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The Second Intifada in the Palestinian City of Ramallah: Social, Economic and Political Consequences

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The Second Intifada in the Palestinian City of Ramallah: Social, Economic and Political
Consequences

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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History

by

Saber Farhud

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Abstract

Over the years, the Second Intifada has been consigned to paragraphs within history books and the significance has been forgotten by many. While this may be due to the scarcity of sources that are out there, the history of the Second Intifada cannot be ignored. Like previous conflicts in the past between Palestinians and Israelis, the Second Intifada had a monstrous toll on the way of life for both Palestinians and Israelis. The following thesis will examine the Second Intifada and how it affected the economy, the politics, and the social life of Palestinians living in Ramallah, the de facto capital for Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank.

Keywords: Palestine; Ramallah; Israel; Hamas; West Bank; Fatah

Introduction

On November 2, 1917, Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary and former Prime Minister, sent a letter to Baron Rothschild, one of the leaders of the Zionist movement. In the letter, Lord Balfour issued the “Balfour Declaration,” promising British support in creating a Jewish homeland in Palestine. On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was created with the help and support of the United Nations.¹ The establishment of the state of Israel on Palestinian land, caused many wars between the two sides. For example, when Israel was established in 1948, a conflict broke out which is recognized as the first Arab-Israeli war. As a result of this, the Israeli military exiled hundreds of thousands Palestinians from their homes, forcing them to seek shelter in refugee camps in neighboring countries such as Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

Since that time, many other wars have erupted. In 1967, the Six Day War erupted between Palestinians allied with neighboring Arab countries and the state of Israel. Palestinian objectives during this war focused upon regaining independence and lands that were seized by Israel in 1948. This war lasted for only six days, and Israel gained a decisive victory.² Six years after the 1967 Six Day War, Palestinians continued the fight against Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The main players in this war were Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon. The main goal of the war was to reclaim land that was taken by Israel during the Six Day War, and also gain Palestinian independence.

During this war, Lebanon allowed Palestinians to shell Israeli civilian settlements from its territory. Palestinians also fought against the Israeli military alongside the southern front with

¹ Priscilla Roberts, ed, *Arab- Israeli Conflict: The Essential Reference Guide* (Santa Barbra, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 311.

² Bernard Reich, *A Brief History of Israel* (New York, NY: Facts On File, 2005), 85.

the Egyptians and Kuwaitis.³ The war would be successful to an extent, because Egypt obtained majority of the land that was taken during the 1967 war through negotiations with Israel. Palestinians however failed to regain Palestinian land that was lost during the Six Day War or achieve independence.

Fourteen years after the historic Yom Kippur War, a new kind of conflict erupted. The first Palestinian Uprising, also known as the First Intifada, lasted from 1987 until 1992.⁴ The First Intifada erupted after four Palestinians were killed at an Israeli checkpoint in the Gaza Strip on December 9, 1987. The deaths set off a landslide of primarily nonviolent Palestinian resistance that had been in the making for generations.⁵ The Intifada aimed to end the Israeli occupation and establish Palestinian independence. Palestinian resistance fighters tried to achieve Palestinian independence, and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip continued.

The years following the First Intifada would be known as the “Oslo Years.” During this time period, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators established a peace process known as the Oslo Accords (signed in 1994), which fundamentally allowed Palestinian economic, social, and political life to function properly.⁶ Many Palestinians and Israelis believed that a chance for peace was likely. Unfortunately, this would not occur. On September 28, 2000, the Second Intifada, commonly referred as “Al-Aqsa Intifada,” or the Second Palestinian Uprising, broke out

³ Chaim Herzog, *The Arab- Israeli Wars* (NY: Random House, 1984), 278.

⁴ Eitan Alimi, “The Israel Political Arena and Palestinian Contention: The Case of the ‘First’ Intifada,” *British Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 3 (2007), 433.

⁵ Mary Elizabeth King, *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance* (NY: Nation Books, 2009), 1.

⁶ Sara Roy, “The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict and Palestinian Socioeconomic Decline: A Place Denied,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17, no. 3 (2004), 366.

between Palestinians and Israeli's lasting five years until February 28, 2005. From the beginning, opinions have differed about the origins of the Second Intifada. Many Palestinians insist that the Second Intifada occurred due to the actions of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. On September 28, 2000, Ariel Sharon made an unexpected public visit to the Al-Aqsa mosque, in Jerusalem's old city. The Israeli Prime Minister was accompanied by more than 1,000 members of the Israeli police. During his visit, Ariel Sharon repeated a phrase that was broadcast during the 1967 Six Day War when Israeli occupation forces seized Arab East Jerusalem. "The Temple Mount is in our hands," Sharon shouted. According to Colin Chapman, an independent English writer, the actions committed by Ariel Sharon at the Al- Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam, sparked the start of the Second Intifada between Palestinians and Israelis.⁷

Many Israelis, however, believe that Palestinians are at fault for the start of the Second Intifada. In an article titled "The Palestinian Authority's Responsibility for the Outbreak of the Second Intifada: Its Own Damning Testimony," Lt. Col. (ret) Jonathan D. Halevi emphasizes that the Palestinians were at fault. In the article Halevi asserts that the final decision to initiate the Second Intifada was made by Yasser Arafat immediately upon the conclusion of the second Camp David Summit, ending on July 25, 2000. Directives were disseminated to Palestinian national security forces, instructing them to prepare for the immediate option of initiating a violent campaign against Israel.⁸

⁷ Colin Chapman, *Whose Holy City?: Jerusalem and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Oxford: Lion, 2004), 179.

⁸ Jonathan Halevi, "The Palestinian Authority's Responsibility for the Outbreak of the Second Intifada: Its Own Damning Testimony, " in *jcpa.org*. <<http://jcpa.org/article/the-palestinian-authoritys-responsibility-for-the-outbreak-of-the-second-intifada-its-own-damning-testimony/>> (24 July 2015).

One thing is for certain, however. The Second Intifada was a very violent uprising that took the lives of numerous Palestinians and Israelis, and both continue to blame the other for starting it. Neither side admits that it is responsible for the death of more than 5,000 human beings. Indeed, even estimates of conflict's total number of victims vary. According to one estimate, over the five years, approximately 1,000 Israelis died and 6,700 more were wounded.⁹ Israel reported that by 2003, 2,124 Palestinians died, but a U.S source reported that by 2005, 4,099 Palestinians died and approximately 30,527 were wounded.

Clearly, the Second Intifada had wider effects too, negatively affecting the social, economic, and political life of many cities located within the Palestinian West Bank. During the "Oslo Years," prior to the start of the Second Intifada, many Palestinian cities lacked significant violence. Once the Second Intifada began, things changed drastically for the worse. Many Palestinian cities began seeing their local economies plummet. There was also a lack of social life for many because of increased violent clashes between Palestinians and Israelis, and also because of the constant curfews enforced on Palestinian cities by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Politics also became a hot topic in many cities within the West Bank. Many cities saw the establishment and increased support of guerilla warfare groups within the West Bank, affiliated with the Al-Aqsa Brigades, Fatah, Hamas, and others.

