building the family of Islam’.\textsuperscript{19} Perhaps the most prominent of these new leaders is Sheikh Abdullah Nemir Darwish of Kafr Kassem, who is the leader of the southern branch of the Islamic movement in Israel. A graduate of the Islamic seminary in Nablus, in the early 1970s Darwish published a pamphlet calling on the Muslim citizens of Israel to return to their roots.\textsuperscript{20} Skeikh Rai’d Salah, the leader of the northern branch of the Islamic movement, also received his religious education in an Islamic college on the West Bank.

In 1978, the Arab population of Israel was given the opportunity for the first time to make the pilgrimage (\textit{hajj}) to Mecca, their journey made possible by Jordan’s concessions in allowing Israeli Muslims to cross the border into the kingdom in order to obtain transport to Saudi Arabia. This step, too, contributed to the Islamic awakening among Israeli Muslims and to their feeling of belonging to the Islamic nation. It also exposed the Palestinians in Israel to Muslims from all over the world, among them Iranian revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{21}

The question remains, did the favourable change in the mutual image of the two groups, Israeli and territory Palestinian Arabs, the contact between their elites and the strengthening of ties at the nationalist-ideological level lead to the creation of intensive social ties between them?

An examination of the situation in different areas shows that a considerable social distance still exists between Palestinians on either side of the Green Line. Ongoing social relations between the two groups is still a marginal phenomenon. The area of marriage exemplifies this point. The number of marriages between the two populations is still insignificant. Statistics derived from an initial investigation show that existing marriages are mostly uni-directional – the man from the Israeli side of the Green Line and the woman from the territories. The men are generally from a low socio-economic background; some are much older in age than their wives, widowers or divorced, or want to take an additional wife. There are isolated cases of marriages between educated Arabs from Israel with women from the West Bank and marriages between relatives of the two groups. Also, since the 1980s, we have witnessed an increasing, though still limited, phenomenon of Palestinian men from the territories who marry Arab women from within the Green Line in order to obtain an Israeli identity card.
The social distance between the two groups also manifests itself in the paucity of reciprocal visits or joint social gatherings. In a representative survey of the adult Palestinian population in Israel conducted in 1985, Smooha found only 9% who said they visited the West Bank or Gaza Strip once a month or more; some 30% cited several such visits a year, and 60% said they had never paid a social visit beyond the Green Line. The percentage of Israeli Palestinians who said that territory Palestinians constituted for them a reference group in the area of socio-economic achievement was miniscule (8.9%). In contrast, 60.7% of the Israeli Arabs held Israeli Jews to be their central comparison group, despite the fact that some 60% of the respondents admitted that they felt closer to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip than to Israeli Jews.

The scarcity of intensive social relations between Palestinians on either side of the Green Line may be explained in a number of ways. The economic change that took place among the Arabs in Israel since the establishment of the State of Israel brought about a one-sided dependence of the Arab population on the dominant Jewish centre. A similar process has occurred with the economy of the territories. During this period, however, no economic dependency took place between the two Palestinian populations. On the contrary, in consequence of the unilateral dependency of both groups on the Jewish economy and the over-concentration of their wage-labour force in non-productive employment sectors (services, construction), competition was created that affected salary levels and the bargaining ability of each side. The fact that labourers from the territories, unlike those from Israel, are not members of the Histadrut (General Federation of Labourers in Israel) and so do not gain the same trade union protection further hurts their wages and work conditions. Moreover, this has also obviated the formation of a common struggle in this area.

The legal standing and political future of the two groups differ. Israeli Palestinians are citizens of the state. In theory, the rights of the Arab population of Israel are guaranteed by Knesset legislation, the Declaration of Independence and court decisions; these include the right to vote, freedom of religion and conscience, and other civil rights. Nevertheless, the Arabs in Israel are discriminated against, whether overtly or covertly, and a wide gap exists between them and the Jewish majority (in favour of the latter) in every conceivable field.

In the territories, the situation is completely different. Since the Israeli occupation in 1967, territory affairs have been placed in the hands of the military government, which enjoys unrestricted power. Until the Oslo agreements in 1993, this administration exerted its legal and administrative authority as a permanent sovereign authority, not as a temporary occupying force, such as is demanded by international law. Over time and after a widening of Jewish settlement in the territories, a dual system of law was institutionalized, one for Palestinian residents of the territories and
one for the Jewish settlers. Legislation that came into force after the start of
the ‘civil administration’ of the territories was insufficient to change the
existing situation and was not intended to grant citizenship status to
territory Palestinians.

