



**Nonviolence
in the context of the Palestinian resistance
against the Israeli occupation**

A Master thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
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I hereby declare that this Master thesis is the result of my own work. Material from the published or unpublished work of others referred to in the thesis is credited to the author in question in the text.

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1. Introduction

*The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral,
begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy.
Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it.
(Martin Luther King Jr.)*

The history of the 20th century is full of examples of violence in the form of war, terrorism, dictatorship, genocide, oppression, and usurpation. At the beginning of the 21st century, this sad history does not seem to abate. At this moment in time, roughly forty wars or armed conflicts are being waged worldwide.¹ Of these forty wars and armed conflicts, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is only one. The territory being fought over in this conflict is tiny in world terms, and the number of lives lost is small compared to other wars. Yet it is this conflict which time and again attracts the world's attention.

The roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict go back to the late nineteenth century and the birth of modern Zionism as a political ideology and an organisational tool which ultimately culminated in the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Today there are various elements present in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including social, ethnic, religious, cultural, and national dimensions. The conflict is characterised by seemingly never-ending acts of violence, enmity and hatred. The use of violence has had devastating consequences for both Israeli and Palestinian society, for there is hardly a family on either side that has not experienced loss and suffering as a direct result of the conflict.

In spite of all the violence, the 20th century has, however, also witnessed some of the greatest nonviolent struggles of all times, such as Gandhi's struggles in India and South Africa, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights campaign in the United States. These struggles have vividly demonstrated how disenfranchised communities can address power asymmetries through nonviolence in order to pave the way for self-determination, equality, justice, human rights, and democracy.

This thesis will show that there are segments of Palestinian society which are attempting to use a strategy based on the philosophy and practice of nonviolence in order to achieve self-determination and to attain equality, justice, human rights, and democracy. It will be argued that a sustained strategy of nonviolent resistance supported by third parties can shift the power asymmetry in this conflict and thus prepare the way for negotiations.

¹ http://www.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de/publish/Ipw/Akuf/kriege_aktuell.htm
(last accessed 27/09/2008)

The objectives of this thesis are firstly to provide an overview of the concept of nonviolence with a particular reference to the Middle Eastern context; secondly to present a detailed picture of the current nonviolent struggle within the Palestinian territories; thirdly to create a tool for generating discussion and awareness; fourthly to recommend strategies which third parties may pursue in order to support the Palestinian nonviolent struggle; and fifthly to suggest areas for further research.

The structure of the thesis is as follows: Part A provides the theoretical and historical background, including a definition of the concept of nonviolence, a brief overview of its development over time in both theory and practice, and its usage in a Middle Eastern context. Part B provides a detailed picture of the current nonviolent struggle within the Palestinian territories based on interviews conducted with Palestinian nonviolence practitioners. Drawing upon these interviews, strategies for third parties will be presented and areas for further research will be suggested.

PART A

2. Definitions

The purpose of this section is firstly to define the term nonviolence, including its aims and methods, and secondly to give a brief overview of the historical development of the concept of nonviolence, both in theory and in practice.

2.1 Defining nonviolence

Gene Sharp defines nonviolence as:

“a technique of conducting protest, resistance, and intervention without physical violence by: (a) acts of omission (that is, the participants refuse to perform acts which they usually perform, or are required by law or regulation to perform); or (b) acts of commission (that is, the participants perform acts which they usually do not perform, are not expected by custom to perform, or are forbidden by law or regulation from performing); or (c) a combination of both.”

(Quoted in McCarthy and Kruegler 1993, 2-3)

McCarthy and Kruegler interpret this the following way: Firstly, nonviolence is an active, not a passive behaviour which is used to influence the course and outcome of any given conflict. Secondly, it is a strategy for protesting, resisting, and intervening and cannot be equated with conflict resolution tools such as negotiation or mediation. Thirdly, nonviolence operates outside of institutionalised channels. Fourthly, the effects of nonviolent protest, resistance, and intervention can be assessed independently, regardless of whether violence is also present in the conflict in question or not. Lastly, nonviolence takes the form of specific methods which were classified by Gene Sharp as *protest and persuasion*, *noncooperation*, and *nonviolent intervention*. (McCarthy and Kruegler 1993, 3-4)

Véronique Dudouet defines nonviolence furthermore as resistance to both direct and structural violence. Terms such as *nonviolent resistance* or *nonviolent struggle* emphasise the conscious opposition to violence. (Dudouet 2008, 4) In this thesis, all three terms – *nonviolence*, *nonviolent resistance*, and *nonviolent struggle* – will be used interchangeably.

2.2 Aims

McCarthy distinguishes between three different levels of aims or goals which groups conducting nonviolent struggles might try to reach. The first level would be *ultimate goals*. These are the changes which the group wants to achieve in the end. This could mean changing a specific situation, possibly even to the extent of a revolutionary change. The second level would be *process goals*. These goals refer to activities that must be concluded by the group engaging in nonviolence in order to be successful. Process goals range from choosing suitable nonviolent actions to raising the necessary funds for these actions. The third level would be *achievement goals*. These goals refer to the immediate or intermediate results of a single nonviolent action or a series of nonviolent actions. The immediate result of a demonstration, for example, might be to mobilise other people to take part in future activities. The intermediate result of a single nonviolent action or a series of nonviolent actions could be the opening up of avenues for dialogue with other elements of society. These intermediate results should not be mistaken for ultimate goals. (McCarthy 1990, 116-117)

2.3 Methods

In order to achieve the aforementioned goals, nonviolence practitioners have a wide range of methods available to them. The most comprehensive collection of nonviolent methods was

compiled by Gene Sharp in his seminal work *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*. In this manual for direct action, he lists 198 different nonviolent strategies which he divides into three categories. The first category contains methods for nonviolent protest and persuasion. According to Sharp, these methods are “mainly symbolic acts of peaceful opposition or of attempted persuasion” (Sharp 1973b, 117) and include formal statements, such as the holding of public speeches, symbolic public acts, such as the displaying of flags, or drama and music, such as performing plays, among many others. The second category contains methods of noncooperation, including social, economic, and political noncooperation. These methods allow the activist to “deliberately withdraw the usual forms and degree of their cooperation with the person, activity, institution or regime with which they have become engaged in conflict.” (Sharp 1973b, 183) Strategies for social noncooperation include the ostracism of persons, for example through social boycotts, or the withdrawal from the social system, for example through collective disappearance. Strategies for economic noncooperation can be divided into economic boycotts, such as actions by consumers, i.e. consumers’ boycotts, and strikes, such as industrial strikes or agricultural strikes. Strategies for political noncooperation range from citizens’ noncooperation with the government, as expressed in a boycott of elections, for example, to action by government personnel, for example through the blocking of lines of command and information. The third category contains methods for nonviolent intervention. These methods “may disrupt, and even destroy, established behavior patterns, policies, relationships, or institutions which are seen as objectionable; or they may establish new behavior patterns, policies, relationships, or institutions which are preferred.” (Sharp 1973b, 357) Strategies for nonviolent intervention include psychological intervention, such as fasting or nonviolent harassment, physical interventions, such as sit-ins, or social interventions, such as guerilla theatre, among many others.

3. Historical development

The roots of contemporary nonviolent theory and practice can be found in many of the world’s ancient religious traditions. More recently, the works of writers such as Henry David Thoreau who elaborated on civil disobedience or Leo Tolstoy who advocated a radical Christian pacifism have contributed to the development of a theoretical concept of nonviolence. (Zunes, Kurtz and Asher 1999, 3) The most important developments in the field of nonviolence theory occurred in the 20th century, however.

3.1 Nonviolence theory and practice in the 20th century

Undoubtedly the most well-known example of a nonviolent struggle during the 20th century is that of Gandhi's struggle against British colonial rule in India. Gandhi was not just the foremost practitioner of nonviolence; through his prolific writing he also provided the basis for a theory of nonviolence. (McCarthy and Kruegler 1993, 5) Gandhi drew upon the ancient religious traditions, as well as the thoughts of writers like Thoreau and Tolstoy. His approach was one of principled nonviolence: he believed that nonviolence was a moral necessity and a way of life. (Dudouet 2008, 6; Martin and Varney 2003, 115) Gandhi introduced the term *satyagraha* or "truth force" which is made up of the two Gujarati words *Satya* (truth) and *Agraha* (firmness). This term describes not just a nonviolent strategy but rather emphasises the spiritual element inherent in any nonviolent action. (Dudouet 2008, 6-7) The principled approach to nonviolence was further developed by faith-based organisations, such as the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, or the Quakers and the Mennonites. Individual religious leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu, and Bishop Câmara, have likewise played a role in further developing the concept of principled nonviolence. (Dudouet 2008, 7)

A different approach to principled nonviolence is pragmatic nonviolence, as embodied in the writings of Gene Sharp. Supporters of pragmatic nonviolence argue that nonviolent action is superior to violence either because it is more effective in certain situations, because it is less costly, or because no military alternative is available. (Dudouet 2008, 7; Martin and Varney 2003, 117) Supporters of pragmatic nonviolence argue that nonviolence is a strategy, not a goal in itself. In practice, however, principled and pragmatic nonviolence often merge.

In general it can be said that over the course of the 20th century, nonviolence has developed from an *ad hoc* strategy employed due to religious or ethical principles to a much more institutionalised method of struggle.

Nonviolent struggles have been fought across the globe for numerous reasons during the 20th century, be it to overthrow repressive regimes, prevent military coups, or defend human rights. Nonviolent campaigns have ranged from Chinese boycotts of Japanese products during the First World War; the struggle against British colonial rule in India; attempts to resist Nazi occupation in countries such as Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands; the American civil rights movement; the "colour" revolutions in Eastern Europe; to the nonviolent uprisings in the Philippines which first overthrew the Marcos dictatorship and later ousted President

Estrada. (Sharp 2003, 6-7) These are only very few examples of nonviolent struggles in which ordinary people took up nonviolence to bring about social change.

4. Nonviolence in the Middle East

Although nonviolent struggles have been fought worldwide across different continents, examples of nonviolent struggles in the Middle East are strangely absent from the nonviolence literature, the assumption being that nonviolence is a concept which is not inherent to or compatible with Islam and consequently cannot gain a foothold in a Muslim society. Before turning to a brief historical overview of nonviolent struggles in the Middle East it is therefore necessary to determine which role nonviolence plays in Islam.

4.1 Nonviolence in Islam

There are three different schools of thought regarding the status of nonviolence in Islam. According to the first school of thought Islam neither advocates nor rejects nonviolence. The supporters of this particular school of thought propose that nonviolence in Islam should be analysed within the framework of social justice. The second school of thought suggests three principles: the first principle being that Islam allows for the use of violence under certain circumstances; the second being that *jihad* does not necessarily involve the use of violence; and the third being that from a theological point of view violence is not entirely forbidden. The third school of thought emphasises specific Islamic values such as '*adl* (justice) or *rahma* (compassion) which are inherent to nonviolent social action. (Abu-Nimer 2003, 36-37) Supporters of the third school of thought advocate the creation of a specifically Islamic approach to nonviolence. (Abu-Nimer 2003, 38) This notion which is based on a hermeneutic interpretation of the Islamic scriptures is supported by Islamic reformist scholars such as Abdul Aziz Sachedina and Farid Esack. The new hermeneutic discourse propounds that the historical context of the revelation of the Qur'an has changed and that consequently its content, including the status of violence as a conflict resolution tool, has to be reconsidered (Abu-Nimer 2003, 39).

From this brief overview it can be concluded that Islam and nonviolence are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and that there are Muslim academics and theologians who are trying to establish a Muslim approach to nonviolence based on the assumption that the principles of nonviolence are well grounded in Islamic texts and traditions.

4.2 Examples of nonviolence in the Middle East

Nonviolence is not a term usually associated with the wider Middle East region, including the Arab states, Israel, Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey. It is a region which is susceptible to outside intervention due to its strategic location and its oil and gas resources. (Ibrahim 1990, 1-3) It is also a region which has seen its fair share of civil wars which often erupted over sectarian or ethnic issues. (Ibrahim 1990, 5) The conventional stereotype of the Middle East region as a cradle for violence is thus partly understandable. There are, however, roots and traditions present in the Middle East region which provide the basis for nonviolent struggles.

Two of these traditions are the Arab practices of *sulha* and *musalaha* which are traditional forms of mediation. (Bing 2004) These two practices are particularly prominent in Yemen, Jordan, and Iraq, and to a lesser extent are also practised in the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, and Morocco. (Safa 2007, 4-5) *Sulha* meaning “settlement” and *musalaha* meaning “reconciliation” are methods of conflict resolution which seek alternatives to violence. (Safa 2007, 5) *Sulha* and *musalaha* are traditional tribal forms of conflict resolution which aim to restore honour and reduce shame in societies in which these concepts have an important role to play. These practices do not seek to punish the perpetrator; they attempt to restore the honour of the one who has been wronged.