The one city in the West Bank, where the Second Intifada had possibly the greatest impact economically, socially, and politically, was Ramallah. One of the largest cities in the West Bank, the city is approximately 16 kilometers north of Jerusalem, adjacent to Al-Bireh. It currently serves as the de facto administrative capital of the state of Palestine due to Israeli

⁹ Spencer Tucker, *Encyclopedia of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: A New Era of Modern Warfare* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 267.

control of Eastern Jerusalem, which Palestinians and many others in the international community see as the future capital of Palestine. Ramallah was historically a Christian town, but today Muslims form the majority of the population, with Christians still making up a significant minority.¹⁰ According to the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, the current population of the city stands at 34,173.¹¹

Prior to the start of the Second Intifada, Ramallah was a very prosperous city to which Palestinians traveled to work and shop. However, once the uprising began, Ramallah became a nightmarish and dangerous city. As a result of the Second Intifada, many young men and women joined social and political movements, like Hamas. Prior to the Second Intifada, Hamas was not very popular among Palestinians. Khaled Meshal, one of the main political figures of Hamas, stated that Hamas is an “Islamic movement, a nationalist movement, a militant movement, a political movement – in addition to its cultural and social dimensions, its service functions, and its institution buildings.”¹²

A limited number of scholars have discussed the Second Intifada, but have not focused their discussion on specific sites or communities. For example, in a 2001 published book titled *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid*, Roane Carey argues that the Second Palestinian Uprising was the result of the mistreatment and occupation of Palestinian lands following the failure of the Oslo Accords. Carey claims that the visit of the Al-Aqsa mosque by Ariel Sharon

¹⁰ Daniel Jacobs, *Israel and the Palestinian Territories: The Rough Guide* (London: Rough Guides, 1998), 431.

¹¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Localities in Ramallah & Al Bireh Governorate by Type of Locality and Population Estimates," <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/ramallah.htm> (17 Aug. 2015).

¹² Mouin Rabbani, “The Making of a Palestinian Islamist Leader: An Interview with Khalid Mishal: Part I,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37, No. 3 (2008), 69.

gave Palestinians an opportunity to protest and fight against the occupation of Palestinian lands.¹³ Through the examination of primary sources, such as the UN Archives, the Central Zionist Archives, oral histories, journal articles, and newspaper articles, Carey illustrates the lived experiences of the Second Intifada. In the book, Carey highlights the Intifada's economic, and social effect on Palestinians living in the West Bank. When examining the Palestinian economy, Carey states that the closure of Palestinians from the outside world forced the Palestinian economy to become more broken and fragmented.¹⁴ Carey also highlights how the creation of Israeli checkpoints damaged the Palestinian social and economic way of life, which eventually opened the floodgates of a violent uprising against the Israelis.¹⁵

However Carey fails to examine the negative impact the Second Intifada specifically had on the city of Ramallah, the de facto capital of the West Bank. She also fails to mention that the Second Intifada led to the establishment of Qalandia checkpoint, the largest Israeli checkpoint located in Ramallah. Qalandia prevented Palestinians living in the Ramallah metropolitan area from entering Jerusalem, and many other areas that are under the control of the Israeli government. She also fails to elaborate on Palestinian politics during the Second Intifada and how it allowed Hamas to become a power to be reckoned with in the West Bank, allowing it to take control of many cities, including Ramallah. Other omissions are due to the book's having been published in 2001, during the beginning of the Second Intifada, before, for example, the Separation Barrier was constructed, damaging Palestinian economic and social life.

¹³ Roane Carey, *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (Brooklyn: Verso Press, 2001), 2.

¹⁴ Ibid, 92.

¹⁵ Ibid, 194.

Writing after Carey, others have explored the history of the Second Intifada and its consequences. Ramzy Baroud, a former journalist and producer for Al Jazeera TV wrote *The Second Intifada: A Chronicle of a People's Struggle*. Published in 2006, Baroud's book highlights the most controversial issues that occurred during the uprising such as the construction of the Separation Wall, waves of suicide bombings, and also the unemployment rate amongst Palestinians. Baroud examines many articles in Arabic and English sources, including *Al-Ahram Weekly*, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, *International Herald Tribune*, and the *Middle East Times*. Baroud also received assistance from the Palestinian initiative for the promotion of global dialogue and democracy, which provided him with casualty figures during the Intifada.¹⁶ In addition, Baroud recounts the story of his grandfather who lived in the Gaza Strip during the Intifada, thus also taking recourse to personal family stories like I do in this paper.

Unlike Carey, Baroud gives readers a look at the historical background of the Israeli Separation Barrier and its role as an influential tool dismantling Palestinian economic and social life. He briefly highlights how travelling to Jerusalem from Ramallah was difficult for Palestinians as a result of the establishment of the Separation Barrier and also the Qalandia checkpoint. For example, Baroud recounts a day in which he had to take three different taxi cab rides to get from Ramallah to Jerusalem due to the Separation Barrier and Qalandia checkpoint.¹⁷

Baroud fails to pay attention to the people of Ramallah, focusing instead on the wider effects of the conflict. Baroud notes, for example, that the Second Intifada led to an increase of

¹⁶ Ramzy Baroud, *The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicles of a People's Struggle* (Chicago: Pluto Press 2006), XVII.

¹⁷ Ibid, 1.

Israeli settlements and land grabs in the occupied West Bank, and he counts altogether 145 thriving settlements in the West Bank.¹⁸

Like Carey and Baroud, Wendy Pearlman also illustrates the importance of the Second Intifada. In her book *Occupied Voices: Stories of Everyday Life from the Second Intifada*, Pearlman examines how the Second Intifada had a negative effect on Palestinians living in multiple areas in the occupied West Bank. Through the usage of sources such as oral histories, newspapers, and magazines, Pearlman allows readers to understand the variety of different hardships that Palestinians suffered during the Second Intifada. In this book, some of the examples come from Ramallah. Pearlman for example, recalls a story told by Osama, a financial officer in Ramallah and how his life was economically and socially affected.¹⁹ Yet Pearlman fails to go into much detail about everyday life in Ramallah, and focuses more on Palestinians living in different areas of the occupied West Bank.

These works, then, do not specifically focus upon the situation in the city of Ramallah during the Second Intifada. The most-cited work regarding this subject is the memoir *When the Birds Stop Singing: Life in Ramallah under Siege* (2003) by Palestinian writer Raja Shehadeh. A journalist, Shehadeh is a keen observer and allows readers to understand Palestinian life under Israeli siege. This beautifully written first-person account allows readers to understand the violence and destruction of the Israeli Defense Forces of Ramallah in 2002 and 2003. Shehadeh also elaborates how during this time, many Palestinians were shot, medical equipment was destroyed, banks were demolished, political buildings were bombarded, and many small

¹⁸ Ibid, 18.

¹⁹ Wendy Pearlman, *Stories of Everyday Life from the Second Intifada* (New York: Thunder's Mouth/Nation, 2003), 38.

businesses were forced to shut down. Shehadeh recounts how Palestinian social, economic, and political life deteriorated due to the lack of peace efforts between Palestinians and Israelis, and the ongoing curfews forced upon Ramallah.²⁰ Shehadeh does not cover all five years of the Second Intifada, and he fails to present a full picture of how the city of Ramallah was affected by the conflict. For example, he does not include present statistical evidence on how the Ramallah economy was damaged during the Second Intifada, because it was not available yet.

This thesis will help fill the gaps left by the works of Shahedeh, Pearlman, Baroud, and Carey. This paper, in addition to the scanty existing literature, is based on oral histories with Palestinians (friends and family members who were willing to talk) who have lived through the Second Intifada. These accounts reflect the Palestinian perspective and voice, and together with the available literature they allow us to construct a narrative of the social, economic, and political effects the Second Intifada had on the city of Ramallah. In addition, some personal observations are interspersed in this text since the author lived in Ramallah during part of the Second Intifada. These autobiographical snippets are those of a participant observer in historical events in Ramallah, the city considered to be the de facto capital of Palestine and the largest city in the occupied West Bank.