The constraints imposed on the reality, therefore, do not permit the
setting up of joint political frameworks for Palestinians on either side of the
Green Line. It is doubtful whether territory Palestinians would be happy
with the establishment of such frameworks, because since 1967 they have
been living in a period of ‘waiting and expectation’ for the end of the Israeli
occupation and for an overall solution of the Palestinian problem. Thus,
existing cooperative frameworks are temporary, not formal, and they tend
to be manifested in joint conferences of intellectuals in various areas. It
should be noted, though, that a decision in principle was made in 1987 by
the Palestinian artists’ association, based in the territories, to accept Israeli
Palestinians as members, too. This decision constitutes precedence in the
history of various associations in the territories, which up to then had no
members from within the Green Line among their ranks. The artists’
decision was taken after stormy debate, in which not a small number of the
membership expressed opposition and demanded that Palestinian artists in
Israel cancel their membership in the parallel Israeli association as a
condition of being accepted into the Palestinian association.

The orientation for the future of Palestinians in Israel differs from that
of territory Palestinians. The overwhelming majority of the Arabs in Israel
support as a solution to the Palestinian problem the establishment of a
Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel. They are not, though,
prepared to move there to live if and when such a state should be founded.
They see the State of Israel as their homeland, have tied their future to it
and are struggling for equal civil rights within it.

The period of ‘waiting and expectation’ for Palestinians in Israel ended,
paradoxically, the moment this period began among the territory
Palestinians. The June 1967 war, as mentioned, brought about far-
reaching changes both in the orientation and in the identification pattern of
Palestinian Israelis. In time, they developed ‘a strategy of adjustment’,
which manifested itself in a strengthening of biculturalism and
bilingualism and the development of a set of expectations for the present
and the future, based on a desire to achieve equality with the Jewish
population in all areas. As a result, starting in the 1970s, various
countrywide organizations began to be formed that emphasized civil rights
and the struggle to obtain them, alongside the national orientation. The
main such bodies were these: National Committee of Heads of Arab Local
Authorities, established in 1974; National Committee of Arab Students, set
up in 1975; and the Committee for Defence of Arab Lands, also established
in 1975. In the 1980s, national public committees started to appear that
focused on specific civil subjects: Follow-Up Committee for Arab
Educational Affairs, set up in 1984; Committee for Health Affairs, established in 1986; Committee for Welfare Affairs, in 1987. In 1987, the Arabs in Israel established the most central extra-parliamentary organization: the Supreme Follow-up Committee of the Arab Population, which includes all the elected Arab leadership in Israel across the political spectrum.

The Palestinians in the territories, by contrast, developed over these 20 years a ‘strategy for survival’, not least through a struggle against Israeli authorities. Knowledge of the Hebrew language, contact with Israeli society, economic and commercial ties with Israel and still other elements were, and remain, principally for the purpose of existence; they do not indicate the development of any long-term adjustment strategy. Solutions for the future of the territories, as presented by the various political streams, are based first and foremost on an end to the Israeli occupation. All along, moreover, the Palestinian leadership in the territories has never raised any demands for equality in the framework of the State of Israel or to become citizens of this country. Even the demand for an improvement in the condition of their lives and in their economic situation does not now top the list of interests of the Palestinians in the territories.


On 9 December 1987, a violent incident broke out in the Jabaliah refugee camp, located in the Gaza Strip. During the clash between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian demonstrators, one of the latter was killed and ten were injured. This incident marked the beginning of the rebellion in the occupied territories that later became known as the ‘intifada’. The intifada quickly spread, encompassing the whole of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The Israeli Palestinian population was at first confused, its leadership simply condemning the ‘strong arm’ policy being administered by the Israeli military against the Palestinian population in the territories. There arose criticism of the passive reaction of the leadership, however, and calls were heard for more active identification with territory Palestinians. In this atmosphere, the Supreme Follow-Up Committee convened in Shefar-‘Am, and the decision was taken to hold a general strike to express sympathy for the struggle of their brethren in the territories. The organizers called the strike, on 23 December 1987, which was to include the entire Israeli Palestinian population, by the name of ‘Peace Day’ and intended it as a quiet action, legally sanctioned. Nevertheless, a number of violent incidents did occur, the worst of them being the closing of the Wadi Ara road (which runs from Hadera to Afula) for several hours by demonstrators from Um el-Fahm. There were also clashes between demonstrators and police forces in Jaffa, Lod and Nazareth.
The response of the Israeli political system was one of ‘shock and surprise’. Many leaders, among them the president, the prime minister and the minister of defence, issued severe warnings to the Israeli Arab population, crying out against a return to the tragedy of 1948. The leaders of the large Zionist parties were united in the opinion that Israeli Arabs had allied themselves with the Palestinians in the territories and thereby erased the Green Line. Former chief of staff Motta Gur, then a Labour Party Member of Knesset, was quoted as saying: ‘If the citizens of the State who are subject to its laws think that Jaffa and Lod and Wadi Ara and Nazareth also have to be a part of a Palestinian state, what purpose is there in discussing compromises and concessions in Nablus and Hebron?’