As Khalid Kishtainy points out, numerous examples of nonviolence can be found in the Middle East from the time of the Prophet Muhamamd and the early Muslim caliphates right until this day. (Kishtainy 1990, 16-24) The 20th century has seen several struggles in the Middle East which were accompanied by nonviolent techniques, such as strikes, boycotts, and demonstrations. The Egyptian rebellion against the British protectorate which lasted from 1919 to 1922 included many elements of nonviolence, including a strike by much of the population and the refusal of civil servants to cooperate with the British authorities. Although unable to achieve full independence from Britain, the nonviolent noncooperation forced the British to abandon the protectorate and recognize Egypt as an independent state on certain conditions. (Bennett 1990, 41-43) Similarly, the Iraqis implemented a predominantly nonviolent uprising in 1948 to protest against the Portsmouth Treaty which granted Britain influence and military bases in Iraq. This nonviolent uprising forced an unpopular administration to resign, and the Portsmouth Treaty to be renounced. (Bennett 1990, 47-48) Another example of nonviolence in the Middle East is the nonviolent noncooperation

campaign waged by the Druze² in the Golan between 1981 and 1982 in an attempt to halt the Israeli annexation of the Golan. The nonviolent noncooperation campaign was sparked when Israel tried to coerce the Golani Druze into accepting Israeli identity cards. Nonviolent activities included a strike which had severe effects on the economy in Northern Israel. Even Israeli military repression in the form of a siege, home demolitions, and arrests did not deter the Golani Druze. (Bennett 1990, 50-52) Other examples of nonviolent struggles in the Middle East include the predominantly peaceful civil rebellion against Jafaar Nimeiry's rule in Sudan; the establishment of a sophisticated government in exile structure by the Polisario Front, the nationalist movement of Western Sahara seeking independence from Morocco; or the noncooperation with the Shah's regime in Iran prior to and during the Iranian Revolution. (Zunes 1999, 43-45) These examples of nonviolent resistance in the Middle East have received little attention and are rarely mentioned in the nonviolence literature. One example from the Middle East which has received attention, however, and which has been covered quite extensively in the nonviolence literature, is the case of the Palestinian Intifada.³ The most comprehensive insight into the nonviolent nature of the 1987 Intifada is provided by Mary Elizabeth King's work *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance*. The following section will provide some insight into the nonviolent nature of the 1987 Intifada, including its aims and its impact on Israel.

5. Nonviolence in the Palestinian territories

On December 8th, 1987, the Intifada was sparked by a tragic road accident that failed to attract the attention of the local press or the international media. The accident took place in Gaza when an Israeli military tank hit an oncoming car, killing four Palestinian workers and injuring several others. Rumours spread quickly that the accident had been deliberate, in retaliation for the killing of the brother of an Israeli soldier. The funeral of the Palestinian men turned into a massive demonstration, illustrating the rage and frustration of the Palestinian people who were forced to live under the Israeli occupation. (Farsoun and Zacharia 1997, 214; Peretz 1990, 39)

² The Druze are a distinct social and religious group who speak Arabic and practice a religion considered to be an offshoot of Islam. The majority of the Druze live in Lebanon and Syria; in Israel and the Palestinian territories they inhabit a few villages in the Galilee, on Mt Carmel, and in the Golan. The Druze tend to identify with whatever country they live in. Thus those Druze who are Israeli citizens, for example, serve in the Israeli army. The situation is different with regards to the Druze living in the Golan which until 1967 was a part of Syria. The Syrian Druze in the Golan reject Israeli claims to the area and support Syrian claims to the Golan.

³ The Arabic word Intifada literally means *shaking off* and refers to the spontaneous popular uprising which erupted in the Palestinian territories in 1987 as a response to the Israeli occupation.

The ensuing Palestinian uprising took the Israelis by surprise, and although their response to the Intifada was swift and violent, they were unsuccessful in quelling Palestinian resistance. (Peretz 1990, 45-47; Farsoun and Zacharia 1997, 214) The resistance was carried out with the only weapons available to ordinary Palestinians: nonviolent tactics and stones. (Grant 1990, 64) Ackerman and Kruegler come to the conclusion that the Intifada was a mixed struggle with a major nonviolent component, and that in particular during the first three years the resistance was more nonviolent than violent. According to their analysis, those low-level violent actions that did occur, such as stone throwing and the occasional use of Molotov cocktails, were perceived by the outside world as largely symbolic. (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994, 345)

Initially the resistance was spontaneous and included strikes, demonstrations, and protests during which slogans were being chanted and the Palestinian flag was being waved. Within a short period of time, however, the resistance activities were being coordinated by a “Unified National Command” which was a political grassroots organisation made up of the different political parties that issued leaflets containing orders for specific activities. The vast majority of these orders called for nonviolent resistance. The recommendations for sustaining the uprising ranged from strikes and demonstrations to withholding taxes, refusing to work for Israelis, holding symbolic funerals, and breaking curfews. (Grant 1990, 64-65)

Where violence did occur, it was mostly in the form of youths throwing stones. Occasionally, suspected collaborators were murdered and sometimes Israeli settlers were attacked. (Grant 1990, 65-66)

The ultimate aims of the Intifada had been firstly to render the Palestinian territories nongovernable by Israel, and secondly to establish institutions and structures independent of Israel which could serve as a future Palestinian state. (Dajani 1999, 56) These ultimate goals were not fully achieved through the Intifada; however, several important intermediate goals were reached. Most importantly, the Intifada helped to change the image of the Palestinians in the eyes of the world from “terrorists” to people with a legitimate claim to a national identity. This partial success was largely due to the overwhelmingly nonviolent nature of the Intifada. Ironically, however, it was the images of stone-throwing youths confronted by the Israeli military machinery which allowed for widespread sympathy for the Palestinian cause in this David-against-Goliath scenario. This shift in public opinion also spread to the American Jewish community. In a Gallup survey conducted in January 1988 among American Jews in New York, 39 percent of those asked said that Israel's handling of the Intifada was too harsh, while 38 percent said it was about right. In general there occurred a shift in American Jewish

thinking towards accepting an international peace conference, as well as towards accepting the land-for-peace formula. (Cohen 1988, 101) Suddenly, a moral dimension had been added to the conflict.

In addition to changing public opinion about the Palestinians and creating sympathy for their national cause, the 1987 Intifada also empowered the Palestinians by giving them a sense of their own strength and of what they were able to achieve with nonviolent means. Furthermore, the refusal to cooperate with Israel led to the establishment of a nascent indigenous infrastructure which could serve as the basis for a future Palestinian state, thus further empowering the Palestinians and making them less dependent on Israel. At the same time, however, the Intifada also weakened the Palestinians because of the burden it placed on Palestinian society. Strikes, for example, proved to be a serious economic strain. Much worse, however, were the collective punishments meted out by the Israeli authorities against Palestinian communities. These could range from tax raids to the imposition of curfews or travel bans. (Dajani 1999, 58)

Nonviolent resistance also always aims to impact upon the opponent. This can be through *nonviolent conversion* whereby a sense of justice is awakened in the opponent, or through *nonviolent coercion* whereby the opponent does not change his mind but does not have the means available to choose a different alternative. (Dudouet 2008, 15)

The Israelis were completely taken by surprise when the Intifada erupted. It had a severe impact upon the Israeli psyche because it changed the predominant assumption that holding on to the Occupied Territories was crucial to the security of the Israeli state. According to Ghassan Andoni “the most immediate accomplishment of the 1987 Intifada was that it seriously challenged the sustainability of occupation.” (Andoni 2001, 210) More specifically, the Intifada had an impact on the Israeli army, the Israeli government, and the Israeli public. With regards to the Israeli Defence Forces, serious moral and economic issues were raised. The deployment of a highly armed and well-trained army against a civilian population that behaved mostly nonviolently raised questions about the morale of such an operation, to the extent that the number of Israeli soldiers who refused to serve in the Occupied Territories increased. (Zunes and Kurtz 1999, 312) Although this did not develop into a larger refusal movement, it does indicate that the Intifada had an impact upon individual soldiers within the Israeli Defence Forces. (Dajani 1999, 59-61) Gene Sharp refers to this phenomenon whereby the strength of the opponent is turned into a weakness as *political ju-jitsu*. (Sharp 1973c, 657) The pitting of heavily-armed Israeli soldiers against mostly unarmed Palestinian civilians symbolised the power discrepancy between the two sides, and made the Israeli occupation

look unreasonable. According to Ackerman and Kruegler, the decision by the “Unified National Command” to ban weapons from the struggle “led to a redefinition of the conflict, one in which Israel’s repressive violence was made to appear both gratuitous and dysfunctional.” (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994, 345)

Economically, the Intifada proved to be a disaster for the Israeli Defence Forces. Between the outbreak of the Intifada in December 1987 and November 1989, it had cost the Israeli Defence Forces \$500 million. (Bickerton and Klausner 1998, 236)

On the governmental level, the Intifada created a political stalemate within Israel. The Intifada caused a shift towards the right in Israeli politics and created an atmosphere of tension. The preoccupation of the Israeli public with the Intifada increased the gulf between the two main political factions within the Israeli National Unity government. Labour and Likud were divided on the issue of exchanging territory for peace. In this atmosphere of tension, the Knesset passed a vote of no-confidence against Yitzhak Shamir’s government.

With regards to the Israeli public, the Intifada succeeded in propelling the Israeli peace camp into action. A large number of Israeli peace groups emerged during the Intifada. Many of these demanded an end to the occupation or supported soldiers who refused to serve in the Occupied Territories. On balance, however, the impact of the Israeli peace camp remained relatively small since the Intifada also had the effect of polarising Israeli society between those who advocated a withdrawal from the Occupied Territories and those who advocated resorting to even greater military force. (Dajani 1999, 61-63)

Taking all factors into account, it has to be said that the effect of the Intifada on the Israeli Defence Forces, the Israeli government, and the Israeli public was not strong enough to seriously challenge the Israeli occupation.

By the early 1990s, the Palestinian population was no longer able to sustain a nonviolent campaign which cost them dearly in terms of strength and resources. Not only was the Palestinian economy dependent on the Israeli economy, there were also mass arrests, torture, injuries and deaths, as well as deportations to cope with.

Today, many analysts argue that the nonviolent resistance has become second nature for the majority of Palestinians, the kind of practical applied knowledge which Pierre Bourdieu calls *habitus*. As Amira Hass, an Israeli journalist reporting from the Palestinian territories, put it: “every car trip is a minor uprising.” (Quoted in Murray 2001, 333) The following section will demonstrate the level of nonviolent resistance being practised on a daily basis in the Palestinian territories.

PART B

6. Methodology

The second part of this thesis is based almost exclusively on interviews conducted with Palestinian nonviolence activists and academics. The interviewees were either the Directors of Palestinian nonviolence organisations, or nonviolence activists holding positions as nonviolence trainers or serving on the steering committees of nonviolence organisations.

The Palestinian organisations represented in this study have been selected based on their explicit commitment to the promotion of nonviolent struggle, as expressed in each organisation's mission statement or strategic vision. This means that Palestinian organisations promoting other methods of struggle or promoting specific methods of conflict resolution, such as dialogue, peacebuilding, or mediation, are excluded from this study.⁴ International nonviolence organisations⁵ and Israeli nonviolence organisations⁶ are also excluded from this study because the objective is to provide a detailed picture of the indigenous Palestinian nonviolent struggle.

It should be noted that this selection of Palestinian nonviolence organisations provides a very comprehensive picture of the nonviolence landscape within the Palestinian territories since there are virtually no other organisations which focus specifically on nonviolence. The following eight organisations are represented in this study:

The Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre based in East Jerusalem and Nazareth is a grassroots movement of Palestinian Christians which was established as a permanent institution in 1990. It was founded out of a perceived need to analyse the issues of justice and peace on a theological level. Ever since, Sabeel has been attempting to develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, nonviolence, liberation, and reconciliation. The organisation also focuses on community building and empowerment, advocacy, local and international conferences, and visitors' tours with a special focus on experiencing the reality of living under the occupation. The interview was conducted with Omar Harami who is Sabeel's Youth Coordinator.

⁴ For a detailed overview of peacebuilding organisations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict see the very comprehensive work *Bridging the Divide: Peacebuilding in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* edited by Kaufman, Salem, and Verhoeven.

⁵ For an insight into international nonviolence groups and their activities, see the book *Live from Palestine: International and Palestinian Direct Action against the Israeli Occupation* edited by Stohlman and Aladin, and the article *Unofficial Nonviolent Intervention: Examples from the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* by Andrew Rigby.

⁶ For an insight into Israeli nonviolence groups and their activities, see Gila Svirsky's article *The Israeli Peace Movement since the al-Aqsa Intifada*.

The Palestinian Conflict Resolution Centre WIAM is based in Bethlehem. It is a grassroots organisation founded in 1995 on the belief that a democratic and just society can be built by addressing injustices instead of avoiding them. The main focuses of WIAM's work are to provide training in conflict resolution and nonviolence, information dissemination, education to prevent violence against women and children, democracy education, cross-cultural activities, international exchange, and mediation using *Sulha*, the traditional Arab technique for conflict resolution. The interview was conducted with Zoughbi Zoughbi who is the Director of WIAM.

The Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace is based in East Jerusalem and Hebron. The library travels through the West Bank, providing children with books and other educational materials. The library's main aim is to educate children about peace and nonviolence. In addition, the library runs a number of other projects such as publishing a series of educational booklets. The interview was conducted with Nafez Assaily who is the Director of the Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace.