The Social Impact the Second Intifada had on Ramallah

For many years after the First Intifada occurred in 1987, the city of Ramallah was peaceful. Clashes would occasionally ignite between the Palestinians and Israelis, but it would not affect the living conditions of Palestinians living in Ramallah. During the 1990s, many Israelis living in nearby Israeli settlements occasionally traveled to the city of Ramallah and

²⁰ Raja Shehadeh, *When The Birds Stop Singing: Life in Ramallah Under Siege* (Hanover: Steerforth Press, 2013), V.

purchase items within the Ramallah market without any type of altercation with the Palestinian people. The 1990s was a brief period of peace and stability for many Israelis living near cities that were under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Unfortunately this would not last for long as a result of the Second Intifada which began on September 28, 2000.

When the Second Intifada was unleashed, Ramallah quickly became a ghost town. Many people were afraid to leave their homes because they might get caught up in the middle of gun fights between the Palestinians and Israelis. The city was placed on lockdown for many days by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), which prevented Palestinians from leaving their homes. Many Palestinians living in Ramallah felt like they were living in a prison and were isolated from the rest of the world due to curfews, the establishment of the “Israeli wall,” and the creation of checkpoints.

During the years of the Second Intifada, many Palestinians lacked any type of social life. Many residents living in Ramallah would go days and even months without seeing any family members because of the IDF curfews enforced in the city. Many places where Palestinians would socially interact with one another, such as coffee shops, parks, malls, schools, etc., were frequently closed.²¹ As a result of this, many Palestinians went through periods of long-term depression. Nearly one-third (32.7%) of Palestinian children displayed acute symptoms of PTSD during the Second Intifada.²²

In order to make life tougher for Palestinians and safer for Israeli citizens, Israeli checkpoints were established throughout the West Bank. The establishment of checkpoints made

²¹ Hugh Miles, *Al-Jazeera: The Inside Story of the Arab News Channel That is Challenging the West* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 75.

²² M.J. Friedman, and A. Kos-Mikus, *Promoting the Psychological Well Being of Children Following War and Terrorism* (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2005), 168.

travelling impossible for many Palestinians. One of the main checkpoints in the West Bank was Qalandia checkpoint. This checkpoint is not located on a border, but between the Palestinian city of Ramallah, and the Palestinian town of Al- Ram. Qalandia checkpoint separated Ramallah residents from southern Palestinian towns and northern Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem. Before the start of the Second Intifada in late September 2000, there was no permanent Israeli military presence at Qalandia. However, as the Intifada progressed, a newly-created checkpoint turned from a few concrete blocks to a sprawl of turnstiles, watch-towers, offices and loading bays. In order to pass through, Palestinians had to show identity cards and permits, as well as have their bags and vehicles searched.²³ The Qalandia checkpoint is considered to be the largest Israeli military checkpoint in the occupied West Bank. For many Palestinians, checkpoints like Qalandia, are a contemporary incarnation of Israel's denial of the collective and individual rights of Palestinians to a living space.²⁴

A Separation Barrier, also known as the "Apartheid Wall," was also created separating Palestinians from Israelis. The construction of the wall began in 2002. The Israeli Separation Barrier is considered to have obvious historical parallel with the Berlin Wall, which was 96 miles long (155 KM). Once the construction of the separation barrier is complete, it is expected to reach at least 403 miles in length (650 KM). The average height of the Berlin Wall was 11.8 feet, compared with the current height of the Israel's wall at 25 feet.²⁵

²³ Franz von Benda- Beckmann, Keebet von Benda- Beckmann, and Julia Eckret, eds, *Rules of Law and Laws of Ruling on the Governance of Law* (London: Ashgate, 2009), 83.

²⁴ Helga Tawil-Souri, "Qalandia Checkpoint: The Historical Geography of a Non-Place," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 42, (2010), 27.

²⁵ Nigel Parry "Is It a Fence? Is It a Wall? No, it's a Separation Barrier," in *electronicintifada.net*, 1 August 2003 < <https://electronicintifada.net/content/it-fence-it-wall-no-its-separation-barrier/4715>> (17 Aug. 2015).

For many Palestinians living in Ramallah and surrounding neighboring areas, the construction of the wall came at great psychological costs. The wall was also seen by many as an indication of Israeli intentions regarding its annexation of West Bank territory, and as a final death blow to any two- state solution to the conflict.²⁶ According to the Israeli government, the motive behind checkpoints and the Separation Barrier were to reduce terrorist attacks on Israeli soil. A wall of several hundred miles allows the Israeli government to trap Palestinians who are affiliated with any political groups who seek the destruction of Israel.²⁷

During the first thirty- four months of the Second Intifada, Palestinians carried out seventy three attacks in which two hundred-ninety three Israelis were killed and one thousand nine hundred and fifty were injured. However, once the wall was established, only three attacks were successful, and all three were successful during the first half of 2003.²⁸ These statistics suggest that the wall has indeed reduced attacks in Israeli cities. Building the wall, however, not only reduced attacks, it also affected the Palestinian way of life. Many people who lived in Ramallah struggled to travel within the West Bank. The establishment of the wall prevented some families in the Ramallah area from seeing one another. It also prevented civilians from having a normal social life.²⁹

Prior to the start of the Second Intifada, travelling to Jerusalem from Ramallah was relatively easy for Palestinians. Residents living in Ramallah did not have to worry about being harassed for hours at Israeli checkpoints like Qalandia since checkpoints did not exist prior to the

²⁶ Alan Dowty, *Israel/Palestine* (3rd edition, London: Polity Press, 2012), 172.

²⁷ René Backmann, *A Wall in Palestine*, trans. A. Kaiser (New York: Picador, 2010)

²⁸ Dan Cohn Sherbok and Mary Grey, *Debating Palestine and Israel* (Devon: Impress Books, 2014).

²⁹ Jamil E. Effarah, *Think Palestine: To Unlock Us-Israelis & Arabs Conflicts* (Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2013), 12.

Second Intifada. The travelling distance between the two cities is approximately thirteen km.³⁰

Before the Second Intifada started, it would take a Palestinian living in Ramallah approximately thirty eight minutes to get to Jerusalem. However, once Israeli checkpoints were established, it would take several hours to get to Jerusalem. On some days Palestinians who were trying to travel from Ramallah to Jerusalem were not allowed to cross the checkpoints at all and were ordered to return to their homes for no reason.³¹

There are many reasons for the creation of Qalandia checkpoint. For Israelis, the creation of Qalandia helped prevent attacks by Palestinians on Israeli cities. It also segregated Palestinians from Israelis. Many Palestinians, however, believe that the real motive behind Qalandia checkpoint, and many other checkpoints located in the West Bank, is to prevent citizens living in Ramallah and other neighboring areas from reaching famous holy sites within Jerusalem, such as the Al- Aqsa mosque for Muslims and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for Christians. Many other Palestinians living in Ramallah had to cross this checkpoint daily in order to get to work, to their businesses, or to their schools. The only people who were able to get through this checkpoint are Palestinians carrying Israeli-issued permits, or Jerusalem I.Ds. The Qalandia checkpoint, along with the rest of the checkpoints located within the West Bank, have greatly inhibited the movement of Palestinians.³²

The establishment of the checkpoints also prevented many residents from going to their own land to pick olives off their olive trees. During the fall of every year, Palestinians who own

³⁰ Adrian J. Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades: Society, Landscape, and Art in the Holy City under Frankish Rule* (London: Routledge, 2001), 98.

³¹ Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007), 147.

³² Yehudit Kirstein Keshet, *Checkpoint Watch* (London: Zed Books, 2013), 55.

land within the Ramallah area, met with family and friends to pick olives. People loved doing this because it created social interactions between family and friends. Palestinians also believe that olive picking is what keeps family bonds strong. While living in Ramallah from 2003 until the year 2010, my grandmother Yusra always constantly reminded me that an olive tree is what keeps a family strong. “Why do you think our country is filled with olive trees? It’s because god knew that the simple things in life, like a tree, would keep families closer together, and forget the tough times they suffered together.”³³

When the Second Intifada occurred, my grandmother was living in her house, which is located approximately one mile away from the city of Ramallah. She was living by herself in the house, because a year prior to the start of the Intifada, my grandmother continued to live alone. During the first three years of the Second Intifada, my grandmother was living by herself. She always was afraid something might happen to her and no one would be there to help her. Thankfully, the five years of the Second Intifada went by and nothing happened to her. The only thing she lost were bits and pieces of her social life which meant so much to her.