The Israeli defence minister cautioned Israeli Arabs: ‘Do not join the intifada’. Officials were often quoted as stating that ‘there are signs that the intifada is creeping across the Green Line’ or that the Arabs in Israel had adopted intifada methods for advancing their status. Such statements were more frequently reported than declarations by some officials that despite the Arab citizens’ identification with the intifada, they have not participated in it.

A large part of the mainstream press in Israel subsequently reported that the intifada had already crossed, or was about to cross, the Green Line. Typical headlines, even for isolated violent incidents, took these forms: ‘The Intifada Is Already Here’, ‘The Intifada Is Creeping Across the Green Line’, ‘Intifada in Tel Aviv’, ‘Intifada in Haifa’, ‘Nazareth like Gaza’.

After the ‘Peace Day’ strike, the Supreme Follow-Up Committee decided on a number of other steps to support the uprising in the territories. These actions included food caravans, financial contributions, delegations sent to cities and refugee camps in the territories to express identification with the cause and various assemblies in Arab settlements across the country. Israeli Arabs also constituted an active factor in the protest movements – Yesh Gvul (Enough), Kav Adom (Red Line), Hashana Ha-21 (The 21st Year) and various student organizations in the universities – that sprang up among the Jewish population in opposition to the occupation and in favour of speeding up the peace process.

These acts of identification on the part of Israeli Palestinian were, at the outset, favourably received and appreciated by the territory Palestinians. The active stance of Israeli Arabs was considered particularly striking in light of the delay in response and the passivity of the Arab and Muslim world. These acts of identification with the intifada earned the Palestinian population in Israel praise, too, from Palestinian radio stations in various Arab countries, especially the new station ‘Al-Quds’, which broadcast from Syria and was identified with the radical wing of the PLO.

The identification of the Palestinians in Israel with the intifada was also reflected in reports in the Arab press within the Green Line.
language newspapers covered events in the territories in column after column, highlighting the heroism of the intifada. The government shut down the paper *El-Ittihad*, effectively the organ of the Israel Communist Party, for a week in March 1988 on the charge that it was publishing inciteful material against Israel in regard to the uprising in the territories.46

The Green Line, which had become blurred at the start of the intifada, soon became more obvious, however, as the uprising continued. The difference in status and in orientation to the future between Palestinians in the territories and Palestinians in Israel was conspicuous. The Israeli Arab leadership across the whole political spectrum emphasized this difference despite the leaders’ dedicated support of the struggle of the Palestinian people. Moreover, in acts of identification that were undertaken by Israeli Arabs, the Israeli citizen component stood out alongside the national component. The leaders of the Israeli Communist Party reiterated at various opportunities that the Israeli Palestinian protest against Israel’s occupation of the territories stemmed both from their being part of the Palestinian people and also from their being citizens of the State of Israel who feared for its democratic character and were struggling for equal rights within it.

In the main demonstrations organized by the Supreme Follow-Up Committee or by the Communist Party, discussion was abandoned between the Communists and the ‘Abnna El-Balad’ (Sons of the Village-Land) on the slogans to be aired and on the unfurling of the Palestinian flag. The former adopted a strategy of struggle within the framework of the law and on many occasions served as a restraining factor on the latter. The editor of *El-Ittihad* stated in a central article:

> The essence of our concern today and for the whole fateful period is opposition to any way and any slogan that contradicts the clear aim of the uprising: withdrawal of the occupation and the turning of the Green Line into the final borders of Israel and the establishment of the Palestinian state alongside Israel.47

The Progressive List for Peace (PLP), at that time the second strongest political body amongst Israeli Arabs, took a position similar to that of the Communist Party. In an editorial in the newspaper *El-Watan*, one PLP leader wrote:

> As citizens of the State of Israel we have no right to harm the legal or governmental authorities. Therefore, we have undertaken that our struggle will be a public political struggle in everything pertaining to identifying with our brothers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. We view the use of violence within the state, no matter the target at which it is directed, as contrary to the law, and no use of violence will be made by anyone from the PLP. At the same time, the use of violence in the
occupied territories is a legitimate right for our brothers there and is backed by international charter.\textsuperscript{48}

The then-leader of the Islamic Movement in Israel, Abdalla Nemir Darwish, also underscored the two components in the identity of the Israeli Palestinian – the national element alongside the civil, in addition, of course, to the Islamic religious component. The political solution, as he saw it, called for two states for the two peoples – Israel and Palestine. Even if a Palestinian state were to be established, in Sheikh Darwish’s opinion, Israeli Arabs would not go there to live. They would continue to reside in the State of Israel, and they would struggle for equal rights within it.\textsuperscript{49} The chairman of the National Council of Heads of Local Arab Authorities also spoke of the line separating Palestinians on each side of the Green Line and the need to keep within the law in acts of identifying with the intifada.\textsuperscript{50}