The Centre for Rapprochement between People is based in Beit Sahour and was established in 1990. Its main focus of work is to promote dialogue as a way to break down prejudices. The Centre also engages in nonviolent action to oppose the Israeli occupation, and runs cultural events, community programmes, international youth exchanges, and training activities. The interview was conducted with George Rishmawi who is the Director of the Centre for Rapprochement between People.

Combatants for Peace is a joint Israeli-Palestinian organisation. The members of this organisation were once actively involved in the cycle of violence, either as soldiers in the Israeli Defence Forces or as fighters in the name of Palestinian liberation. These individuals are now committed to nonviolence so that each side will come to understand the national aspirations of the other side. They focus on dialogue and reconciliation as a way to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. The interview was conducted with Osama Abu Kersh who serves on the Steering Committee of Combatants for Peace and is responsible for activities and direct actions on the Palestinian side.

Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil'in is a grassroots organisations formed by the people of the village of Bil'in where for the past 5 years the villagers – together with Israeli and international activists – have nonviolently resisted against the building of the Separation Barrier⁷ on the village's agricultural land. The organisation was established with the aim of

⁷ The Separation Barrier is being referred to by different names. The Israeli side generally refers to it as "Security Fence" (see for example the website of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The Palestinian side usually uses the term "Wall." This is also the terminology adopted by the International Court of Justice. In this

building a wide network of people supporting justice and freedom, strengthening the steadfastness of the Palestinian people, and spreading the experience of Bil'in to other villages in Palestine, as well as other communities. The interview was conducted with Eyad Burnat who is the head of the founding committee of Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil'in, as well as the head of the Bil'in Popular Committee.

Holy Land Trust is based in Bethlehem and was founded in 1998. The main focus of Holy Land Trust is to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories through nonviolent resistance. It also focuses on community development. Holy Land Trust's main programmes are Travel and Encounter, Peace and Reconciliation, and the Palestine News Network. The interview was conducted with Sami Awad who is the organisation's Director.

Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy (MEND) is based in East Jerusalem with local branches in Izzaryya, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, and Tulkarem. It was founded in 1997 with the aim of spreading awareness of nonviolence and democracy, using training and innovative media techniques to reach out to Palestinian society. Apart from training and education in nonviolence and conflict resolution, MEND also runs empowerment projects for youths and women, as well as youth exchanges. The interview was conducted with Lucy Nusseibeh who is the Director of MEND.

The interviews were conducted based on a questionnaire containing 48 questions divided into different categories. The categories are (a) Personal motivation, (b) Goals, (c) Methods, (d) Target audience, (e) Mobilization, (f) Strategies, (g) Cooperation, (h) Successes and limitations, (i) Reactions, (j) Political positions, (k) Further research, and (l) Vision for the future.

The interviewees responded to these questions both in their capacity as nonviolence activists, as well as in their capacity as experts or academics on the topic of nonviolence. Their answers therefore reflect both their personal involvement with nonviolence in the Palestinian territories, as well as their academic expertise on the subject of nonviolence in general. While this means that the interviewees' knowledge of the theory and practice of nonviolence is very comprehensive, their personal involvement in the nonviolent struggle also means that their perspectives on issues such as successes and limitations of nonviolence are influenced by their personal experiences. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that the following section provides a detailed picture of the current nonviolent struggle within the Palestinian territories based on the analysis of its main protagonists.

thesis, the term Separation Barrier will be used which is how the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem refers to it. This is because both other terms ("Wall" and "Security Fence") are misleading since the Separation Barrier is a concrete wall in some places and a fence in others.

The interviews were all transcribed in their entirety, and subsequently categorised to allow for comparison. Since the objective of this section is to present a detailed picture of the current nonviolent struggle within the Palestinian territories, relevant passages from the interviews have been reproduced here. Where the identification of interviewees could lead to reprisals due to comments critical of either the Israeli or the Palestinian authorities, the individuals in question have not been named.

7. Analysis of Interviews

7.1 Personal motivation

For Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, there are numerous ways to become exposed to the idea of nonviolence.⁸ These ways can be divided into two categories. The first category would be the intuitive resorting to nonviolent methods as a direct response to perceived injustices. These perceived injustices are directly related to the issue of Israeli control over the lives of the Palestinian people.

Omar Harami from the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Center recalled being a school pupil during the 1987 Intifada at the Friends' Boys School in Ramallah, a Quaker school. While the Intifada raged outside and took its toll on the pupils with the killing of one of their classmates during a demonstration, the Religious Education teacher would point to the Bible as a justification for the situation, giving the pupils the impression that because they were not *God's Chosen People* they were second class citizens. The pupils' reaction was to initiate a nonviolent protest and to boycott Religious Education classes. This small incident is simply an example of a group of Palestinian pupils intuitively resorting to a nonviolent protest as a way to express their disagreement with a teacher in a school; an incident which could have happened at any school in any given context, yet this incident was fuelled by the desire to resist this particular teacher's interpretation of the Israeli occupation.

Another example of this intuitive resorting to nonviolent methods was provided by Osama Abu Karsh from Combatants for Peace who first came into contact with the concept of nonviolence inside an Israeli prison. It was in prison that he and his fellow inmates resorted to

⁸ The research conducted for this thesis pertains only to Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank since to the knowledge of this author there are currently no Palestinian nonviolence organisations working actively in the Gaza Strip. Also, it is virtually impossible to obtain visas for the Gaza Strip, so interviews could not have been conducted there.

nonviolence as a means of opening up dialogue with the prison's administration, for example through conducting a hunger strike.

The second category would be exposure to individuals or organisations which are already committed to the idea of nonviolence. George Rishmawi from the Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between People was first exposed to the idea of nonviolence through his membership in the Palestinian Communist Party. During the early to mid 1980s the Palestinian Communist Party educated its members on resolving regional conflicts through political means, i.e. through non-military means. The terminology used by the Palestinian Communist Party at the time was *peaceful* means rather than *nonviolent* means but the concept being referred to was the same. When the first Intifada broke out in 1987, George Rishmawi – like the majority of Palestinian *Shebab* or youths – got involved in the activities of the Intifada while having in mind the kind of policy advocated by the Palestinian Communist Party. Even while the Intifada was still continuing, the Palestinian Communist Party (which had relations with communist parties all over the world, including the Israeli Communist Party) arranged meetings between its Palestinian members and Israeli soldiers refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories, thereby sowing the seeds of dialogue.

Lucy Nusseibeh from Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy (MEND) was similarly exposed to the idea of nonviolence through an organisation, albeit not a political party. Her first contact with nonviolence was at school where she had friends who were involved in different forms of nonviolence which they would discuss together. This led to her attending some meetings of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation where she was further exposed to the idea of nonviolence.

Sami Awad from Holy Land Trust had a more personal introduction to the concept of nonviolence through a relative of his, Mubarak Awad, who is a renowned Palestinian-American academic and activist on the issue of nonviolence. Mubarak Awad is the founder and Director of Nonviolence International. Sami Awad recalls his introduction to the concept of nonviolence as follows:

”I would say my first introduction to nonviolence was when I was maybe thirteen or fourteen years old. And it was due to a person who was directly involved in nonviolence who was an uncle of mine. So my uncle – his name is Mubarak Awad – in the early 1980s returned from the US to Jerusalem and opened a center called *The Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence*. And as a young teenager I used to go to the center a lot, participated in many of the activities and events. And for the first

time, I recall very well, it was a real time for me when I felt that there was something I could do about the occupation.”

There are of course other ways how Palestinians might first come into contact with the concept of nonviolence which do not fit neatly into either of the two categories. Nafez Assaily from the Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace remembered reading a critic’s review of the film *Gandhi* which prompted him to write a university term paper on the question of how nonviolence could be applied in the Palestinian territories. He described this incident and the subsequent study of the works of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. as a turning point in his life which led him to embrace nonviolence as a strategy for his whole life. Another explanation for how Palestinians first come into contact with the idea of nonviolence was offered by Zoughbi Zoughbi from the Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center WIAM. According to him there is a misconception that Palestinians specifically and Arabs more generally do not have a history or a heritage of nonviolence. According to him, the Palestinians have a long history of involvement in nonviolence. He cited the 1929 Western (Wailing) Wall incident and the Arab Rebellion of 1936 to 1939 as examples of Palestinian nonviolence.⁹ He furthermore argued that whether as Christians or as Muslims, Palestinians have a heritage of nonviolence which is being advocated in the Holy Books of both faiths.

In general it can be said that there are various ways how Palestinians are being exposed to the concept of nonviolence. This demonstrates on the one hand that the concept of nonviolence is more widespread in the Palestinian territories than one might have assumed; on the other hand it shows that nonviolence organisations working in the Palestinian territories – regardless of whether these are Palestinian, Israeli or international organisations – have a large number of channels available which they can use to expose even wider segments of Palestinian society to the concept of nonviolence. Bearing in mind these different ways of exposure, how do Palestinian nonviolence practitioners define nonviolence?

All of the interviewees defined nonviolence for themselves as a way of life which affects one’s personal affairs, as well as family matters, and social or political issues. According to Lucy Nusseibeh nonviolence ”starts with the individual, and then with the family, and the

⁹ The 1929 Western (Wailing) Wall incident was a riot that was sparked by a minor religious disagreement which ultimately triggered a crisis and led to the murder of 133 Jews and 116 Palestinians. According to most narratives, this was an extremely violent riot. (For more details, see Farsoun and Zacharia 1998, 101 - 102 or Bickerton and Klausner 1998, 52) The Arab Rebellion of 1936 to 1939 on the contrary, although sparked by a spontaneous act of violence, quickly turned into a nonviolent strike encompassing all sectors of Palestinian society and including strategies such as civil disobedience, nonpayment of taxes, and closing the municipal governments. Later on the nonviolent strike turned into an armed insurrection. (For more details, see Farsoun and Zacharia 1998, 106 - 107 or Bickerton and Klausner 1998, 53)

community. It is something that has to start with each person.” Nonviolence is also being seen as a means to redress wrongs rather than avenge them, and as a way to end or transform conflicts through means that will cause less damage than using violence and will consequently make reconciliation easier. Nonviolence is also seen as a tool for personal empowerment and the fulfilment of potential. As Sami Awad put it:

”The word I use always in parallel to nonviolence is the word *empowerment*. And this is what I think nonviolence is all about. It is to give a voice and to give tools to people who feel completely disempowered, completely marginalised in political or social or even economic fields. To say that instead of falling into the trap of complaining and blaming and even retaliating for what has happened, it is to empower people to proactively deal with whatever oppression they feel. And that really is what nonviolence is for me. It is to empower people to take charge of their lives and their destinies and not to allow others to control that.”

For some of the interviewees their faith either as Muslims or as Christians plays a major role in their definition of nonviolence, as well as their motivation to engage in nonviolence. It should be noted that those interviewees who adhere to Christianity generally put more emphasis on the importance of their faith when it comes to their engagement in nonviolence than those interviewees who adhere to Islam. For Sami Awad personally, for example, religion and spirituality play an important role in developing a principled approach to nonviolence.

In addition to these definitions of nonviolence at the personal level, there is also a definition of nonviolence as a strategy, as a means of struggle. If nonviolence is seen as a strategy rather than a moral principle, i.e. as a pragmatic approach rather than the Gandhian approach of principled nonviolence, this raises the question of where Palestinian activists and organisations stand on the admissibility of using violence as a strategy in certain situations. Some of the interviewees – although they accept nonviolence as a principle when it comes to their personal lives – agreed that under certain circumstances it is admissible to resort to violence. One of the examples being brought forward by Zoughbi Zoughbi to support this view was that under international law a people under oppression has the right to resist by all means.¹⁰ Similarly, Lucy Nusseibeh said that:

¹⁰ See for example Tanya Reinhart who says that “the fourth Geneva Convention recognizes the right of an occupied people to carry out armed struggle against the occupying army.” (Reinhart 2006, 59)

”A lot of it is to do with circumstances. And it is a matter of working with choice and trying to choose what one believes is the most appropriate and most genuinely fulfilling behaviour, and least harmful. But maybe sometimes that might include using violence.”

So while there was a strong agreement among the interviewees that due to the present circumstances nonviolence is the appropriate strategy for the Palestinian people at this moment in time, there were some who do not believe that nonviolence should always be the only option. Regardless of whether one is a supporter of the principled or the pragmatic approach, the real challenge arises when it comes to convincing Palestinians in general of the power of nonviolence. Sami Awad explained it like this:

”When we do trainings in nonviolence we present nonviolence both as this principled approach of life, an holistic approach, and we also present nonviolence as a strategic and pragmatic approach to deal with conflicts. So we are not out to make Gandhis or Dalai Lamas of every single Palestinian that is here. [...] Because people here are looking for immediate answers to immediate concerns, like the occupation, the Wall, the settlements, and so on. So we do not have, I would say, the luxury at this point of engaging in nonviolence as this holistic, communal way of living and approach.”

The issue of *immediate answers to immediate concerns* touches upon another important aspect of nonviolence within Palestinian society. How can nonviolence answer these immediate concerns? What are the goals of the individuals and organisations engaged in nonviolence in Palestine?