Before the start of the Second Intifada, my grandmother would leave the house almost every day. Some days she would walk to the center of Ramallah to get some exercise, while other days she would go see her friends and family to drink a cup of tea. This would ultimately end once the Second Intifada began. Once the Intifada started, my grandmother was forced to stay in her house, and she was no longer able to take the daily walk that made her feel healthy and young. “When I was walking every day, I felt like I was 60 years old, not 71,” my grandmother stated. “My doctor would tell me that I needed to move my legs because I have

³³ Yusra Farhud, interview by author (8 June, 2015).

diabetes. If I didn't walk very often, I felt my body go weak and I also felt old. I did not like that feeling, my child. I loved feeling young. It kept my mind off that I was nearing the end. Your grandmother, once a former stallion, started evolving into a tortoise due to the lack of day-to-day movement.”³⁴

In *When the Birds Stopped Singing*, Raja Shehadeh also speaks about how his social life was affected during the Second Intifada. During the five years, Raja emphasized how life revolved around constant drama, tragedy, catastrophe, violence, brutality, and stupidity. The Second Intifada made him feel powerless, and also a prisoner in his own home, which made it impossible to live a normal life in his own country³⁵ Shehadeh also elaborates that buying food products became a struggle during the Intifada. He recalled for his readers a time when he made a visit to the local vegetable store and all the products in the store were rotten.³⁶ This was due to the enforced curfews that were placed on the city, preventing fresh products from reaching local grocery stores.

Like my grandmother and Shehadeh, many other Palestinians have raised concerns regarding social life during the Second Intifada. Belal Shalabi, a 23-year-old Palestinian who currently resides in Tampa, Florida, expressed to me in an interview how his own social life was affected while living in Ramallah during the Second Intifada. “It had a huge impact on my social life,” Belal stated. “When the Second Intifada occurred, I was 11 years old. Due to the Intifada, I wasn't able to enjoy my childhood the way I wanted to. There were many days where I wasn't allowed to step outside and play in front of my house or go to the metropolitan park located in

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Raja Shehadeh, *When the Birds Stopped Singing: Life in Ramallah under Siege* (Hanover: Steerforth, 2003), 21.

³⁶ Ibid, 63.

central Ramallah due to the constant fear my parents had for me. They were afraid that a bullet hit would me or that I would get abducted by Israeli soldiers. As a result of that, I felt like I was a little boy who was charged with house arrest because I couldn't step outside. This really hurt me because I wasn't able to enjoy the little things in life. I felt like I was being forced into the real life at a really young age, which I wasn't prepared for."³⁷ Belal believes that his social life was negatively impacted during the Second Intifada.

During the interview, Belal also discussed how his educational experience was impacted. Going to school plays an influential role when it comes to your social life, as you interact both with classmates and teachers. "It depends on how the day is in Ramallah," Belal stated. "If there is a curfew issued by the Israeli military, we won't be able to attend school. They would be closed until further notice. This would go on and have a huge impact on my early education years and also my social life. I didn't have many friends during those years because school would be closed down multiple times. Many kids weren't able to get to know one another and establish a friendship. When the Intifada first occurred, I was in the sixth grade attending a school in Ramallah city. During my time as a sixth grader, I only completed a little more than half of my education year. The clashes between Palestinians and Israelis made life for us young kids tough. Many teenagers living in Ramallah during the start of the Second Intifada were more focused on the clashes between the two sides rather than their education."³⁸ As a result of the constant school closure, many people, like Belal, were not provided a stable education during the Second Intifada.

³⁷ Belal Shalabi, interview by the author (31 May, 2015).

³⁸ Ibid.

Belal believes that the school closures during the Second Intifada is a main reason why many Palestinian kids were not able to complete their education. It is estimated that between 28 September 2000 and 7 March 2001, forty one Palestinian schools were closed or unable to operate, which would affect approximately 20,000 Palestinian students.³⁹ The life of many Palestinian students was also in danger when attending school. Between September 2000 and January 2006, among school pupils and other students, 801 youths were killed.⁴⁰

Due to ongoing school closures, many schools in Ramallah were greatly affected. The Ramallah Friends School, a Quaker-funded school established in 1901, was one school in particular that suffered greatly during the start of it all. From the beginning of the Intifada, the Friends School located in the center of Ramallah became exposed to a new level of violence with a sequence of nightly shellings from Israeli tanks and attacks by helicopter gunships. As a result of this, the psychological well-being of parents, students, and staff was shaken and enrollment figures of the school dropped greatly as families left for America and elsewhere to escape the violence in Ramallah.⁴¹

As a result of the harsh living conditions due to the Intifada, many Palestinians began leaving Palestine and migrating to other areas around the world. Many saw no hope in establishing a life within the area due to security chaos, the construction of the separation wall, which prevented regular Palestinian labor markets, and the lack of a dependable education

³⁹ Asef Bayat, *Being Young and Muslim: New Cultural Politics in the Global South and North* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 117.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 117.

⁴¹ The Friends School, "School History" <<http://www.palfriends.org/schoolhistory.php>> (5 July 2015).

system.⁴² During the years 2000 and 2003, approximately 34,700 Palestinians emigrated from the West Bank to other countries in order to pursue a better education, a better life style, and also to hunt for a job.⁴³ Many Palestinians who left were given access to school visas or work permits. Other Palestinians who left, however, carried a U.S. passport which made it easier for them to leave the country.

During the Second Intifada, my life was also greatly affected when I moved to Ramallah in 2003. Before moving to Ramallah, I had been a happy 11-year-old boy who was enjoying life in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In Milwaukee, I was able to enjoy life without worrying about seeing soldiers in the streets holding M-16's, driving around in military tanks or jeeps. These things were all new to me. When I was living in the United States, I was allowed to play in front of my house without adult supervision because our family lived in a peaceful suburban area. After moving to Ramallah in 2003, I was not allowed to play or look out the window without adult supervision. I was also given a curfew by either my parents or the Israeli military, preventing me from stepping outside my house to get some fresh air, or even play basketball or soccer. My school education was also affected due to random school closures enforced on the city.

The Economic Impact the Second Intifada had on Ramallah

Prior to the year 2000, the city of Ramallah had been economically stable. People were able to make a decent living. Citizens in Ramallah, who maintained jobs outside the city limits, were able to travel without worrying about being harassed by Israeli checkpoints or the establishment of the wall, which prevented Palestinians from reaching certain areas within the

⁴² MPC- Migration Policy Centre, "MPC Migration Profile: Palestine," in *migrationpolicycentre.eu*, June 2013
<www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration_profiles/Palestine.pdf> 1 (21 July 2015).

⁴³ Ibid, 5.

West Bank and also Israel. Travelling to major cities under the control of the Israeli government such as Haifa, Jaffa, and so forth was allowed for Palestinians. The years between 1995 and 2000 (known locally as the “Oslo Years”) brought relative prosperity to Ramallah. During the Oslo Years, Palestinian Gross Domestic Product expanded from \$3.65 billion to a projected \$5.3 billion. Unemployment also decreased from 18.2 percent in September 1995 to 11 percent by September 2000.⁴⁴ In December 1995, the Israeli army abandoned the center of Ramallah and withdrew from the city outskirts.⁴⁵

Once the Israeli army left the city in 1995, life in Ramallah became more normal, with shops being opened all day and schools being fully functional. Particularly, there was a surge in the numbers of new restaurants in the city. For example, in the year 1995 it is estimated that there were approximately ninety restaurants within the city. By the year 2000, the number grew to 105. The slight growth soon slowed, however with only two restaurants established in Ramallah during the Second Intifada.⁴⁶ Ramallah prior to the Second Intifada had been a city of offices, commerce, culture, art, and leisure, and in several ways an alternative center to Jerusalem.⁴⁷ Many Palestinians living in Ramallah were optimistic about the future of Palestine.