The aforementioned trend among Israeli Palestinians manifested itself in the Land Day strike of 30 March 1988. The Supreme Follow-Up Committee of the Arabs in Israel announced a general strike under the banner ‘Land Day, Peace and Equality’. The message conveyed by the strike emphasized the two elements, the national and the civil, and therefore also a continuation of the different situation that then prevailed in Israel and in the territories. Quiet was preserved in the Arab villages in Israel, and the four central gatherings that were organized went off without any incident. The local leadership in every settlement took a key role in maintaining law and order and greatly contributed to the atmosphere of calm.\textsuperscript{51}

The striking difference in the way in which Land Day was marked on each side of the Green Line again raised many questions about the extent and form of loyalty of Israeli Arabs to the Palestinian interest. The quiet strike was contrary to the expectations both of the Israeli public and of the Palestinians in the territories. The impression gained from the events that had taken place on Peace Day (1987) was that the Green Line had been erased and that the two groups of Palestinians had joined together in their expectations for the future and for the strategy of the struggle they wanted to conduct. The behaviour of the Israeli Palestinian population on this Land Day (1988) showed that these evaluations were not well based and that the Green Line still stood, despite the national and citizenship dilemmas facing the Palestinians in Israel.

THE IMPACT OF THE PEACE PROCESS

One of the main points of consensus among the Palestinian citizens in Israel, one that reflected the simultaneous existence of the national and citizenship components in their identity, has to do with the resolution of the Israel–Palestinian conflict based on the two-state solution: the
establishment of a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel. This stand stems from the fact that the Palestinians in Israel believe that all the parties involved, including the Arabs in Israel, would benefit from the peace process. A poll that had been conducted on the eve of the Israel–Palestinian Oslo agreement showed that the Arab population in Israel had very high, positive expectations of a peace agreement that included the establishment of a Palestinian state.\(^{52}\)

This conclusion even found support in the Israeli academic community. For example, Smooha argued that the peace process was expected to considerably improve the status of the Palestinians in Israel, since peace would widen the ‘common culture’ between Jews and Arabs, legitimize the struggle of the Arabs for citizenship equality and put an end to the status of the Arab citizens as a ‘hostile minority’.\(^{53}\) On the other hand, peace would also improve the status of Israeli Palestinians within the Palestinian national movement and enable them to compete successfully for ‘mediating posts’ between Israel and the Arab world in the fields of economics, diplomacy, tourism and the like.\(^{54}\)

Despite the common misconception, however, the peace process has not improved the status of the Arabs in Israel and has not significantly altered the ethno-national culture of the Jewish majority.\(^{55}\) What is most conspicuous to date is precisely the opposite: the struggle by the Jewish majority on behalf of the Jewish-Zionist identity of the state has been reinforced.

The main motivation for peace on the Israeli side is the preservation of the Jewish-Zionist character of the state and the prevention of its conversion into a bi-national state. This argument, which implies the need for separation between the Palestinians and the Israelis, has been voiced by Jewish leaders of both the Zionist right and the Zionist left. Thus, the Israeli left’s lobbying on behalf of peace has been divorced of any social-citizenship content. Moreover, peace is not perceived as a condition for the construction of a civil society in Israel, but as the only means to achieve security – for the Jewish population – and maintain the Jewish character of Israel. One may conjecture that even as the Jewish majority becomes more open to a compromise at the regional level, it is becoming more closed toward compromises at the civil level, especially when it comes to the ethnocratic nature of Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state.\(^{56}\)

The Palestinian national movement, as well, has overlooked issues relating to the Palestinian population in Israel. On the one hand, the PLO’s acceptance of the principle of ‘two states for two peoples’ means, for most Israelis, acceptance of the principle of a Palestinian state alongside a Jewish state. The Palestinian leadership, however, accepts this principle without concern for the status of the Palestinian citizens of Israel. As a matter of fact, the Oslo accords made no mention of the Palestinians in Israel. When the refugee issue was raised, the Palestinian ‘internal refugees’ in Israel
were overlooked. The message for the Palestinian population of Israel has been that they are not on the agenda of the Palestinian national movement; their problems are their own and should be solved within the Israeli context. Needless to say, this conclusion perfectly fits the Israeli point of view.

In this sense, it is safe to argue that the Oslo process reinforced the status of the Palestinians in Israel as a ‘double periphery’: being placed at one and the same time at the margins of Israeli society and at the margins of the Palestinian National Movement. This is probably the main reason for placing citizenship issues at the centre of the struggle of the Arab population in Israel since the Oslo agreements. Therefore, even though both national and citizenship issues are important for the Arabs in Israel, it is the latter that increasingly preoccupies them. Citizenship issues are directly connected to their daily life, and they see their future as linked to the State of Israel, even after the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Amir Makhoul, the director of the Union for Arab NGOs in Israel, described this situation well:

As negotiations on permanent settlement between the Palestinians and Israel proceeded, the Arabs in Israel felt more despair, and therefore the feeling that they have to take their fate in their own hands just intensified. When the state of Israel does not care about them, on the one hand, and the Palestinian Authority neglects them, on the other, they are the only people who can take care of themselves.