7.2 Goals

The ultimate goal of all the organisations represented by the individuals interviewed for this study is to end the Israeli occupation through nonviolence and thus prepare the way for a political peace process between equal partners which will lead to a negotiated agreement regarding Palestinian independence. Closely related to this ultimate goal of national independence are several other goals.

The Centre for Rapprochement between People firstly tries to change the image of Palestinians which is portrayed in different media outlets through a nonviolent strategy.

Secondly it attempts to minimise the loss of human life through using a nonviolent strategy instead of using violence in the struggle for independence. This is due to the fact that using a nonviolent strategy will make it easier for both sides to reconcile eventually.

Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil'in – which is essentially an activist organisation – furthermore has as its goal to keep the activism in Bil'in going while spreading its method to other villages which are facing a similar situation, i.e. the loss of their agricultural land due to land confiscations to make way for the Separation Barrier. More specifically, Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil'in also wants to support villagers in their attempt to prevent their agricultural lands from being confiscated. This means enabling them to access their lands so they can cultivate them because land that is not being cultivated gets confiscated by the Israeli Authorities. As a means of support, Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil'in provides the villagers with seeds or trains them in how to care for their olive trees.

Sabeel – which is a Christian organisation serving the Christian community in the Holy Land – also aims to unify the Christians living in Israel and the Palestinian territories through a Ministry of Ecumenism.

Combatants for Peace – which is a joint Israeli-Palestinian organisation – furthermore aims at discouraging Israelis and Palestinians from being part of the spiral of violence which includes convincing Israelis to refuse to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces.

MEND has as its first goal to get nonviolence into the mainstream and to initiate a genuine nonviolence movement. The second goal is to strengthen nonviolence regionally. And the third goal is to impact on the educational system in a positive way so that there is space for fulfilment and development of potential. Both MEND and Holy Land Trust are currently undergoing a process of rethinking and replanning. For Holy Land Trust a change has taken place in terms of its goals since its inception in 1998. While it started out as an organisation focusing on nonviolence as a toolkit against the occupation, it is now trying to devise a philosophy of nonviolence for the future struggle in Palestine, and to develop the tools that should be used in the future. Sami Awad put it this way:

”As we developed, we started realising that our nonviolence that we were engaging in was what I would call *reactionary nonviolence*. So everything we were doing, and I would say even up until this point in many instances, we are reacting to what the Israeli military and government are doing to us. So they build the Wall somewhere, we go and react by demonstrating. [...] What we are now seeking is how to transform this

into a proactive movement where we are not reacting to the other side but are engaging ourselves in actions and activities and the other side has to react to us.”

So the overall goal for the Palestinian nonviolence organisations is to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories through a genuine nonviolence movement. The majority of interviewees strongly emphasised that there is a need for preparation through training in nonviolent methods before such a nonviolence movement can be effective.

7.3 Methods

Nonviolence organisations in Palestine use a wide collection of methods to achieve their goals. Many of the organisations publish materials about nonviolence, including training manuals for nonviolent conflict resolution. Providing the nonviolence training itself is also a method employed by the majority of these organisations. Similarly, most of the organisations organise seminars and conferences on the topic of nonviolence. Another method used by the majority of these organisations is through contacts with international groups or individuals abroad. An important method which is used to differing degrees by all the organisations is activism. This means organising or taking part in demonstrations, vigils, letter writing campaigns, voluntary work in refugee camps, picking olives for farmers who are prohibited from harvesting their crops, and many more.

Depending on the outlook of the organisation in question, they might also use methods that are more specifically linked to their worldview. Sabeel for example does a tour of the biblical Stations of the Cross, relating them to contemporary stations of Palestinian life, including refugee camps, checkpoints, settlements, and so on. These tours give international visitors the opportunity to learn about the situation of the Palestinians and serve as ambassadors when they return to their home countries.

The Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace – which also publishes materials and conducts training in nonviolent conflict resolution – focuses on library projects such as the *Children’s Peace Programme* under which books on various topics, including nonviolence, are distributed to children. Within the same programme, the Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace runs a *Children’s Parliament for Nonviolence* which serves to educate children about nonviolence. Another book-related project currently being implemented by the organisation is a campaign called *Books along the Divide – Reading at the Checkpoints*. For this project, the Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace distributed bags filled with

books, including books about nonviolence, to the taxi drivers working on certain routes between cities that are separated by checkpoints. The taxi drivers in turn hand out the books to their passengers. The aim of this campaign is to show the soldiers at the checkpoints that regardless of the circumstances, the Palestinian people will continue their education, even if checkpoints prevent them from reaching their schools or universities. Several of the taxi drivers involved in the project have reported that some of the Israeli soldiers started confiscating the books. The Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace is now considering distributing books in Hebrew to the soldiers. In addition to these methods, the organisation also runs a mental health programme, a programme which seeks to analyse the place of nonviolence in Islam, and a programme for administration development, i.e. capacity building for its employees.

The Centre for Rapprochement between People also employs a number of different methods and runs various programmes but it places an emphasis on media and information dissemination. Working through media is also a method that is being used successfully by MEND. The organisation ran a radio soap opera which tackled various aspects of daily life and how to deal with them nonviolently. Another method which is being used by MEND is the campaign *Smarter without Violence* which seeks to build up a slogan and through that to raise awareness that there is a choice between violence and nonviolence.

As has been shown, there is a wide range of methods being employed by Palestinian nonviolence organisations to strengthen the idea of nonviolence within Palestinian society. Some of these methods might be more successful in bringing about the desired outcome than others. For example, Mubarak Awad states that a method which creates points of contact between the oppressor and the oppressed highlights the oppression on the one hand and leads to a meaningful confrontation on the other hand. (Awad 1984, 26)

The general consensus among nonviolence organisations in Palestine is that there are points of contact with Israeli pro-justice organisations such as Rabbis for Human Rights, Breaking the Silence, the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, and the like. These are Israeli organisations whose members regularly join Palestinian organisations and Palestinian activists in rebuilding homes, harvesting olives, or in the weekly demonstrations against the Wall. However, as Lucy Nusseibeh pointed out, working with these Israeli organisations is like reaching out to the converted whereas it would be much more important to convince those Israelis who think that all Palestinians are violent or terrorists. She believes that to have a point of contact with those Israelis who, for example, believe that the Wall is necessary, one might have to go via some other group so that the Israelis could feel less defensive. She said:

”It is very important to reach outside. To reach the West and also via the West to reach Israel. Because part of the strategy of nonviolence, part of the need for a nonviolence movement would be that it can have an impact on how Israelis view the Palestinians and the level of fear that Israelis have of Palestinians. And if that level can go down and if they can start to have a little bit more trust, then you start to shift the whole equation. So it is very important but it is more likely to be effective I think if it goes in a roundabout way. And it needs the work on the Palestinian side to be really genuine.”

This is essentially one of Johan Galtung’s key concepts which he called the The Great Chain of Nonviolence. (Galtung 1989, 13) His idea is that liberation from oppression is not just the responsibility of those who are suffering from the oppression but also the responsibility of intermediate groups. These third parties may be able to persuade the oppressors to change their opinion if the oppressed themselves are unable to do so.

Apart from the perceived difficulty of finding people on the Israeli side one can reach out to in order to establish points of contact, there is also a real logistical difficulty of making these points of contact possible. Several of the interviewees pointed out that the restrictions of freedom of movement imposed on most Palestinians these days mean that they cannot reach places where joint meetings such as workshops or conferences take place. One interviewee said that he had the feeling of being specifically prevented from travelling because of his active involvement in nonviolence. Palestinians living in the West Bank do not normally have a permit to travel to Jerusalem, whereas Israeli – unless they are settlers or members of the Israeli Defense Forces – are officially discouraged from travelling through the West Bank, although there are some Israelis, either as individuals or as members of organisations such as Rabbis for Human Rights or Anarchists against the Wall, who defy this discouragement. Israeli activists from these organisations regularly join the demonstrations organised by Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil’in, as well as demonstrations organised by other villages. For other activities, however, such as workshops and conferences, the restrictions on freedom of movement mean that these activities often have to be organised abroad, in places such as Cyprus or Jordan which can be accessed by both Israelis and Palestinians.

There is also a fear on the Palestinian side which is to lose credentials with the general Palestinian public or even to lose one’s accreditation with the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Culture because of *normalisation* with Israel. Several interviewees also pointed

out that they were frustrated with a perceived Israeli attitude which allows for exchanging pleasantries but not for a change in politics. Zoughbi Zoughbi made it clear that:

”The idea is to deal with our reality. [...] I do not want someone to give me a cup of coffee and say *Let's eat hummus* as if there is peace. I want someone who is in there, who would like to know how I feel, and I would like to know how he feels or she feels, and, you know, how to transform workshops to social action and then lead to a political change.”

So in conclusion it can be said that there are various difficulties in establishing points of contact between Israelis and Palestinians, although this is a tactic which is generally endorsed by Palestinian nonviolence organisations.

A variation on the tactic of establishing points of contact is to use confrontational tactics aimed at the perceived oppressor, i.e. in this case at the Israelis. Mubarak Awad calls this tactic harassment or psychological warfare. He includes denunciation, whistling, and provocations in this. (Awad 1984, 31) Among the nonviolence organisations in Palestine, there there exists disagreement regarding the merits of using confrontational tactics.

One opinion presented by several of the interviewees was that confrontational tactics are unproductive and tend to enforce feelings of anger or intimidation which in turn lead to more violence. There is also a very strong desire not to give the Israeli Defense Forces any excuse to use violence.¹¹ The Centre for Rapprochement between People, for example, runs specific training sessions for participants of demonstrations to avoid any kind of confrontation, as explained by George Rishmawi:

”When doing the training we make sure to inform people not to initiate any kind of violence and not to respond to violence with violence. But we teach people techniques of de-escalation, techniques of avoiding being arrested, or de-arresting someone. And also techniques of safety, how to escape tear gas, sound bombs, bullets, rubber bullets, how to treat them afterwards, and all of that. So our intention is de-escalation and that is important, and we do not really run for confrontation.”

¹¹ As the author experienced herself, the Israeli Defense Forces do not necessarily require a trigger to use force, including tear gas, sound bombs, and rubber bullets, on nonviolent demonstrators. During a peaceful demonstration in the village of Bil'in on Friday, June 27th, 2008, the IDF used excessive amounts of force to disbandon the demonstration although there had been no prior provocation or violence from the demonstrators.

Holy Land Trust also deals with the issue of confrontation in its training sessions for participants of demonstrations. Sami Awad sees seemingly small issues like the use of language becoming decisive factors for Israeli soldiers in determining whether an action is seen as violent or nonviolent, and consequently whether the use of violence as a reaction is justified or not. According to him the question is: "How does the soldier who is standing on the other side in his own mind, and his own mentality and analysis justify the act as being violent or nonviolent?" He emphasised that avoiding confrontation in demonstrations is one way of sending a message of nonviolence to the world and the Israeli community.

Nonetheless, he did concede that direct confrontation is a major point of nonviolence. A major problem in trying to use confrontational tactics, however, is obviously that one of the few places where Israelis and Palestinians do meet under the present circumstances (apart from the demonstrations) is at checkpoints, where security is very strict. This is a marked difference compared to the situation in 1987. As Sami Awad put it:

"If you look at the first Intifada, the army was in our cities, the Israeli army was in our cities, in our towns, and it was very feasible and possible to have a direct confrontation where you exposed them. [...] Now direct confrontation has become very difficult for us because now we have these walls around us and we are in prisons. So what we need to start thinking of is what are the different tools that may have not even been developed at this point to engage in a very powerful nonviolence movement. and the tools now for us are based also not just on what we could do to be proactive against the Other but also what we could do to in a sense break the different walls that exist. Not just the cement walls but the moral, the psychological, the ideological walls that have been built over the last sixty years."

Other interviewees, however, were very supportive of the idea of using confrontational tactics and had used them with their organisations, albeit not necessarily in the context of a demonstration. The Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace, for example, started a campaign in Hebron where throughout the night, ten minutes before each full hour, the women would ululate loudly to keep the settlers and soldiers present in the city awake. However, when the campaign failed to show immediate results, it was discontinued.

Apart from confrontational tactics or tactics which establish points of contact, creative tactics are also a powerful tool in any nonviolence movement due to the ability to mobilise people

and to gain media attention. Mubarak Awad gives several examples of creative tactics, including protest prayers, silent demonstrations, guerilla theatre, and the like. (Awad 1984, 28) The creativity exhibited by Palestinian nonviolence organisations is truly impressive. In commemoration of the Naqba, for example, Sabeel let one black balloon fly into the sky for every day since the Naqba.¹² In a similar vein Sabeel was planning to fly sixty paper kites with prayers, also in commemoration of the Naqba, during a conference in July 2008. George Rishmawi recalled a demonstration where mirrors were used to create a pattern resembling a prison which was then projected onto the Israeli soldiers, giving the impression that they were trapped inside a prison. Similarly, using the idea of being imprisoned, Eyad Bornat from Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil'in recalled a demonstration where activists put themselves into a makeshift prison to symbolise the occupation. At another demonstration in Bil'in, activists tied themselves to their olive trees. Sami Awad mentioned a mock crucifixion which actually created some backlash within the local community due to the fact that the person being crucified was a Muslim. Another creative tactic used by Holy Land Trust was to dress up as Santa Claus and distribute candy to the soldiers. But again, this created some backlash when local Palestinians accused the activists of handing out candy to the soldiers without understanding the symbolism of the act. There is, therefore, a need to discuss possible activities with the local community and to be sensitive to local customs and the local culture. Nonetheless, Sami Awad is in favour of creative tactics because:

”Creativity does not just attract media attention but it also becomes attractive for the local community to participate when you know there is something else happening every day. So for example we would have demonstrations where only women would go out. So women became very encouraging of other women participating.”