All the optimism the Palestinians had felt, however, quickly vanished once the Second Intifada was unleashed. The city began re-experiencing the challenges that occurred during the First Intifada, such as curfews, shutting down of schools, and also public institutions. The

⁴⁴ Dan Cork, “The Palestinian Economy Post Oslo: Unustainable Development,” in jerusalemfund.org, (11 July 2001).

⁴⁵ Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism A Moral Critique* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 1997), 146.

⁴⁶ Issam Al-Khatib et al., “Microbiological Quality of Food Samples From Restaurants and Sweet Shops In Developing Countries: A Case Study From the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” *International Journal of Environmental Health Research* 79, no. 4 (2004), 445.

⁴⁷ Menachem Klein, *Jerusalem: The Contested City* (New York: NYU Press, 2001), 37.

establishment of checkpoints and the apartheid wall made it impossible for Palestinians living within the Ramallah area to get to their jobs outside the city limits. As a result of this, many Palestinians were laid off from their jobs and were left on the streets struggling to make ends meet. Prior to the start of the Second Intifada, approximately 11 percent of Palestinians were unemployed; that number increased to 41 percent in the third quarter of 2002.⁴⁸ Some estimate that approximately 125,000 Palestinian workers relied on jobs inside Israel for their modest income.⁴⁹ Palestinian employment in Israel is currently restricted to a few sectors: construction, agriculture, industry and services.⁵⁰ Travel to Jerusalem also became difficult once the Second Intifada started, making it more difficult for different Palestinians to pray regularly at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. In order to get to Jerusalem, a special permit was required which made it hard to reach the holy city. Israeli settlements also increased around the Ramallah area.

From the time of the signing of the Oslo Accords until the outbreak of the Second Intifada, Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip increased by 52 percent, and the number of settlers rose from 261,000 to 373,000. This is considered to be the fastest rate of settlement growth since the occupation of the Palestinian lands by Israel in 1967. The building of settlements was accomplished through the confiscation of private and public Palestinian land, the uprooting of olive, citrus and other orchards, and the bulldozing of agricultural fields, the main income for Palestinian farmers.⁵¹ The Palestinian Census Bureau

⁴⁸ Salem Aljuni, "The Palestinian Economy and the Second Intifada," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no. 4 (2003), 69.

⁴⁹ Avi Kober, *Israel's Wars of Attrition: Attrition Challenges to Democratic States* (London: Routledge, 2009), 87.

⁵⁰ Kav LaOved, *Employment of Palestinians in Israel and the Settlements* (Tel Aviv: LaOved, 2012), 8.

⁵¹ Lisa Taraki, *Living Palestine: Family Survival, Resistance, and Mobility Under Occupation* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 104.

reported that as of 2012, there were approximately 144 Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank. Of the 144 settlements, approximately twenty four settlements were concentrated in the central West Bank district of Ramallah.⁵² Due to these settlements, a network of bypass roads was established around the city of Ramallah for the use of Israeli settlers.⁵³

The start of the Second Intifada also brought a rise in unemployment. In Ramallah, the current unemployment rate has grown to 34 percent and the poverty rate is 51 percent and increasing.⁵⁴ The household size of a Palestinian families also played a huge role when determining whether or not a family is suffering from poverty. For example, a household size of 4-5 individuals living in Ramallah had a poverty rate of 12 percent when placed on the national poverty line. If you have a household size of ten plus individuals within the city of Ramallah, the poverty household rate was approximately 46 percent.⁵⁵

Due to the Second Intifada, Ramallah faced isolation, economic deterioration, and infrastructure damage from which the city still continues to recuperate. For five years, many Palestinians living in Ramallah struggled financially. Tourism also decreased within the city. When tourists would come to Ramallah, they would visit major businesses, media centers, local NGO's, and international organizations. What attracted tourists the most was the city's relaxed religious atmosphere and the cafes along its main streets. Prior to the start of the Second Intifada on September, 28, 2000, it was estimated that there were 1,222 tourist trips within the Palestinian

⁵² IMEMC & Agencies, "Israel Built Four New Settlements in 2012," in *imemc.org*, 15 August 2013 <<http://www.imemc.org/article/65970>> (19 Aug 2015).

⁵³ Martine Rothblatt, *Two Stars for Peace: The Case for Using U.S. Statehood to Achieve Lasting Peace in the Middle East* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2003), 23.

⁵⁴ Microfinance Department, "Utilizing the Palestine Simple Poverty Scorecard: Baseline Poverty Study of UNRWA Microfinance Clients in the West Bank," in *unrwa.org*, Apr 2011 <<http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011050234417.pdf>>, 12 (8 Jul 2015).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

territory. Once the Second Intifada began however, the numbers slipped remarkably. In 2002 it was estimated that there were only 210 tourist trips within the Palestinian territories.⁵⁶

Prior to the Second Intifada, the hotel industry within the Palestinian territories was relatively stable due to the calm existing between the Palestinian and Israelis, and as a result of the Oslo Accords implementations and the high expectations all over the world that a just peace was approaching quickly. In 1996 there were approximately 100 functional hotels in the Palestinian territories. Once the Second Intifada erupted in 2000, the numbers began to decrease. In 2002, the number of hotels declined within the Palestinian territories to just eighty five. Many hotels were either damaged or destroyed by the Israeli military during the Second Intifada.⁵⁷ During the Second Intifada, many tourists feared to travel anywhere within the West Bank, and Israelis made travel within the area difficult due to the establishment of checkpoints and the Separation Barrier. Many buildings and areas which tourists would visit in Ramallah were destroyed during the Israeli occupation of the city. One of those buildings was the Muqataa (Arafat's Headquarters), one of the major political buildings within the city.

Farmers were also affected economically as a result of the Second Intifada. As noted earlier, the Israeli army uprooted and bulldozed thousands of Palestinian- owned olive trees. The uprooting of just one olive tree costs a farmer about 700 dollars. When you plant a new tree, it takes five years before it produces anything, and then another five years before it reaches the level of production of a mature tree. Palestinian farmers worked knowing that the IDF or Israeli settlers could destroy their crops at any moment. Farmers rely on their harvest in order to provide

⁵⁶ "Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics," in *palestineconomy.ps*, 2002
≤<http://www.palestineconomy.ps/files/server/20142411172720-1.pdf>> (8 July 2015).

⁵⁷ Dr. Fadle Mustafa Naqib, ed. "Quarterly and Economic Social Matter" *Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics* 8, 2007, 30.

for their family. Unfortunately, during the Intifada many farmers had to witness the uprooting of their olive trees.⁵⁸ As a result of this, olive oil production decreased within the area. Prior to the Second Intifada, the Palestinian Plant Production Division would export a surplus of fifteen thousand tons of olive oil a year. However these exports stopped once closures were enforced during the Second Intifada.⁵⁹

During the first four years of the Second Intifada, it is estimated that approximately 400,000 olive trees were uprooted by Israeli forces.⁶⁰ The estimated value of the olive trees was well over 60 million US dollars. The systematic attack on the olive groves of Palestine constitutes an immense economic and environmental disaster that will impact Palestinian society for many years to come. It is estimated that the annual income generated by olive production for Palestinians is approximately 40 percent of the gross product of fruit trees in Palestine and more than 20 percent of the overall national agricultural output. The olive crop makes up approximately 4.6 percent of the Palestinian GDP.⁶¹

Due to the Second Intifada, many citizens in Ramallah reached poverty levels never seen before within their family households. My uncle Majed, a 60 year old Palestinian who currently resides in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, witnessed this while visiting Ramallah during the intifada. During the interview with my uncle, he discussed how he believes the Second Intifada caused an increase of poverty within the city of Ramallah. “Before the Second Intifada occurred, poverty

⁵⁸ Wendy Pearlman, *Stories of Everyday Life from the Second Intifada* (New York: Thunder's Mouth/Nation, 2003), 160.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 161.