The strong desire of the part of the Palestinians in Israel to achieve legitimacy and be accepted as full members of Israeli society is being manifested even while, paradoxically, the Jewish majority is becoming increasingly closed towards the acceptance of Arabs on an equal footing. Consequently, whenever Israeli Palestinians try to show that they belong to Israeli society, at both the individual and the group levels, they reach the conclusion that this belonging is a one-sided illusion.

This disillusionment stood out in the wake of the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin. Despite the image engraved in the Arab memory of Rabin as a tough military man both in the 1976 Land Day and at the beginning of the intifada, his efforts on behalf of peace and equality in the last years of his life created a sympathetic image among the Arab population in Israel. Therefore, Arabs expressed anger and pain about the assassination of Rabin in different ways: Arab political parties, local authorities and public figures published obituaries in the newspapers. Arab schools began with an hour-long discussion in the homeroom about the assassination and the need for tolerance. The Supreme Follow-Up Committee of the Arab Population convened a special meeting and dispatched a large delegation of mayors and Knesset members to represent the Arab population at the funeral.
The Arab population in Israel intended these acts to demonstrate a sense of belonging to Israeli society. However, this gesture too soon proved to be an ‘illusion of belonging’. The reaction of the Arabs was pushed to the margins in the Hebrew media and among the Jewish public at large. The Jewish majority related to the assassination of Rabin as an internal Jewish–Jewish affair; the call for soul-searching and pluralism remained within the Jewish sphere; and the discourse that developed around the assassination was a Jewish-nationalist-religious discourse, not a civic discourse.62

Another example of the desire of the Arab citizens to materialize their potential power in an attempt to penetrate the nation-power system was manifested in the 1999 elections. The Arab candidate for prime minister, MK Azmi Bishara, eventually had to quit the race, thus paving the way for the Arab population’s massive support of Ehud Barak, the candidate of the Labour party and Zionist left, who received 95% of the Arab vote and won the elections.

However, as soon as he became prime minister, Barak withdrew from the slogan he had promoted during the election campaign ‘a state for all’, which was well received by the Arab population. First, Barak ignored the Arab parties when it came time to form his government. Once again, they were relegated to the status of a ‘permanent opposition’.63 Second, for a year and a half after Barak was elected, he refused to meet with the Supreme Follow-Up Committee of the Arab Population or with the Arab Knesset members in order to deal with issues of interest to the Arab population.64 The first meeting with the Arab leadership took place only after the outbreak of the October 2000 events. In addition, promises made by Barak to enhance citizenship equality and improve conditions among the Arab population proved to be just election slogans, aimed at catching the Arab vote.65

It should be noted that the despair of the Palestinians in Israel at the citizenship level was coupled with despair at the national level. The retreat in the peace process increased the alienation of the Arab population. Within a relatively short period, negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians over a permanent solution of the Israel–Palestinian conflict reached a dead end, thus leading to a total stagnation in the peace process.

The accumulated despair, because of both national and citizenship issues, together with the religious element, formed the basis for the outbreak of the October 2000 events, which took place at the beginning of the el-Aqsa intifada.
EL-AQSA INTIFADA-THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 2000

The El-Aqsa intifada – or the second Palestinian intifada – broke out on 28 September 2000, against the background of Sharon’s visit to the El-Haram Esharif (Temple Mount) (which was considered by the Israeli side as a legitimate step and by the Palestinians as a provocative action). This time, the Palestinians in Israel shared the intifada from the very beginning. It could even be argued that, at least at its inception, the Arabs in Israel played a leading role.

The leadership of the Israeli Arab population declared a one-day strike, accompanied by demonstrations, on Sunday, 1 October. One demonstrator was killed in Um el-Fahm and many were wounded. From that moment, the situation deteriorated, setting off the ‘el-Aqsa intifada’ on both sides of the Green Line. The unrest spread to various Arab localities and mixed Jewish–Arab cities. These protests were met by a violent reaction on the part of the Israeli police and border patrol, leading to the killing of 13 Arab demonstrators (12 Arab citizens of Israel and one Arab from the territories). In addition, hundreds of Arab citizens were wounded or arrested.66

One of the major outcomes of the October 2000 events is, undoubtedly, the reconsideration of the citizenship status of the Arab population from both angles: that of the Arab minority and that of the establishment and Jewish majority.