There are sceptical voices as well, however, such as the one from Zoughbi Zoughbi who believes that campaigns which use creative tactics provide good opportunities for taking pictures but do not have much merit on their own. Osama Abu Karsh also stressed that Combatants for Peace as an organisation does not aim to go where the media is but rather to go to places which are not in the spotlight; where people are suffering and need help. They are therefore not trying to use particularly creative tactics.

¹² The Arabic word al-Naqba literally means *catastrophe* and refers to the destruction of Palestinian life as a result of the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

All the nonviolence tactics being used, including tactics which establish points of contact, confrontational tactics, and creative tactics, have had to be re-evaluated since the first Intifada which is widely considered to have been a nonviolent uprising. The recent al-Aqsa Intifada, on the contrary, is an uprising which is characterised by the extensive use of violence. It is within this violent environment that Palestinian nonviolence organisations are trying to operate.

There was an agreement among the interviewees that the use of violence during the al-Aqsa Intifada has been detrimental to the Palestinians' interests. One interviewee expressed the opinion that the Israeli side has a more effective media strategy which allowed them to distort the Palestinians' image in the aftermath of the al-Aqsa Intifada.

One of the major differences between the 1987 Intifada and the nonviolent activities which Palestinian nonviolence organisations are implementing at this time is that the first Intifada was a spontaneous, popular initiative. The methods being used at the time were nonviolent without being referred to as nonviolent. They were usually referred to as *unarmed struggle* or *unarmed resistance* and had a mass appeal. This mass appeal today can only be found in the villages which are directly affected by land confiscations in order to gain land for the building of the Separation Barrier. Eyad Bornat believes that one of the reasons for the lack of a mass appeal is because during the first Intifada there was no politically negotiated settlement in sight whereas now negotiations take place, albeit unsuccessfully. He also claims that the violent repression of the al-Aqsa Intifada has made people weary of engaging in any activities. Lucy Nusseibeh sees the major difference between the 1987 Intifada and the nonviolent activities being implemented today on the issue of leadership. While there was a unified leadership in 1987, including all the different political factions, which gave out written instructions on a regular basis for nonviolent strategies which were obeyed by the entire Palestinian population, there is no unified leadership and no major strategy today. Sami Awad believes that the major difference lies in the control which the Israeli military had over the Palestinian population at the time of the first Intifada. According to him living under full military occupation created opportunities for actions, such as demonstrations. He said:

”Part of the power of nonviolence is to disobey the rules that are set. So we were living under hundreds of thousands of rules, where you could choose even what rules to refuse to obey.”

As he explained, one of the most proactive nonviolent actions done by the Palestinians at the time was related to the changing of clocks from summertime to wintertime and vice versus. Sami Awad recalled:

”One of the very creative actions done by the underground leadership in the first Intifada was in saying to Palestinians *Let us change our time one week after Israel changes its time*. So they do it on this Saturday, let us do it the next Friday and have our own independent time even for this one week. It was incredible! [...] As empowering as it was for the Palestinians, as provocative and threatening it was to the Israeli military. They would actually stop people on the streets and break their arms if the time did not match their time and they refused to change the clock. So this is what, you know, the things that we were able to do in the first Intifada. Because they wanted to have direct and complete control over every aspect of our life. In the second Intifada it is, as you know, it is completely different because now what has been created is a buffer zone between us and the occupation called the Palestinian Authority. And the Palestinian Authority now has control over things in our life that the Israeli military had a few years ago.”

Due to these circumstances nonviolent resistance has become more difficult to accomplish because there are fewer military orders directed at the entire Palestinian population which they could collectively refuse to obey. Sami Awad thinks that the big issue now is the building of the Separation Barrier and the land confiscation accompanying this process, as well as the settlement building. This means that the attention has been taken away from the people and has been focused on the land. The people most affected by the land confiscation are the villagers, a relatively small proportion of the Palestinian population. Palestinians living in urban areas are still affected by the building of the Separation Barrier and the building of settlements, but not as directly as those people whose lands are being confiscated for it. So two of the biggest challenges for nonviolence organisations today, as compared to the situation in 1987, are how to mobilise large segments of Palestinian society to show solidarity with the villagers, and also to develop the tools that can be used to empower an entire community to engage in nonviolent action.

7.4 Mobilisation

Regarding the issue of mobilisation, and the question of which segments of Palestinian society are most active in nonviolent activities today, there was a broad agreement among the interviewees that any Palestinian who goes about his daily life in spite of all the difficulties, such as restrictions on the freedom of movement, is effectively practising nonviolence. Simply moving from one place to another becomes a form of defiance and of nonviolent action. According to Omar Harami this includes teachers who continue to teach although their salaries are not being paid; people who risk opening a business and employing people; and those who cross the checkpoints every day without resorting to violence.

Zoughbi Zoughbi suggested that during the last forty years, different segments of Palestinian society have been at the forefront of the nonviolent struggle. According to him, during the 1970s the students were the backbone of the nonviolent struggle. He said that this shifted later to the PLO in its capacity as a state in exile.¹³ During the first Intifada, the people in general were most active in the nonviolent struggle. Today, he believes, NGOs with a local mandate are the most active in the nonviolent struggle.

George Rishmawi sees the ordinary people, in particular the villagers, as being most active in the nonviolent struggle today, although he says that the intellectuals usually take the leading initiative. He sees this as problematic because according to him the Palestinian people have little confidence in their political leadership and will not believe intellectuals either who are trying to lead them in the field. He does concede, however, that there is a need for leadership. On the issue of confidence he said:

”It is important when we train young people in nonviolence that they know that we are practitioners of nonviolence, not only scholars or just talking about nonviolence, preaching nonviolence. And that gives them even more confidence in us when we talk about it and when we train them.”

This opinion was echoed by Lucy Nusseibeh who believes that it is comparatively easy to get intellectuals on board but that they can easily be dismissed as people who do not have to deal with the same daily difficulties.

¹³ The Palestine National Council, considered by the PLO to be its parliament in exile, implicitly recognised the right of existence of the State of Israel at the Arab League meeting held in Algiers in November 1988. A month later, Yassir Arafat, at a press conference in Geneva where he had spoken to the UN General Assembly, fully renounced terrorism.

It seems justified to conclude that although the majority of Palestinians deal with the daily challenges of the occupation nonviolently, there is only a small segment of Palestinian society which engages in a concerted nonviolent struggle these days. These are the villagers who continue to resist nonviolently, supported by international and Israeli activists. This raises the question how other segments of the Palestinian population can be mobilised to become active in the nonviolent struggle to end the occupation. As has been pointed out earlier, the issue of mobilisation is one of the most pressing issues that Palestinian nonviolence organisations currently have to deal with. Despite the difficulty of mobilising huge numbers to take part in nonviolent activities, there are some strategies which can be successful.

Sabeel, for example, places a real emphasis on involving its constituents in the decision making process. Any activities that do take place arise out of a need of the population and are negotiated by them. Consequently, there is no need to *sell* an activity or a project to them because they are the ones who have created it in the first place. WIAM prefers to take action and lead by example so that others are inspired to join in their activities. They also like to raise awareness. One of the most successful ways of mobilising the Palestinian population to engage in nonviolent activities is through training them in nonviolent techniques while they are children or teenagers, for example through summer camps. This is an approach taken by many of the Palestinian nonviolence organisations, including the Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace. Nafez Assaily explained that his organisation first started out in 1986 and that some of the children who were involved with the Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace back then are now leading the nonviolent resistance in places like Bil'in. He sees this as a real success of educating young people about nonviolence. Nonviolence training and educating people about nonviolence is also a strategy being employed by Combatants for Peace who go into villages over long periods of time and hold lectures there. After a year, they will then prepare the first nonviolent activities, such as demonstrations, in which most of the villagers participate. According to George Rishmawi, one of the major obstacles in mobilising people to take part in nonviolent activities is that one does not see immediate results. Furthermore, there was also a lot of suspicion initially among Palestinians regarding nonviolence. They were afraid that being nonviolent was equal to being passive. By now, however, after several years of nonviolence training done by different organisations, nonviolence has theoretically become acceptable. While training still has an important role to play, Sami Awad argues that there is now the need for working in the domains of leadership and strategy. This means focusing on high level leaders within Palestinian society and training

them in understanding and engaging in nonviolence so that they may lead the Palestinian people in action.

One of the ways to mobilise people to take part in nonviolent activities would be through using specific messages or slogans that stir up emotions and encourage people to act. Abigail Fuller calls this the *framing of issues*. This refers to the process of shaping a particular message to catch people's attention and to appeal to them. (Fuller 2005) The question regarding the issue of framing is two-fold. Firstly, which messages or slogans are being used by Palestinian nonviolence organisations to catch people's attention and to appeal to them? And secondly, which of these messages or slogans are particularly successful?

At Sabeel, two messages are being emphasised. One, that there has been enough suffering, and two, that the situation needs to be changed. Sabeel is using these messages because its programmes are very much needs-based and because they appeal to a Christian constituency. Zoughbi Zoughbi from the WIAM Center emphasised that different terminology should be used for different audiences. When he is speaking in a church, he will speak about Christians; when talking at a public meeting, he will speak about humans; and when addressing a meeting of Muslims, Christians, and Jews, he will speak about the Abrahamic family. So it is important to use inclusive terminology depending on the audience one wishes to reach. Despite of this, there is a general sense that the accepted slogans such as *Enough blood* or *Ending the occupation* have lost their power. Combatants for Peace has made the experience that personal stories are a more successful tool for convincing people to engage in nonviolent activities than particular slogans. Sami Awad from Holy Land Trust argued that:

”The Palestinian community is getting very, very tired of slogans. We have been hearing slogans and words from the political and the military and the nonviolent leadership now for forty years. And these slogans are really falling on deaf ears now.”

Nonetheless, he is hopeful that the idea of equality as expressed in a slogan calling for equality between Palestinians and Israelis, between Christians, Muslims, and Jews might become very strong, albeit more internationally than locally. He cited the example of South Africa where the most commonly used slogan was neither to resist Apartheid nor to end Apartheid, but rather it was *One person, one vote*.

Another slogan which has the potential to mobilise people is *Smarter without violence* which is the title of a campaign implemented by MEND. The organisation is using different tools,

such as posters, bumper stickers, T-Shirts, and a web domain to spread the slogan, thus raising a level of interest and awareness from which it then becomes possible to launch a campaign.

7.5 Media strategy

In addition to trying to mobilise the Palestinian population to take part in nonviolent activities, Palestinian nonviolence organisations are also trying to reach outside of Palestine and to mobilise the media, in particular the international media, to provide coverage of these activities.

One way of achieving this, and this is the way chosen by Sabeel and MEND, for example, is through chapters or branches of the organisation abroad. Sabeel has several *Friends of Sabeel* chapters around the world which raise awareness of the activities Sabeel organises in the Palestinian territories. Apart from raising awareness, the members of these chapters abroad put pressure on their churches, which then in turn try to put pressure on decision makers to influence decisions regarding the situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories. MEND, on the other hand, has a very active branch in the UK which often organises events that get coverage in the British media, thus raising awareness about the organisation and its work. Furthermore, MEND produces a nonviolence newsletter called *The Phoenix* which lists nonviolent activities inside the Palestinian territories organised by different nonviolence organisations.

The majority of Palestinian nonviolence organisations are also members of international nonviolence networks, such as the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Nonviolent Peaceforce, The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, and the like. Through membership in these worldwide networks they are able to spread the word about their activities.

Another way of reaching outside of Palestine and being able to have international media cover the nonviolent struggle in Palestine is going on speaking tours abroad. These speaking tours are being organised by universities, nongovernmental organisations, or religious communities who invite representatives of the Palestinian nonviolence organisations to speak to their members.

An even more proactive strategy when it comes to reaching outside of Palestine and reaching the international media is being implemented by Holy Land Trust. The organisation created its own press agency, the Palestine News Network (PNN) because it was felt that this was

more likely to lead to success than trying to convince the corporate press structures to listen to them. As Sami Awad explained:

”We provide all the news but with a real focus on news about nonviolence and community building and social events. And we also provide news for other press agencies now, so they would call us now for news, and they would call us for reports, or to confirm actions that happened. We have been able to build this trust relationship with them, locally we provide news to a network of radio and television stations in the West Bank and Gaza where we have now twelve radio stations that take our news bulletins from us. Every hour we have a news summary and again we focus in it on the nonviolent actions that happened; and we have two programmes that we provide. One for women and empowering women in society, and one for children and the rights of children in society. They are also broadcast in these radio stations.”