⁶⁰ Monitoring Israeli Colonization Activities, Olive Harvest in Palestine. “Another Season, Another Anguish,” in *poica.org*, 11 June 2004 <<http://www.poica.org/details.php?Article=376>> (21 Aug 2015).

⁶¹ Ibid.

existed in Ramallah but not as bad as it became during the Intifada,” my uncle stated. “Ramallah was considered one of the only prosperous cities in the occupied West Bank. However, that changed when the Second Intifada occurred. During the Intifada, Ramallah suffered greatly because Yasser Arafat’s headquarters, the Muqataa, was located within the city. Because of that, gun battles were always intense between Israeli Defense Forces and Palestinian resistance fighters. Curfews were also always enforced on the city. As a result, Ramallah residents could not go to work and without any type of work there was no type of income flowing into certain homes to pay for food, utensils, clothing, etc. Independent business owners were also affected because they were not allowed to open up their shops on a day to day basis to make a suitable living. As a result all of this, poverty would find its way into certain homes where poverty never existed before.”⁶²

During the interview with my uncle, he stated that the ones he believed suffered the most were the people who lived in Ramallah who did not have any family members living outside of Palestine. According to him, some families living in Ramallah struggled to find a job during the Intifada; but they did not have to worry much because they could ask for financial help from their family members living in the United States or other parts of the world.

One way to understand what my uncle said is by analyzing remittances. Remittances are among the most tangible links between migration and development. According to the Migration Policy Institute, it is estimated that in the year 2000, the West Bank and Gaza received \$1 billion dollars in international remittances. Due to the rupture of the Second Intifada in September of 2000, the amount of money received began to gradually decrease from year to year. For example,

⁶² Majed Farhud, interview by author (16 June, 2015).

in the year 2005 the amount of money received in the West Bank and Gaza was approximately \$643 million dollars.⁶³

Louay Joudeh, a 25- year- old Palestinian who currently resides in Gretna, Louisiana, also sat with me and discussed the economy in Ramallah during the Second Intifada. Like my Uncle Majed, Louay believes that Ramallah was greatly affected economically from 2000 to 2005. While living in Ramallah, Louay and his family struggled to bring food products and supplies into their homes because independent business owners were not allowed to open up their businesses due to the curfews that were enforced by the Israeli Army. “When the Second Intifada occurred, things changed for the worse,” Louay stated. “Ramallah became a dead city due to harsh curfews placed by the Israeli Defense Forces, and because of that, independent business owners were not making any money. Palestinians in Ramallah were also not allowed to go to work depending whether or not there was a curfew placed on the city. Poverty increased in the city of Ramallah because of the Intifada. College graduates were unable to find any type of job with their college degrees during this time period because no one was hiring due to the harsh living conditions within the city.”⁶⁴

Due to the long- term curfews during the Second Intifada, many Palestinians business owners permanently closed their stores and migrated to other areas around the world hoping to start a new future outside the conflict. The closure of businesses in Ramallah was an economic

⁶³ Migration Policy Institute, “Total Remittance Inflows and Outflows,”
< <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/global-remittances-guide> > (22 Aug. 2015).

⁶⁴ Louay Joudeh, interview by author (12 June, 2015).

casualty of the Intifada. The real per capita income fell 41 percent and domestic investment declined to 90 percent below what it was before the start of the Second Intifada in 2000.⁶⁵

During the occupation of Ramallah, many Israeli soldiers did not care about the livelihood of Palestinians. As a result of that, many businesses would be destroyed and ripped apart. In the book *Inheriting the Holy Land: An American's Search for Hope in the Middle East*, Jennifer Miller tells the story about an American fast food restaurant, Checkers, which was destroyed by Israeli Forces in Ramallah. The owners of the business were the aunt and uncle of Reem, a Palestinian who resides in Ramallah. During an interview with the author, Reem tells Miller how the Israelis parked their tanks inside the mall believing that Palestinian militants were hiding inside her aunt's and uncle's restaurant. No militants were found within the restaurant, but Israeli soldiers ate the food found inside and vandalized the store afterwards.⁶⁶

Many other Palestinians suffered a similar fate to Reem. Like Reem, Belal Shalabi's family owned an independent business in the center of Ramallah. He emphasized how the business struggled financially during the years 2000 to 2005. "My family was greatly affected financially during the Second Intifada," Belal stated. "In the heart of Ramallah, my father and his brothers are partners in a very busy market which sold many different items. The majority of the items within the market were household supplies which many families counted on in order to live comfortable lives. Before the start of the Intifada, the market was thriving because of the constant traffic it was receiving on a day to day basis. Once the clashes between Israelis and Palestinians started in 2000, things changed for the worse. The Israeli army would go on and

⁶⁵ Jennifer Miller, *Inheriting the Holy Land: An American's Search for Hope in the Middle East* (New York: Ballantine, 2005), 127.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

occupy the city of Ramallah and because of that, curfews were enforced on the city. Due to the curfews, my family were not allowed to open up the business which prevented any type of cash flow from entering the family household. These curfews would go on and economically affect not just my family but the whole family clan in general because that business helped feed our family and it also payed the major bills.”⁶⁷

According to Belal, his family’s store struggled financially for four years. Once the Second Intifada was nearing its end, the business began coming back to normal. For a few years, Belal and his family had to make sure they maintained a stable cash flow which could last until the Second Intifada was over. Around the year 2007, members of Belal’s family moved to the United States and began opening businesses which provided the family with money just in case Ramallah suffered another occupation under the Israeli army, which would therefore force the business to close yet again. The family could no longer rely on that store in particular. The Second Intifada thus had economic effects in Palestine and also provoked migration by Palestinians in search of economic opportunities abroad.

The Political Impact the Second Intifada had on Ramallah

Prior to the start of the Second Intifada, politics within the city of Ramallah were functional and stable. Many Palestinians believe that the heart of Palestinian political life is found within Ramallah, the de facto capital city of the West Bank Palestinian territories. Before the Second Intifada began, the main political group that was in charge of the local government was Fatah. Fatah is a major political party that began as the Palestinian National Liberation

⁶⁷ Belal Shalabi, interview by author (31 May 2015).

Movement in 1965.⁶⁸ The founder of Fatah was Yasser Arafat, who later became the chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and president of the Palestinian National Authority.⁶⁹ Arafat spent the majority of his life dedicated to fighting Israel. For more than sixty years, Arafat's main political agenda was the extermination of Israel. However, his agenda gradually changed during the 1990's.

During the 1990's, Arafat wanted to take a different approach and establish peace for the Palestinian people. In 1994, Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin shared the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts in the Oslo peace process and there was a sense of hope that a new chapter in Israeli-Palestinian relationships had begun.⁷⁰ Unfortunately the efforts to bring peace between Palestinian and Israelis ultimately failed once the Second Intifada ignited in 2000. During the height of the Second Intifada, the Israeli army damaged or destroyed numerous Palestinian police stations as well as many vehicles, communications equipment and networks, weapon supplies, and detention centers in the West Bank and Gaza, including the West Bank police headquarters.⁷¹ The Muqata, Yasser Arafat's political headquarters in Ramallah, suffered the most damage, resulting in both political and symbolic damage.