Israeli Palestinians were deeply shocked by the fact that their Israeli citizenship had not provided them with any advantage in status compared to their brethren in the occupied territories. That is to say, the citizenship of the Arabs in Israel had not protected them from being targeted with live ammunition by Israeli security forces. Moreover, the way in which security forces behaved towards the Arab protests was similar to the responses of these forces in the West Bank and Gaza in terms of methods, weapons and intensity.67

In a heated discussion in the Knesset, Ahmad Tibi, one of the Arab deputies, said: ‘This is the only democracy in the world that shoots citizens in peaceful demonstrations … They (the police) accused us of closing roads but they still used live ammunition. They relate to us as an enemy.’68 The feeling of the Palestinian citizens that their citizenship had not shielded them resulted, for the first time, in an appeal, a petition signed by more than 10,000 Arab citizens of Israel, for international protection by the United Nations.69 This initiative, however, remained just a symbolic act. Nevertheless, it had far-reaching repercussions in terms of an attempt to internationalize the problem of the Arab minority in Israel.

The October 2000 events sharpened the alienation that had already existed among the Arab population. Therefore, the outrage of the Arab population was manifested in the 2001 elections for prime minister,
conducted on 6 February. In these elections Sharon received 62.4% of the votes, while Barak received only 37.6%.\(^7\) One of the landmarks of this election was the massive abstention of the Arab electorate, with only 18% of eligible Arab citizens casting a vote. The turnout was particularly low in the large Arab towns forming the centre of the political activity of the Arab population: 15.5% in Nazareth; 4% in Um el-Fahm; 1.1% in Sakhnin; 6% in Taibe, and 8.4% in Tira.\(^7\)

However, although the ‘Green Line’, which differentiates between the orientations of the Palestinians on either side, has been blurred, it has not disappeared. This is reflected in the terminology used by the Arab leadership in order to describe the October 2000 events within the Green Line as compared to events in the territories. While the first are called *habbat el-Aqsa* (*habbah* in Arabic reflects a short-term action), the events in the territories are called *Intifadat el-Aqsa* (*intifada* is a long-term uprising). The difference between the two terms is not only semantic. It means that the Arab leadership in Israel itself considers the action of the Arabs in Israel to be a one-time action, be it a reactive behaviour or an act of identification with the Palestinians in the territories. At the same time, the intifada means a continuing act, the aim of which is to attain the definite goal of ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a Palestinian state.

In the words of Muhammad Zeidan, then chair of the Supreme Follow-Up Committee of the Arabs in Israel:

We [the Palestinians in Israel] called the October 2000 events, ‘*habbat el-Aqsa*’, since we do recognize the differences between our struggle and that of our brethren in the West Bank and Gaza. By doing this, we wanted to prevent any misunderstanding from the part of the Israeli public that the el-Aqsa intifada had crossed the Green Line.\(^7\)

Also, Arab leaders manifested their national identity alongside their citizenship identity immediately after the October events. Thus MK Muhammad Barake stated in a debate in the Knesset, ‘We are part of the Palestinian people and that fact must be understood. We are also citizens of the state of Israel and that fact too must be understood’.\(^7\)

From the Jewish side, however, the October 2000 events looked completely different. Jewish leaders across the Israeli political spectrum declared their deep concern and disappointment at the acts of Arabs in Israel. Right-wing intellectuals spoke about the Arabs in Israel as a ‘fifth column’, who ‘will just wake up when Israel is attacked from the outside’.\(^7\) For many Jews these events proved that the ‘1948 files’ were still open and that Israel was still fighting for its independence against ‘outside enemies’ and ‘inside enemies’.\(^7\)

The accusation of disloyalty against the Arab citizens also came from the Zionist left, which felt that it had been betrayed by the Arabs. Some
even went as far as to call on the Arabs to relinquish their Israeli citizenship if they did not identify with the State of Israel. Meir Nitzan, mayor of Rishon Lizion and member of the Labour Party, had this to say: ‘if the Arabs do not identify with the state they cannot affect the policy of Israel and be represented in the Knesset. They have to decide which side they want to be with’.76

The October 2000 events in Arab localities have deeply affected Jewish–Arab relations at the day-to-day level. Arab businesses were deeply hurt in the wake of these events because of a boycott by Jewish clients, whether they feared to enter Arab localities or as an explicit boycott by Jewish clients against Arabs.77 This atmosphere was well described by an Arab businessman from Sakhnin in Galilee:

Everything was turned upside-down. The atmosphere is not good and there is a total mistrust between the two sides [Jews and Arabs] … Something had been broken in the relationships. Every side sees what happened here from its point of view. Jews ask why we behaved like this, and we are angry because youngsters of ours were killed.78

Mixed Jewish–Arab cities or Jewish cities adjacent to Arab localities saw an organized campaign to boycott Arab businesses and drive away Arabs who lived in Jewish localities.79 Arab leaders and ordinary people complained that Jewish nation-wide companies from both the private and the public sectors refused to enter Arab localities because of what these companies termed ‘security reasons’.80

Paradoxically, while the October 2000 events have deepened the internal Jewish–Arab rift and increased anti-Arab attitudes among the Jewish population, it has not affected the Jewish majority’s support for territorial compromise. To some extent, these events further reinforced the Israeli public’s backing for a quicker resolution of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict.