7.6 Strategy for involving women

Women can play an important role in spreading awareness of nonviolence because they are usually - in particular in traditional societies - the ones raising the children. Reaching out to women and educating them about nonviolence is therefore a way to reach into the families. Most Palestinian nonviolence organisations therefore run projects specifically to teach women about nonviolence but also to empower them.

However, there is also a threat of nonviolence becoming marginalised if the focus is solely on working with women. Lucy Nusseibeh argued that gender equality in projects is important but "if the idea is to become mainstream it is much better to have less women but to have them in the mainstream and to have the nonviolence in the mainstream."

7.7 Cooperation

A key factor which would strengthen the concept of Palestinian nonviolent resistance both within the Palestinian territories, as well as in Israel and abroad, is cooperation. While cooperation with other Palestinian nonviolence groups would bolster the potential of reaching more segments of the Palestinian population, cooperation with Israeli nonviolence groups could lead to a change in perception held within Israeli society of the Palestinian people. Cooperation with international nonviolence organisations would raise awareness of the

Palestinian plight, create solidarity with the Palestinian people, and provide a tool for leverage to influence decisions taken by international players regarding the situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

With regards to cooperation between the Palestinian nonviolence groups, there are some attempts to increase cooperation. Sabeel, for example, organised a concert to commemorate sixty years of the Naqba together with a wide number of Christian organisations. They usually only cooperate with other Christian groups.

Nafez Assaily from the Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace believes that cooperation is one of the biggest difficulties for Palestinian nonviolence organisations, and that networking poses a particular challenge. He argues that there is the need for leadership under which networking could be assimilated. Sami Awad shares this view. In his opinion:

”One of the challenges is that within the nonviolent groups there is also not a real understanding of what we want to achieve in the future. What is it that we want to fight for and do? And the word nonviolence becomes one that is used by different organisations for different reasons. [...] So we have some organisations, for example, that use the word nonviolence in their language when it comes to dialogue with Israeli groups. And you have some groups that use nonviolence as what we would say *direct confrontation*. [...] So you go to the extremes with this one word on all of this. And that in a sense creates a confusion within society as well because even as an organisation we have very little, if any, contact with Israeli groups, we are always accused of wanting to normalise relations with Israel.”

The conclusion resulting from this is that cooperation is apparently a lot easier when it comes to organising direct actions, such as demonstrations against the Separation Barrier, than it is with regards to devising a strategy for the future of the nonviolent struggle in the Palestinian territories. Thus, for example, the Centre for Rapprochement between People, as well as Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil'in, cooperate with the Popular Committees to carry out nonviolent activities.

The leaders of Palestinian nonviolence organisations are, however, very much aware of the need for cooperation in order to strengthen the concept of Palestinian nonviolence. In the summer of 2007, MEND organised a one-day conference on the theme of cooperation among nonviolence groups. The participants agreed that it was necessary to increase cooperation. MEND is trying to achieve this through the *Smarter without violence* campaign which

includes a joint website where organisations can upload information about their activities, as well as through the nonviolence bulletin *The Phoenix* which regularly lists activities run by different Palestinian nonviolence organisations.

George Rishmawi from the Centre for Rapprochement between People explained that there had also been attempts to create a council where staff members from nonviolence organisations could meet regularly to keep each other updated about activities but also to plan activities together. This attempt, however, was unsuccessful due to a shortage of staff and funds.

In spite of these attempts, however, there are still the practical or logistical problems of cooperation, including the restrictions on freedom of movement which sometimes prevent people from actually physically being able to meet. This presents quite a challenge with regards to cooperation between individuals and organisations based in Jerusalem on the one hand and the West Bank on the other hand. It presents an even greater challenge when it comes to cooperation between individuals or organisations who are based in the Gaza Strip on the one hand and those that are based in Jerusalem or the West Bank on the other hand. One way to deal with this challenge is to use video conferencing equipment for activities such as workshops or seminars. This, however, is a relatively costly option which requires access to technical equipment, as well as access to technical training.

Lucy Nusseibeh believes that apart from the practical and logistical challenges posed to cooperation, there are other issues preventing a successful cooperation. In her opinion there is a lot of territoriality and competition over funds, as well as a fear of being dominated by other individuals or organisations. She therefore suggested a fairly loose cooperation at the level of information.

When it comes to cooperation with Israeli organisations the situation becomes even more challenging, for example due to the aforementioned difficulties of restrictions of freedom of movement, as well as due to the fear on the Palestinian side to be perceived as supporting *normalisation* with the Israeli side. In the words of Zoughbi Zoughbi from the WIAM Centre:

”Sometimes certain organisations on the Israeli side have high level relationships with the Israeli government. And they will invite us and say *We will issue [permits]* and they will be able to issue [permits] but I do not like that because peace and nonviolence work and joint projects do not need a one-day permit. [...] We would like to have freedom of movement.”

There is a general feeling that cooperation with Israeli organisations was easier during the years immediately following the Oslo Accords.¹⁴ In particular, a lot of training took place for Israelis and Palestinians. After the al-Aqsa Intifada, these stopped. Those Israeli organisations with which Palestinian nonviolence organisations do cooperate, mainly when it comes to protests but occasionally also when it comes to conferences, are pro-justice groups such as Anarchists against the Wall, Bet Shalom, the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, Rabbis for Human Rights, Ta'yush, New Profile, Breaking the Silence, and others. In order for this cooperation to be successful, as Eyad Bornat pointed out, it is important to "work with organisations and people who are willing to do the work on the ground."

It is important to understand that the cooperation between these Israeli and Palestinian groups does not have as its aim to find political solutions. The aim of both the Israeli and the Palestinian groups engaging in nonviolent activities is to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Sami Awad explained:

"We do not engage with Israeli groups in discussing and creating dialogue over the political issues of Palestinians and Israelis. We discuss with Israeli groups about actions and tactics to resist the occupation."

For these Israeli and Palestinian groups ending the occupation is a prerequisite for engaging in meaningful dialogue, as equal negotiating partners, a dialogue that will eventually result in a political agreement. The importance of equality was emphasised by Lucy Nusseibeh who said:

"I am happy to work with Israeli organisations that work on a really equal basis but it is a matter of being very careful and in actually developing proposals jointly not to allow the other party to dictate."

Where cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian groups does actually take place, there are surprisingly few difficulties. Osama Abu Karsh from Combatants for Peace, which is of course a joint Israeli-Palestinian group, emphasised that they appreciate the involvement of other Israeli groups, in particular when it comes to direct actions because of their experience and because of strength in numbers. Furthermore, in his opinion, Israeli activists are more

¹⁴ In 1993, after secret negotiations, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators agreed on the Oslo Declaration of Principles. The PLO recognised the State of Israel and Israel accepted the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

effective in dealing with Israeli settlers. Eyad Bornat from Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil'in believes that for them the cooperation with Israeli groups works so well because right from the beginning they espoused a strategy that Israelis coming to Bil'in would come as supporters of the villagers and as supporters of the nonviolent struggle against the land confiscations and the Separation Barrier. They would not, however, come as leaders of this nonviolent struggle. The protests would always be led by the local Palestinians. The questions that need to be kept in mind when initiating joint projects or activities, according to Zoughbi Zoughbi, are:

”Are we in such a relationship shortening the Israeli occupation period? Are we mitigating violence? Are we creating healthier relationships? Am I humanising the other side? Is the other side humanising me? Am I building a culture of acceptance among my kids, among my people?”

While there is still a lot of potential for developing a common approach towards cooperation with Israeli groups, cooperation with international activists and international groups is well established. The involvement of internationals in the Palestinian nonviolent struggle is much appreciated because it shows solidarity with the Palestinian people and at the local level gives the Palestinians a feeling of not being alone.

The majority of interviewees pointed out that international activists who come to the Palestinian territories and take part in nonviolent activities and thus experience first hand the situation of the Palestinians, have an important role to play in advocacy when they return to their home countries. They can serve as ambassadors and convey their experiences to their respective home communities.

International activists also used to play an important role in providing protection during demonstrations. Their presence in demonstrations was initially perceived as deterring the Israeli Defence Army from using disproportionate means of force against the protesters. However, with the deaths of Rachel Corrie and Tom Hunter, as well as with the injuring of countless international activists during demonstrations, the presence of internationals can no longer be counted on as providing protection.¹⁵ Nonetheless, international activists who are

¹⁵ In the year 2003 alone, several incidents took place which prove that the presence of international activists no longer guarantees Israeli restraint. As Tanya Reinhart explains: “On 16 March, Rachel Corrie, a twenty-three-year-old student from Olympia, Washington, and an artist with a deep faith in humanity and justice, was run over and killed in cold blood by an Israeli bulldozer in Gaza. On 6 April, Brian Avery from North Carolina was shot in the face by an Israeli tank in Jenin. (Avery survived after months of facial reconstruction in hospital.) Six days later, the Englishman Tom Hurndall was shot in the head by Israeli snipers in Rafah. He died from his injury on

participating in these demonstrations still have an important role. Eyad Bornat explained that the videos which internationals take with their cameras during these demonstrations can be used in Israeli courts to defend the Palestinian demonstrators. An example of this would be if a Palestinian demonstrator gets arrested during a protest and is being accused of throwing stones at the Israeli soldiers. If this is untrue, video coverage of the demonstration could be used as proof of the accused's innocence.

With regards to the demonstrations, George Rishmawi and Lucy Nusseibeh believe that international activists should weigh up very carefully whether to participate in nonviolent protest activities inside the Palestinian territories or not. Lucy Nusseibeh said:

”I do not think anyone should risk their life, especially in this kind of messy situation where things do not even get much notice or appreciation. So there have been times when it has been dangerous for international activists to come.”

For Eyad Bornat, however, international activists play a crucial role in the nonviolent struggle through their participation in demonstrations. Regardless of whether international activists and international groups decide to take part in direct actions or not, there are also numerous other ways how they can support the nonviolent struggle in the Palestinian territories. This includes providing funding for activities, training Palestinians in nonviolent strategies and methods, mobilising individuals to travel to the Palestinian territories, disseminating information about the situation, lobbying their media for a fair coverage of the conflict, lobbying their governments to put pressure on Israel to abide by international law, or organising speaking tours for Palestinian activists.

All of these activities would help to create an awareness of the situation in the Palestinian territories and to present a different picture of the Palestinian people in the international media. Sami Awad believes that this is important because according to him:

”Fox News could go five years without writing one report about the Palestinians but five years from now you ask Americans about Palestinians and they are still the terrorists, the murderers that want to kill every Jew.”

14 January 2004. Other ISM [*International Solidarity Movement*] activists were arrested and deported.” (Reinhart 2006, 178)

He argued that internationals should not just try to raise awareness about nonviolence in the Palestinian territories but also about the injustices happening and the rights being denied to the Palestinians.

The interviewees agreed that international activists and organisations could support the nonviolent struggle in Palestine more through sharing their knowledge about other nonviolent struggles. One of the examples mentioned by Zoughbi Zoughbi was the fall of the Berlin Wall and how Palestinian nonviolence activists and organisations could learn from these experiences. Conversely it would be extremely helpful, as mentioned by Lucy Nusseibeh, to give Palestinian nonviolence leaders the opportunity to give trainings themselves to people abroad. They are exceptionally experienced in using nonviolent methods under very challenging circumstances and thus could contribute immensely to developing the abilities of other communities to engage in nonviolent struggles. Moreover, this would send a very powerful message that nonviolence exists even in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that there are Palestinian individuals and organisations who champion nonviolence.

There is a strong agreement among Palestinian nonviolence organisations that the international community can respond nonviolently to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories through boycotts or morally responsible investment. Sabeel, for example, published a booklet entitled *A Call for Morally Responsible Investment: A Nonviolent Response to the Occupation* in which it calls specifically on churches to put pressure on or divest from companies and corporations which:

- a) provide products, services or technology that sustain, support or maintain the occupation;
- b) have established facilities or operations on occupied land;
- c) provide products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, or maintenance of settlements on occupied land or settlement related infrastructure;
- d) provide products, services or financial backing to groups that commit violence against innocent civilians; or
- e) provide finances or assist in the construction of Israel's separation wall or settlement infrastructure.

(Sabeel 2005, 15)

The call for boycotts or morally responsible investment is not just supported by Palestinian nonviolence organisations; it is also being supported by international groups, including Jewish groups. The US based organisation Jewish Voice for Peace, for example, states:

”At JVP, we fully support selective divestment from companies that profit from Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. This includes American companies like Caterpillar who profit from the wholesale destruction of Palestinian homes and orchards. It also includes Israeli companies who depend on settlements for materials or labor or who produce military equipment used to violate Palestinian human rights.”