Many Palestinians believe that the Muqata is the reason why Ramallah is the heart of their politics. During the five years of the Second Intifada, the Muqata gained an iconic reputation. Built in the 1920s during the British mandate, the Muqata was used by the British as

⁶⁸ Jillian Becker, *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestinian Liberation Organization* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2014), 52.

⁶⁹ David Rosen, *Child Soldiers: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbra: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 138.

⁷⁰ Kylie Baxter, and Shahram Akbarzadeh, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Roots of Anti- Americanism* (London: Routledge, 2008), 144.

⁷¹ Farida Deif, and Lucy Mair, "A Question of Security: Violence Against Palestinian Women and Girls: Occupied Palestinian Territories", *Human Rights Watch* 18, no. 7 (2006), 17.

a military headquarters, a court of law and also a prison. After the British left in 1948, Jordan turned the Muqata into a military base. When Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 war, it was converted back into a prison and a center for occupation troops. For approximately 25 years the Muqata was controlled by the Israeli government, but all that changed during the Oslo Process. During the Oslo Process in 1994, the Israeli government gave the Palestinian National Authority the rights to control the Muqata for themselves. As a result of that, the Muqata became the West Bank headquarters for the Palestinian government. It became Yasser Arafat's domain.⁷²

After 1994, the Palestinian government controlled the political arena through the Muqata. However all that changed during the Second Intifada. During the Second Intifada Israel seized the Muqata, and placed Yasser Arafat under house arrest for an entire year. As a result of that, many Palestinians viewed the Muqata as a ravaged building that symbolized Israel's invasion and its strategy of waging "total war" against the Palestinian people. Yet it was also a symbol of defiance: Yasser Arafat persisted, besieged, in the sole building of the Muqata before he became mysteriously ill and later died on November 11, 2004, at Percy Military Hospital outside Paris, France.⁷³

Once the Second Intifada began, many of Fatah's other governmental buildings were destroyed or severely damaged, such as the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance Central Office, and the Ministry of Agriculture.⁷⁴ Beyond symbols,

⁷² Robin Wright, *Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East* (London: Penguin Books 2009), 24.

⁷³ Priscilla Roberts, *Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Essential Reference Guide* (Santa Barbra; ABC-CLIO, 2012), 29.

⁷⁴ Palestinian NGO Initiative In Jerusalem, "Palestinian Governmental Institutions in Ramallah: Report on the Destruction," in *jnul.huji.ac.il*, 22 April 2002 <<http://www.jnul.huji.ac.il/ia/archivedsites/gushshalom010204/www.gush-shalom.org/terror/report2.html>>

politicians too were affected. One such person persecuted in particular was Marwan Al-Bargouthi, a former student leader of Fatah at Beir Zeit University. Due to his political affiliations, Bargouthi was exiled to Jordan in 1987. He was permitted to return to the occupied West Bank in 1994. Since his return in 1994, Bargouthi became secretary general in the West Bank. In 1996, he was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council for the district of Ramallah. However, during the Second Intifada, Bargouthi was arrested by the Israeli army, and sentenced to five life sentences due to his political affiliations with Yasser Arafat. As a result of that, Bargouthi became a prominent Palestinian public figure and an icon for the Fatah movement.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, without an active government to govern the Palestinian people, Palestinians began to blame Yasser Arafat for the lack of political leadership. Haydar Abd Al Shafi, a Palestinian community organizer and political leader, believed that it was the leaders who had a duty to help organize the Intifada. Due to the leader's failure to help contribute, Al-Shafi believes that it allowed the Intifada to play into Israel's hand.⁷⁶ Due to the lack of political leadership during the start of the Second Intifada, many other political groups began making a name for themselves during the occupation of Ramallah. One political group that would gain the most political support due to its violent ideology towards Israel was Hamas.⁷⁷

Hamas is a more radical Palestinian political group formed in late 1987 during the First Palestinian Intifada, and is considered a terrorist organization by Israel and the United States. Its roots go back to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Hamas is known to have a military wing

⁷⁵ Tikva Honig- Parnass, *Between the Lines: Israel, the Palestinians and the U.S. War on Terror* (Chicago: Haymaker Books, 2007), 18.

⁷⁶ Nigel Parsons, *The Politics of the Palestinian Authority: From Oslo to Al-Aqsa* (London: Routledge, 2012).

⁷⁷ Marc A. Walther, *Hamas Between Violence and Pragmatism* (Stoughton: Books on Demand, 2012), 81.

known as Izz Al- Din Al- Qassam Brigades.⁷⁸ This military wing is responsible for many attacks on Israel and also the Palestinian territories since the 1990's. The attacks that were conducted by Hamas included large-scale bombings of Israeli cities, small arms attacks, improvised roadside explosives, and rocket attacks from Gaza. In a group charter that was published in 1988, Hamas called for Palestinian independence and the destruction of Israel.⁷⁹ For many desperate Palestinians, Hamas, not Arafat's Fatah, became the new symbol of hope and faith.

During the Second Intifada, Hamas became active both politically and militarily. Prior to the Second Intifada, Hamas was not very popular. Palestinians knew about the existence of the political group, but not many supported it. When Hamas was first established, it was popular primarily among Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. Once the Second Intifada began, Hamas saw the uprising as a chance to spread its support among Palestinians, especially those living in Ramallah. During the Second Intifada, Hamas would go on and conduct multiple attacks on Israel. From these attacks, Hamas continuously grew its support among Palestinians.

While radical Hamas gained support among Palestinians, Fatah lost followers. Many Palestinians accused Fatah of corruption.⁸⁰ Such accusations have continued up until current times. Recent documents have been released exposing the Palestinian Authority of corruption. Two of these documents represent efforts by officials to redirect public funds for their own benefits. One was a request by a diplomatic advisor to Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas for \$4 million dollars from Bahrain's foreign minister to fund a private complex for PA

⁷⁸ Bonnie Lynn Docherty, "Indiscriminate Fire: Palestinian Rocket Attacks on Israeli Artillery Shelling in the Gaza Strip," *Human Rights Watch* 19, no. 1 (2007), 28.

⁷⁹ Menachem Klein, "Hamas in Power," *Middle East Journal* 61, no. 3 (2007), 442.

⁸⁰ Jeremy Jones, *Negotiating Change: The New Politics of the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 71.

officials in an upscale neighborhood in Ramallah. The official, Majdi al-Khalidi, insisted that the complex was intended to “resist the Israeli settlements,” even though no settlements were nearby. A second document was submitted by Nazmi Muhanna, general director of the Palestinian Crossing and Borders Authority. He demanded that the government cover his daughter’s schooling as well as medical treatment for his family living in Jordan for a total of \$15,000 dollars, saying it was permitted by government rules. The Palestinian Authority has continued to deny misallocations of money. However, with the decaying and growing dissatisfaction over Fatah, many Palestinians have questioned its way of doing business.⁸¹

One Palestinian who showed his frustration about the political system was Jalal, a former Palestinian resident who lived in the city of Ramallah. During an interview with Jalal, he spoke about the frustration he had with the political system. “Man I tell you, if you thought politics in the United States was crazy, you never seen politics in Palestine,” Jalal stated. “Prior to the start of the Second Intifada, Fatah was the main body of government for the Palestinian people. However once Yasser Arafat passed away, Mahmoud Abbas took over and became president. During his first two years in office, many Palestinians began to show dissatisfaction with the way Abbas and Fatah were governing things. Many believed that the system was corrupt and that Abbas was working with Israel against the Palestinian people. As a result of that, Hamas began gaining monstrous in many Palestinian cities, including Ramallah (sic).”⁸²

⁸¹ Ahuva Balofsky, “Leaked Documents Proving PA Corruption Raises Outcry,” in *breakingisraelnews.com*, 13 August 2015 <<http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/46832/leaked-documents-proving-pa-corruption-raises-outcry-judea-and-samaria/#CiyhjZR7JvQtWArD.97>> (28 July 2015).