This attitude was reflected in a poll of a representative sample of the Israeli adult population conducted on 4 October 2000 and published in Maariv right after the start of these events. Some 50% of the respondents thought that the Arabs in Israel were acting in solidarity with the territory Palestinians; 32% thought the protests were the result of discrimination; 13% believed that both factors were at work. The harsh response of the Jewish population was reflected in its wide support for the idea of ‘transferring’ the Arabs out of Israel: 60% of the Jewish respondents expressed their preference that the Arabs be moved outside Israel, whereas only 33% were opposed to the idea. (Among those who supported the idea of transfer were 100% of the ultra-orthodox, 77% of Netanyahu voters and 71% of the new immigrants.) At the same time, 68% of the respondents said they supported the continuation of the peace process, as compared to 66% before these events.81
This atmosphere formed the background for a conference sponsored by the Interdisciplinary Centre in Herzliyya, with the participation of some 300 people, all of them Jewish and the vast majority Ashkenazim, representing various Israeli elites – military, academic, business, education, humanities, social sciences and politics – in addition to representatives from the Diaspora.  

The discussions at this conference were published in what came to be known as ‘The Herzliyya Document’. Here we shall confine ourselves to the main points relating to our analysis. The conference discussions focused on the crucial question of the best ways to deal with the challenges facing Israel and safeguard its future and its national security. Although different points of view were presented, they all pointed in one major direction: strengthening the Jewish-Zionist-Western ethnocratic structure of Israel at the expense of its democratic-civil-multicultural structure.

The demographic issue received special attention in the conference proceedings. According to the report, the ‘demographic danger’ lies in the ‘natural increase’ of the Arab minority in Israel. A number of measures were suggested for minimizing the Arab population and maximizing the Jewish population. They include preventing any repatriation of Palestinian refugees to Israel, a ‘voluntary’ transfer of the Arab citizens, and ‘that the Arab residents of the “Little Triangle” join the Palestinian state’. In addition, a number of restrictions on Arabs were suggested (such as a connection between military service and citizenship) in order to force at least some of them to renounce their Israeli citizenship.

These abovementioned positions, which are gaining increasing support among Jewish Israeli politicians and public, present a challenge to the Jewish side in regard to the very existence of the Green Line. It means that the citizenship status of the Arabs in Israel is being seriously reconsidered by the Jewish majority and that the Green Line has no significance in terms of differentiating between the Palestinians from its two sides.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has made an attempt to trace the patterns of encounter between the Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line since 1967. The main objective has been to examine the orientation of the Palestinians in Israel towards the two central components in their identity: the Israeli citizenship component and the national Palestinian Arab component. Our analysis shows that the relationships that developed between the Palestinians in Israel and the territories are complex. Despite the fact that the two groups went from uncertainty and even a negative image of each other at the outset of their encounter to a positive image and then to mutual identification, no intensive social and economic relations were
created between the two. Moreover, no joint organizations developed, whether in the cultural or in the political sphere. The differences between the two groups also stand out in their respective attitude towards the State of Israel and their orientation towards the future. While Israeli Palestinians have over time developed a ‘strategy of adjustment’, which combines profound elements of bilingualism, biculturalism and a strong desire to fit into Israeli society, the territory Palestinians have developed for themselves a ‘strategy of survival’, which integrates the strong desire to struggle against the Israeli occupation and the striving for national independence.

The Palestinians in Israel developed two central identity components. One, the civic element, is manifested in connecting their future to the State of Israel, which they see as their homeland. Having no other homeland except Israel, they struggle for full equality of rights in this state. The national component is reflected in their perception of themselves as part of the Palestinian people and in their support of the right of self-determination for the Palestinians, including the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. The reference comparison group pertaining to the civic component are the Jews in Israel, while that pertaining to the national component are the Palestinians beyond the borders of Israel and the Arab world. There is no doubt that the simultaneous emphasis of the two components, the civic and the national, and the opposing reference groups operating under a continuing national conflict, place the Palestinians in Israel in a problematic situation, which this author, in the early 1990s, defined as a ‘double periphery’: being located simultaneously at the margins of both the Israeli society and the Palestinian National Movement.86

The first intifada in the Palestinian territories (1987–92) sharpened this status of ‘double periphery’ of the Palestinian citizens in Israel. It narrowed their manoeuvring space, in the context of which Israeli Palestinians learned to live with dual loyalties. Their behaviour during the intifada proved that they had fashioned over the course of time a unique ‘Israeli Palestinian’ identity, in which the commitment to the national component took into consideration the civic element. Activation of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict places Israeli Palestinians within a system of contradictory expectations, and they are called upon by each of the groups (Israelis and Palestinians) to translate their loyalty towards it in practical, unequivocable terms. This situation deepens the peripheral location of the Palestinians in Israel in that one element of their identity is always perceived by each of the two reference groups as illegitimate, and the other component as doubtful.