(Sabeel 2005, 15)

The issue of boycotting Israeli products or calling for morally responsible investment is very controversial in Europe and the United States of America, and the interviewees were well aware of this. There was a strong agreement that any calls for boycotts or morally responsible investment would have to be worded very carefully, and would have to be very specific. The emphasis should be on boycotting the occupation, and not on boycotting Israel. Nonetheless, all interviewees expressed their favour of either boycotting Israeli products or divesting from companies or corporations which benefit from the occupation. Zoughbi Zoughbi believes that boycotting and divesting¹⁶ are some of the mechanisms of supporting the Palestinians. He said:

”I am talking about divestment from anything that will prolong the occupation. Look at these careful words put together. The divestment of anything that will prolong the occupation and the injustices. If people would like to support a health clinic in Tel Aviv for poor children, for cancer children, I am not asking for this to be boycotted or for divestment. But if I see the Caterpillar killing my trees there, taking them out, of course I call for divestment from that.”

¹⁶ Divesting refers to the process of terminating an institution's investment in Israel. The Divest from Israel Campaign was initiated in the year 2001 in the United States by some 50 universities, including Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton, and others. As part of the campaign, the universities' staff would launch petitions calling on their universities to withdraw their investments from Israel. The University of Harvard, for example, according to a report dating from the year 2002, has \$600 million invested in Israel. (Rubenberg 2003, 412-413)

George Rishmawi from the Centre for Rapprochement between People acknowledged that some people abroad might see the boycott of Israeli products as a very radical call. He suggested that instead people might call on Israel to comply with the European-Israeli agreement on trade instead.¹⁷

Nafez Assaily from The Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace believes that the Palestinian people themselves should boycott Israeli products, although he prefers not to call it a boycott. The Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace runs a campaign called *Eat and drink local products only*. They are encouraging Palestinians to use local products which they see as direct aid to the Palestinian people. Sami Awad believes that campaigns like these need to be researched extremely carefully because of the interdependence of the Palestinian and the Israeli markets. Instead, he expressed support for the boycott by British universities of Israeli universities and professors who implicitly support the occupation.¹⁸ He argued that this was a very specific, targeted boycott which did not create a threatening feeling for the rest of Israeli society. He sees the importance of boycotts like these in creating divisions within Israeli society.

”The idea of nonviolence is in a sense to begin creating divisions within the unity of the oppressor and to have them start really doubting, questioning why they are part of that system. [...] We want people to start breaking down as Gene Sharp would call it *the pillars of the oppressor*. And that is why we have to target very specific groups and very specific issues.”

Contrary to Sami Awad’s opinion, Lucy Nusseibeh did not support the academic and cultural boycott:

”I am against the academic boycott and the cultural boycott because many of the academics are the most supportive and helpful and understanding of the whole situation. So I think it is a pity to alienate them or make them feel that they should be

¹⁷ The EU-Israel Association Agreement forms the legal basis governing relations between Israel and the EU. The treaty with Israel incorporates free trade arrangements for industrial goods and concessionary arrangements for trade in agricultural products. The preamble emphasises the importance of the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular the observance of human rights, democratic principles, and economic freedom. Respect for human rights and democratic principles constitutes an essential element of the agreement.

¹⁸ The cultural and academic boycott of Israel originated in the United Kingdom but has now spread to other countries. This particular boycott campaign seeks to exclude Israeli academics, artists, musicians, and others from working and participating in European and North American institutions. The rationale behind this boycott campaign is that with Israel being a democracy its citizens, including academics, artists, and musicians, carry responsibility for the actions of the Israeli government against the Palestinians. (Rubenberg 2003, 413)

cut off. [...] I think it is much better to boycott goods. Especially goods from the settlements would be really worth doing because I do not think people understand enough again what a settlement is. So it could be used as a way of educating. [...] It is a way in to explaining a very complex situation that sounds innocuous.”

It becomes clear then from these different opinions and approaches that although there is agreement among Palestinian nonviolence organisations that boycotting or divesting are usefull nonviolent tools which can be used by the international community to support the nonviolent struggle against the Israeli occupation, there is also a major disagreement about which strategy to follow regarding this issue. Most importantly, the question remains how boycotting or divesting could be use to exert pressure on Israel with the aim of creating awareness inside of Israel that the occupation of the Palestinian territories is detrimental to Israel's interests. Exerting this kind of pressure has to be done in a way which does not allow extremists within Israel to push the rest of Israeli society into more extremism in dealing with the Palestinians.

7.8 Successes and limitations

Considering the fact that there are several Palestinian nonviolence organisations active in the Palestinian territories at this moment in time, and considering that these organisations in most cases have been active for at least a decade now, the question is what up until this point have been the major successes and limitations in the nonviolent struggle against the Israeli occupation.

Since the major aim of Palestinian nonviolence organisations is to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, and since this aim obviously has not been achieved yet, there are only minor successes so far. Most interviewees pointed out that probably the biggest achievement so far is that the majority of Palestinians - despite the overwhelming difficulties they are facing in their everyday lives - have not resorted to using violence. They also consider it a success that the international community has been made more aware of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Likewise, they believe that there are now more voices inside Israel who are calling for nonviolent Palestinian leaders to step forward. In general the shared opinion was that ever since the nonviolent struggle began with the 1987 Intifada, there has been a change of perception of the Palestinian people. As Lucy Nusseibeh commented:

”I think in the Intifada there was a lot of success with the nonviolent methods used then. And it was not entirely nonviolent, there are disputes over stones and there were some people that used violence but essentially it was nonviolent. Those that had weapons did not use them and it was a clear nonviolent strategy. And it was also very unifying because it was nonviolent. So I think that there were many successes then but in particular in actually beginning to awaken sympathy for the Palestinian cause and to change the perception about Palestinians that had really been going on since 1948 and then reinforced after 1967 that there was nothing human about Palestinians. And it was the beginning of a shift in perception that I think is still actually growing. That was really the major success.”

Comparing the success of the 1987 Intifada to today, one would probably have to argue that it is the people of Bil'in and their supporters who have achieved a similarly important success. They have succeeded in keeping a nonviolent protest movement alive over several years. It is due to their continuous nonviolent struggle that the Israeli Supreme Court decided that the Separation Barrier cutting off the villagers from their agricultural land has to be re-routed. In practice, however, the Israeli authorities have not yet implemented the court's decision.

One of the failures of the Palestinian nonviolence organisations up until today has been to get the nonviolent struggle covered in the international media. Again it is the people of Bil'in who have probably been most successful in getting their activities covered in the international media. For example, they are organising a conference on nonviolence every year. Since these conferences are attended by renowned nonviolence activists, such as the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Mairead Maguire, more media interest can be generated.

One of the biggest problems nonviolence is facing is that it does not have immediate results, so people might not have confidence in nonviolence as a strategy. One way to build that kind of confidence might be to educate people about the successes of nonviolence movements in other contexts, such as Gandhi's campaign for independence in India or the civil rights movement in the United States.

Another major obstacle to a nonviolent approach is the "Hezbollah argument" which refers to Hezbollah's perceived success of ending the Israeli presence in Southern Lebanon through armed resistance.

Any strategy for a future genuine nonviolence movement in the Palestinian territories would have to overcome these obstacles which limit the potential success of nonviolence in the context of the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation.

7.9 Reactions

When it comes to reactions to Palestinian nonviolence, there was a consensus among the interviewees that the Palestinian people are tired of nonviolence because it is associated with the peace process which people see as a failure. They believe that despite the peace process more land has been confiscated, more settlements have been built, more people have been imprisoned, and more Palestinians have died. Omar Harami from Sabeel said that in his opinion this was the reason why Hamas won the Palestinian parliamentary elections in January 2006.

Zoughbi Zoughbi echoed the sentiment that the Palestinian people are tired of nonviolence. He added that people might be embarrassed by nonviolent activism and that they see the activists themselves as soft. In particular when it comes to trying to prevent the creation of Israeli settlements through nonviolent action people have lost hope because this has failed repeatedly in the past.

This view was supported by George Rishmawi from the Centre for Rapprochement between People who argued that some Palestinian people believe that using nonviolence is a waste of time and effort and that the Israeli side does not understand the language of nonviolence. According to them, Israel understands only the language of violence and consequently the only way to deal with the Israeli side is to use violence oneself. However, George Rishmawi also pointed out that:

”The moment people recognise nonviolence as a way of resistance, then they accept the results, even if there is a punishment after the action. People know that this is the cost of resistance and to a certain extent people expect it, although they do not like it but they expect it, that there is a cost for the resistance.”

And the cost of engaging in nonviolent resistance is high. One interviewee believes that the Israeli authorities specifically prevent nonviolence activists from receiving permits to travel from the West Bank to East Jerusalem. Another interviewee, Lucy Nusseibeh, pointed out that engaging in nonviolent activities can also have material repercussions. For example when Palestinians refused to renew their car licences as part of the nonviolent struggle during the 1987 Intifada, the Israelis fought back by confiscating the cars. As Zoughbi Zoughbi from WIAM pointed out:

”With our work we are embarrassing the Israeli occupation. They want tougher answers because they can use it, they can picture us. They like to see armed men with hoods, shooting. [...] So the Israeli government does not differentiate and sometimes they are really encouraging a negative reaction rather than encouraging a positive action of peace and nonviolence.”

This point was echoed by Eyad Bornat who said that the Israeli side is not differentiating between Palestinians who are engaging in nonviolent protests and those who take up arms. Thus, the nonviolent protest in Bil'in was immediately classified as and referred to as *terrorist* protest.

Nafez Assaily from the Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace said that it is not uncommon for the Israeli military to ridicule nonviolence activists in order to provoke them. Lucy Nusseibeh also believes that the Israeli military uses provocation as a means to elicit violent reactions from Palestinian demonstrators in nonviolent protests to justify the use of force.

Several of the interviewees pointed out that the Israeli side considers Palestinian nonviolence as a threat to their security and as obstructing the security efforts of the Israeli army. For example when Combatants for Peace calls on Israelis to refuse military service as part of a nonviolent struggle, their reaction is usually to emphasise their patriotic duty and the need for strength in the face of a Palestinian population which is allegedly bent on killing them.

Sami Awad is convinced that the majority of Israelis are not even aware of the existence of Palestinian nonviolent action; firstly because he believes that there is not yet a genuine Palestinian nonviolence movement, and secondly because Palestinian nonviolent actions are not being covered in the Israeli media. In his opinion the reason for this is as follows:

”To keep Israeli society afraid of the Palestinians and the violence of the Palestinians is the best tool of control and mobilising on their side as well. So to build the Wall, to get more money for the military, to build more settlements, they need the green light of society. And the best way to do that is to say that the Arabs are violent and they want to kill us.”

There were different views about the stance of the Palestinian Authority regarding nonviolence. Omar Harami argued that the Palestinian Authority encourages nonviolence, for example by making it easier for nonviolence organisations to operate. Osama Abu Kersh from

Combatants for Peace also pointed out that President Abbas recognised the organisation's work through a letter of support.

Sami Awad differentiates between those members of the Palestinian Authority who will occasionally talk about the need to engage in nonviolence but will not actually do so; those who mock nonviolence; those who truly accept nonviolence as a concept but do not know how to put it into practice; and lastly those who fear nonviolence within the Palestinian leadership. These are the ones who understand how powerful nonviolence can be, and that it could potentially pose a threat to them as well because nonviolence is as much about ending the occupation as it is about a free and open democracy.

Resulting from the different opinions about the stance of the Palestinian Authority regarding nonviolence, there were also different opinions regarding the potential merits of linking Palestinian nonviolence groups to politics. Those in favour of such a linkage said this would increase the sustainability of the organisations themselves. The disadvantage would be in being affected by the politics and being unable to keep their independence.

7.10 Political positions

Most Palestinian nonviolence organisations do not embrace a particular political position regarding a final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The majority of the interviewees emphasised, however, that ending the occupation through nonviolent means was a prerequisite for engaging in meaningful negotiations. As Omar Harami pointed out:

”Embracing nonviolence is to allow the people of the land to make a decision. People cannot make such a decision while they are still under occupation, while they are not free. People need to be free. So the first step is ending injustice, ending the oppression of the people, then the future of the land is discussed. When people sit at the table as equal partners.”

The importance of letting the people themselves decide what kind of political solution they favour was further emphasised by Sami Awad:

"We do not believe that Holy Land Trust should endorse one state, two states, ten states, whatever the politicians are talking about. But for us, what we are trying to do is to create the foundation that will be able to withstand and to support any political solution that might develop in the future. [...] One of the big statements we have now and are pushing is the concept of peaceful coexistence based on equality. Equality is something that some people talk about, most people ignore, but for me it is now the root of the conflict that we have. And it has become easy to talk about peace and justice but when you are really talking about equality, start analysing what it means to live as equals on this land, then this is the real challenge that we have, I would say, as Palestinians, especially with Israelis who feel that this is their land, and God gave them this land, and nobody else is supposed to be on here. It becomes a challenge to talk about equality at that level. And I think if we are able to reach this point where we have this recognition of equality, then any political solution becomes the right solution for the future."

Regardless of this, most interviewees agreed that they personally, irrespective of the position of their organisations, were in favour of a one-state solution. They did concede that the concept of a one-state solution would not find many supporters on the Israeli side which is why officially they would support a two-state solution. Zoughbi Zoughbi summarised this position in these words:

"We are not Catholics, we can divorce but the problem is that Israel does not want to wed us or divorce us. Up till this moment they want us as cheap labour, captive market, and garbage dump. [...] I am for a secular, democratic, bi-national state. But at this moment Israel is fearing demography more than Hamas rockets or Hisbollah rockets. So there is a demographic bomb. I hope that they will think that it is not going to explode. We can defuse this with different mechanisms. We are talking about citizenship better than religion or nationalities."