⁸² Jalal Jubreel, interview by author (15 June 2015).

Due to the increasingly prominent role Hamas played in the Second Intifada and also the dissatisfaction towards the way Fatah was running things, many Palestinians believed that a change in the body of government was necessary. In 2006, a Palestinian Legislative District election was set in motion in order to determine who would control the government. The United States and Israel hoped that Fatah would win the election. Both countries have a better relationship with Fatah, and both view Hamas as a terrorist organization and a deadly threat to Israel. The elections did not go as planned and Hamas shocked the world by winning a majority of the seats in the Palestinian legislative body. During the 2006 election, Hamas would go on to win 44.45 percent of the popular vote of the Palestinian people, and also claim seventy six of the 132 parliamentary seats, giving the party at war with Israel the right to form the next cabinet under the Palestinian Authority's president, Mahmoud Abbas, who was democratically elected to be the leader of Fatah following the death of Yasser Arafat in 2004.⁸³ Ismail Haniyah, a senior political leader of Hamas became the prime minister under this newly elected cabinet.

In the city of Ramallah, an area predominantly controlled by Fatah for many years, Fatah lost control as a result of the 2006 elections. Of the five seats available in the city of Ramallah, Hamas won four seats, giving them full control of the city. Fatah was able to claim one seat due to Christians voting for Fatah within the city. Many Palestinians blame the leading officials of Fatah for their loss due to the slowness of the peace process with Israel and also rampant Fatah corruption. Due to the 2006 election, Hamas became a political force, feared by Israel and the United States due to their radicalism. Yet they were a democratically elected government that

⁸³ Scott Wilson, "Hamas Sweeps Palestinian Elections, Complicating Peace Efforts in MidEast," in *washingtonpost.com*, 27 January 2006 < <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/26/AR2006012600372.html> > (18 July 2015).

was voted into office by a Palestinian turnout rate of 74.6 percent amongst those living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.⁸⁴

Due to the formation of the new legislative body, both the United States and the European Union announced that they were halting economic assistance to the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority government, but humanitarian aid would continue to flow through international and non-governmental organizations. It has been estimated that the United States suspended \$300 million dollars in aid to the Palestinian people.⁸⁵ In addition, the Palestinian Authority also lost access to banking services and loans as banks around the world refused to deal with Hamas, a recognized terrorist organization by many countries around the world.⁸⁶

Due to these harsh economic sanctions, Hamas found itself in a fiscal crisis. Many members of government did not receive their wages regularly and poverty levels deepened in the Palestinian territories. It is estimated that some 67,000 were either forced by the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah to stop working or were fired by the new de facto authorities. Many basic humanitarian supplies were also taken away from the people, such as housing, education, health, water, sanitation, and electricity supply. Perhaps 34 percent of Palestinians living in the Ramallah area lived in poverty since the international sanctions were enforced against the elected Hamas government.⁸⁷ As a result of the increase in poverty, tensions began to grow between armed supporters of Fatah and Hamas. Both sides began blaming each other for the economic

⁸⁴ Stephen Sloan, and Sean K. Anderson, *Historical Dictionary of Terrorism* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 235.

⁸⁵ Paul Morro, "International Reaction to the Palestinian Unity Government," in *fas.org*, 9 May 2007 <<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22659.pdf>> (29 Sept 2015).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Anwar Qabaja, Jad Issac, and Hilmi S. Salem, "Poverty Indicators in Palestine," in *academia.edu*, June 2007

decline. This would ultimately lead to domestic bloodshed between Fatah and Hamas in 2007 and approximately 100 Palestinians were killed during the civil war like-violence.⁸⁸

Due to the growing instability in the government, Hamas lost governmental control in Ramallah and other prominent areas of the West Bank in 2007. They were able to maintain control in the Gaza Strip, which they still govern till today. Due to the removal of the government of Hamas in the West Bank, the Prime Minister for the Palestinian people changed. The current Prime Minister is Rami Hamdallah, a Fatah Palestinian politician.⁸⁹

Following the removal of Hamas in the West Bank, many Palestinians still believe that the Palestinian authority is corrupt. In a 2007 poll conducted by the Palestinian Branch of Transparency International, it is estimated that approximately 84 percent of Palestinians respondents indicated that they believe that corruption still exists within the Palestinian government. As a result of this, many have basically given up on the future of Palestinian politics.⁹⁰

Conclusion

The Second Intifada played an instrumental role in the lives of many Palestinians living in Ramallah. Prior to the start of the Second Intifada, the majority of Palestinians living in Ramallah, and other areas of the West Bank were living in times of prosperity and peace due to the results of the Oslo Accords. The economic, political, and social life of many Palestinians was

⁸⁸ Aoibhín de Búrca, “*Preventing Political Violence Against Civilians: Nationalist Militant Conflict in Northern Ireland, Israel And Palestine (Rethinking Political Violence)*,” (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 135

⁸⁹ Fred M. Shelly, *Governments around the World: From Democracies to Theocracies* (Santa Barbra: ABC-CLIO, 2015), 343

⁹⁰ Lori Allen, *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2013), 171.

relatively stable with minimal conflicts during these times. However, once the Intifada began, life ultimately changed for the worse for many.

This can be clearly seen in the social, political, and economic hardships many Ramallah Palestinians suffered due to the ongoing violence between the Palestinian people and the Israeli Defense Forces from 2000 until 2005. Indeed, many Palestinians came to believe that migrating to another country was necessary due to the insecurity and also the attendant economic situation. It is estimated that around 100,000 Palestinians left the West Bank from late 2000 until 2007.⁹¹

Like these other Palestinians, I left the area and returned to the United States due to the social, political, and economic hardships the city of Ramallah was dealing with during the Second Intifada. This experience would go on and shape my understanding of the events, and sensitized me to the challenges that Palestinians were dealing with then and since.

It has also led me to how peace, and Ramallah, might be restored. Peace between Israel and the Palestinians is only feasible if both sides make concessions, as a recent article in the article journal of Foreign Affairs suggests: “If a practical peace is ever to be achieved, Israeli and Palestinian leaders will need to accept that their demands will be only partially met. A full right of return for Palestinians, for example, will simply not be possible under and realistic settlement, and even those Palestinians who accept the existence of Israel are not likely to forget their dismay at its creation. Conditioning peace with the Palestinians on their acceptance of Zionism’s basic principle is therefore not only a stretch; it also confuses perfect conflict resolution for achievable peace- which tends to be ugly, practical and unsatisfying.”⁹²

⁹¹ Eyal Benvenisti, Chaim Gans, and Sari Hanafi, ed. *Israel and Palestinian Refugees* (New York City: Springer, 2007), 31.

⁹² Natan Sachs, “Why Israel Waits,” *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 6 (2015), 78.

A better understanding of the history is one way to start. This thesis records the history of the Second Intifada, and how it affected the lives of many Palestinians living in the Ramallah area. The history of the Second Intifada has not received the scholarly study one might expect. Perhaps because many were more focused on studying and writing about the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, and ignored the hostile tensions occurring between Palestinians and Israelis. While some journalists have successfully highlighted the voices of Palestinians during the Second Intifada, it is important to pursue historical explanations that demonstrate the significance this conflict had on Palestinians in a place like Ramallah.

Hopefully this thesis will allow interested observers to continue to tell the story of the Second Intifada, a significant event in the ongoing Israeli/Palestinian conflict. While movements, such as the Second Intifada are hard to track for historians, it is time to pin them down with the sources we do have available ranging from all the information that is available in libraries, to the internet and also eye-witness accounts to recount these events.

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Vita

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