The signing of the Oslo agreements and the start of a peaceful resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict did not shift the disadvantaged status of the Arabs in Israel. The high expectations by the state’s Arab citizens of the
resolution of this conflict proved unrealistic. From the Israeli side, the main motive for peace was based on ethno-national grounds. It has been divorced of any civil agenda that might create a new social order and widen the borders of legitimacy of Israeli society. Thus, although the Israeli public and its leadership alike have become more open over time towards a compromise regarding the ‘external’ Israel–Palestinian conflict, they have become more closed as far as ‘internal’ conflicts within Israeli society are concerned. In this sense, the Palestinian minority is increasingly perceived as a barrier to the realization of a Jewish state, to which the Jewish majority aspires in return for its readiness to make a territorial compromise and recognize the establishment of a Palestinian state. Thus, despite the increasing efforts of the Palestinians in Israel to focus on citizenship issues and to practise the sense of belonging to Israeli society, they have concluded that this is just an illusion of belonging.

It was against the background of this despair on the part of the Arab population that the October 2000 events erupted, deepening the Jewish–Arab rift and sharpening the problems of identity among the Arab population. It may be safe to argue that the deep Jewish–Arab rift is not the result of these events, but vice versa. However, these events and the developments that followed have deepened this rift and presented a serious challenge to the co-existence of the two peoples.

Whither the Green Line? Is it still differentiating between the orientations of the Palestinians on both sides? It is too early to provide a definite answer to these questions and draw far-reaching conclusions, since we are still in the midst of ongoing local and regional processes. But it seems that this line has never been so vulnerable and shaky as it is now. The reconsideration of the status and citizenship of the Arabs in Israel by Jews and Arabs alike after October 2000 raises many questions regarding the meaning of the Green Line. Likewise, there is creeping support among the Jewish majority for the idea of the transfer of large parts of the Arab population in Israel in the framework of any possible future settlement of the Israel–Palestinian conflict. This includes both forms of transfer: a physical transfer of citizens and a political transfer of citizenship, as suggested in the Herzliya document. At the same time, the campaign of the Arabs in Israel for their citizenship is, paradoxically, just gaining power. It seems that the same trend that happened among the Palestinians in Israel (of focusing on citizenship issues) after the signing of the Oslo agreements might just reappear in light of the increasing efforts of the international community to resume the peace process between the Palestinians and Israel.

NOTES

1. Statistical Abstract of Israel, No.52 (2000), pp.2–10. This number does not include Palestinians in East Jerusalem.
3. For mutual images between the Palestinians from both sides of the Green Line, see Sharif Kanaana, ‘Channels of Communication and Mutual Images Between the West Bank and Areas in Israel’, Bir Ziet, 1976, pp.2–3.
10. Quoted from the bulletin issued by the National Committee of Heads of Arab Local Authorities, June 1980.
19. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
30. Al-Sinnarah (Israeli weekly), 16 October 1987 (Arabic).
31. Ibid.
35. Davar (Israeli daily), 29 December 1987 (Hebrew).
40. Yedioth Ahronoth (Israeli daily), 9 November 1988 (Hebrew); Jerusalem Post, 19 May 1989; Maariv (Israeli daily), 27 March 1989 (Hebrew); Hamodia, 25 May 1990 (Hebrew).
41. Yedioth HaGai, 10 November 1989 (Hebrew).
43. Maariv, 7 July 1988.
47. El-Ittihad (Israeli daily), 3 April 1988 (Arabic).
50. Interview with Ibrahim Nemir Hussen, former Chairman of the National Committee, 21 February 1988.
52. Al-Haj et al., ‘Arab and Jewish Attitudes toward a Palestinian State’.
54. Ibid.
57. According to different estimations, about 20% of the Arabs in Israel were displaced from their original communities during or right after the 1948 war and were obliged to move to other localities within the Green Line. For a detailed discussion on the Arab internal refugees in Israel, see Majid Al-Haj, ‘Adjustment Patterns of the Arab Internal Refugees in Israel’, International Migration, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1988), pp. 651–74.
59. Ibid.
62. Ibid., p. 173.
72. Interview with Muhammad Zeidan, June 2003.
73. Quoted by Drummond, ‘Israeli Arabs Start to Make Their Voices Heard’.
83. Ibid.
84. Arad (ed.), *The Balance of National Strength and Security*, p.27.
85. Ibid., p.358.