The wish for a one-state solution was reinforced by Nafez Assaily who said:

"I would like very much a Palestinian state to be created by nonviolence. [...] When it is created by nonviolence, it will continue by nonviolence. If it is created by violence, it will continue by violence. But the idea is [...] two people for one state. It means Tel

Aviv, Gaza, Haifa, Jerusalem, they call it Israel, we call it Palestine. They get the embassy in Berlin; we get the embassy in Paris. They take the Ministry of Defence; we take the Ministry of Welfare. So you call it Israel, we call it Palestine. They have their passports, we have our passports.”

There exists, in fact, an EU-sponsored report written in August 2008 by the Palestinian Strategy Study Group comprised of 27 leading Palestinian figures which calls for a shift to a single bi-national state as the Palestinians’ preferred outcome to any negotiating process.¹⁹ In September 2008, the Israel-Palestine Centre for Research and Information also published a report which suggests that some of the options available to Palestinians would be to disband the Palestinian Authority, to call for a single-state solution, or to unilaterally declare independence.²⁰ It is highly unrealistic that any of these options will be pursued; however, one strategy which Palestinian nonviolence organisations might want to consider in the future is calling for a one-state solution and convincing their international supporters to do the same. This may regain the strategic initiative for the Palestinians. It may also lead to greater acceptance of a two-state solution among Israelis because in a way a two-state solution would present the lesser evil, the smaller compromise. This issue would obviously need more research, in particular with regards to how the Israelis would react to such a bold proposal, and if the international community would be supportive of it.

7.11 Vision for the future

Looking ahead, all interviewees wish for nonviolence to become the means of resistance for all Palestinians, not just in a passive way of dealing nonviolently with all the obstacles and challenges which the occupation poses for their daily lives, but as an active tool for resisting the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Beyond this, there is also the wish to contribute to the worldwide nonviolence movement, through sharing experiences and expertise or sending volunteers. Zoughbi Zoughbi commented:

¹⁹ [http://www.palestinestrategygroup.ps/Regaining_the_Initiative_FINAL_17082008_\(English\).pdf](http://www.palestinestrategygroup.ps/Regaining_the_Initiative_FINAL_17082008_(English).pdf)
(last accessed 27/09/2008)

²⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/sep/04/israel.palestinians>
(last accessed 27/09/2008)

"I want nonviolence not to be a driving force against the occupation only but also a constructive element in building our institutions, build our law, justice, accountability and transparency. And I would like to relate to the people. It is my time to contribute to the world."

This is probably one of the most important conclusions which can be drawn: Palestinian nonviolence practitioners can contribute a lot to nonviolent struggles worldwide because for the past two decades they have engaged in nonviolent resistance under extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances. They can share their experiences with others, thereby not only teaching others but also spreading awareness of how far nonviolence in the Palestinian territories has come, and how much further it still needs to go.

8. Practical suggestions for international nonviolence organisations and activists

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the interviews which have direct repercussions for international nonviolence organisations engaged in supporting Palestinian nonviolent resistance against the Israeli occupation.

- **Providing funds and resources**

There is obviously a need for financial support which international organisations can try to meet. Funds are not only needed to run specific projects and campaigns but also to keep an office open and staffed. If every Palestinian nonviolence organisation could employ one member of staff specifically for networking and cooperation - with other Palestinian nonviolence groups, as well as with Israeli and international nonviolence groups - their nonviolent activities could potentially have a much wider impact.

Another important way to strengthen the Palestinian nonviolent struggle for which funds are needed is to spread nonviolent activities away from the centre of the Palestinian territories. At the moment, the majority of Palestinian nonviolence organisations are based in the Jerusalem-Ramallah-Bethlehem triangle. Although some organisations, such as MEND or Combatants for Peace, are active in other cities and villages in the Palestinian territories, it is necessary to spread nonviolent activities, including nonviolence training, much more. This is particularly pertinent with regards to the Gaza Strip.

Funds are also needed for further training, to send Palestinian nonviolence practitioners on speaking tours abroad, and to enable Palestinian nonviolence practitioners to travel abroad to provide nonviolence training themselves.

International nonviolence organisations which are able to raise money can also support Palestinian organisations through providing resources, such as video cameras which can be used to film violent reactions to nonviolent activities or video conferencing equipment which can be used to connect Palestinian nonviolence practitioners from East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip; as well as providing educational materials and training manuals.

- Providing expertise

International nonviolence organisations can support Palestinian nonviolence organisations through providing expertise in areas as varied as developing training manuals, devising school curricula for nonviolence training, or analysing the economic impact of a boycott and divestment campaign.

- Lobbying for freedom of movement

One of the major obstacles to devising a comprehensive nonviolent campaign and putting this campaign into practice is the inability of Palestinian nonviolence practitioners to meet due to the severe restrictions on the freedom of movement. This obstacle also affects meetings between Israelis and Palestinians and thus often impedes joint activities. International nonviolence organisations should make a concerted effort to pressure their own governments to influence the Israeli government to allow freedom of movement for Palestinian nonviolence practitioners within the Palestinian territories, as well as between the Palestinian territories and Israel.

- Raising awareness

International nonviolence organisations as well as individuals can support the Palestinian nonviolent struggle by raising awareness about the situation in the Palestinian territories. One way to do this would be by travelling to the Palestinian territories and speaking about one's experiences afterwards. Another way would be to invite Palestinian nonviolence practitioners and offer them a platform for sharing their experiences with international audiences.

A sustained public relations campaign to propagate images and stories of the nonviolent resistance in the Palestinian territories would convey to the international community that Palestinians are opposing the occupation nonviolently.

- **Sharing experiences**

Nonviolent campaigns have led to major social change and even revolutionary change in many parts of the world. Palestinian nonviolence organisations would benefit from access to these varied experiences. International nonviolence organisations can organise conferences where nonviolence practitioners from different countries come together to share their experiences with each other.

- **Monitoring international media**

In order to be successful, the Palestinian nonviolent struggle needs international media coverage. International nonviolence organisations and individuals can keep informed about the nonviolent struggle in the Palestinian territories through the Palestine News Network or through the websites of Palestinian nonviolence organisations. This knowledge should be used to monitor international media coverage for accuracy. Where incorrect or biased information is provided by the international media, this should be addressed, for example through writing letters to the editors of newspapers.

- **Strengthening Israeli nonviolence organisations and individuals**

Another way of supporting Palestinian nonviolence organisations would be to strengthen Israeli organisations which are pursuing nonviolence as a strategy to end the occupation. This includes giving moral support to those organisations that are trying to de-militarise Israeli society and those individuals who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories. Israeli individuals who travel to the West Bank to take part in nonviolent demonstrations against the Separation Barrier and those Israeli individuals who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories often have little support for their actions within their own society. Knowing that there is support available elsewhere might encourage more Israelis to engage in these nonviolent actions.

9. Suggestions for further research

Several suggestions for further research were brought up during the interviews. In general there was an agreement that more active research and more publications regarding the topic of Palestinian nonviolence are needed in order to increase awareness of the situation in the Palestinian territories.

- Compiling information about nonviolence publications

In the eyes of this author, a useful starting point would be to compile a comprehensive list of all the publications on the theme of nonviolence published by Palestinian nonviolence organisations. This list should be made available to interested organisations and individuals outside of the Palestinian territories, firstly to give interested readers the opportunity to educate themselves about this topic, and secondly to raise awareness of the fact that many Palestinian academics and practitioners are doing research on the topic. A further step would be to have those publications published in Arabic translated into other languages, primarily English, to make them available to a wider audience.

- Researching the history of Palestinian nonviolence

Several interviewees pointed out that the history of nonviolence in the Palestinian territories has not yet been researched sufficiently, in particular with a view to early Palestinian nonviolent activities during the British mandate. Also, there should be research on the question why the momentum of the predominantly nonviolent first Intifada could not be transferred to the al-Aqsa Intifada which was mainly violent.

- Researching strategy

More research is also needed with regards to strategy. Who are the winners and who are the losers of the nonviolent struggle in the Palestinian territories? What are the future steps that should be taken to establish a genuine nonviolence movement? An important aspect of any future strategy is the question how the Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip can be involved in a genuine nonviolence movement.

- Researching the impact of boycotting and divesting

Boycotting and divesting have been major nonviolent tools in bringing about change in other conflicts. There needs to be research though on the viability of boycotts and divestment. How would the Palestinian economy be affected if Palestinians stopped buying Israeli products? How would the Israeli economy be affected if internationals stopped buying Israeli products or Israeli products manufactured in the settlements? How would the Israelis react to boycotts and divestment? Would there be support for a boycott and divestment campaign internationally or would any call for such a campaign backfire?

- Researching motivation

There is also a need to research the motivation of participants who engage in nonviolent resistance. As has been shown, a wide range of motivations was cited by the interviewees but it would be relevant to find out which normative motivations the majority of Palestinians hold who are active in nonviolence. This is closely linked to the question what motivates Palestinians to stay engaged in the nonviolent resistance longterm. It also raises the question if there exists a culturally specific understanding of the concept of nonviolence within the Palestinian context and if this culturally specific understanding influences the choice of methods employed in the struggle.

- Researching the impact on the primary opponent

Major research is needed on the impact of nonviolent resistance on the primary opponents, in this case the Israeli Defence Forces and the Israeli government. How are the primary opponents affected by nonviolent actions? Are the primary opponents affected by the reaction of third parties, such as the international media or foreign governments, to the nonviolent actions? How effective are actions taken by the opponents themselves in reaction to the nonviolent resistance? With regards to the Israeli Defence Forces, one specific research question might be if Israeli soldiers are less easily mobilised to take action against nonviolent Palestinian protesters than they are against Palestinian protesters who take up arms. Regarding the Israeli government, or more generally decision makers within Israeli politics, it would be extremely valuable to research if nonviolent resistance has any influence on the decisions they make. Research is also needed on how the Israeli public at large reacts to the use of nonviolent tactics by the Palestinians. Can a nonviolent strategy change the attitude of the Israeli public towards the Palestinians?

- Researching the *mobiliser*

Lastly, and most importantly, there remains the pressing question which issue could be powerful enough to spark a genuine Palestinian nonviolence movement encompassing all of Palestinian society. Sami Awad put it this way:

“One of the questions I always get is *Who is the Gandhi of Palestine?* or *Where is the Gandhi of Palestine?* And my response has always been that it is not about the Gandhi of Palestine or the Martin Luther King of Palestine; it is about the salt in Palestine. What is the salt in Palestine? In India it was the salt that was the mobiliser, once

Gandhi did the Salt March. That action was the one that mobilised an entire nation to move forward and engage in nonviolence. So the question for us, and that is what we are looking for, is what is our salt here? What is the one action that can tip the point for an entire community and say *We no longer accept this; we will no longer allow ourselves to be oppressed and under these rules and we will engage in resistance, no matter what the cost.*”

There are many arguments to suggest that the salt in Palestine might be the land, not least because up until this point the villagers of Bil’in who are attached to their agricultural land which they rely on for their sustenance, have been the most determined to continue the nonviolent resistance over a long period of time. They are also the ones who have been the most successful because the Israeli High Court decided that the Separation Barrier has to be re-routed around Bil’in. The question remains, however, how other sectors of Palestinian society could be mobilised to show solidarity with the villagers and their struggle.

10. Conclusion

Nonviolence is a complex phenomenon. Its interpretations range from a nonviolent lifestyle due to moral or religious convictions to a more utilitarian approach in the form of a struggle for social change. As has been shown in this thesis, the type of nonviolence practiced by Palestinian activists and academics aims to bring about this social change by ending the Israeli occupation. The seeds for a successful nonviolent resistance to the occupation were sown during the first Intifada but despite partial successes the Palestinians ultimately failed to capitalise upon their gains and achieve their ultimate goal.

While it is clear what the ultimate goal is, there is less clarity about which strategy to pursue to get there and which intermediate goals to try and achieve on the way. In order to establish a genuine, all-encompassing nonviolence movement which has a fair chance of ending the Israeli occupation and thus pave the way for negotiations, a wider strategy is needed which incorporates different intermediate goals, such as demanding an end to land confiscations, ending the construction of the Separation Barrier, or dismantling checkpoints.

With any such strategy, a decision will have to be made about which methods to use. As has been shown, a wide array of different methods is currently being used but there is a need for more research on the impact of these methods. The creation of the Palestinian Authority as a “buffer zone” between the Palestinians and the Israelis has increased the difficulty of finding

meaningful methods which can be employed to have an impact on Israeli public opinion, as well as on the Israeli Defence Forces and the Israeli government.

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians will not be resolved through military means, nor is it likely that it will be resolved through negotiations alone as long as the power asymmetry between Israelis and Palestinians exists. The only way to redress this power asymmetry is through a genuine nonviolence movement. If this is to be achieved, the moral and material support of third parties is needed more urgently than ever.

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APPENDIX 1

Contact details for Palestinian nonviolence organisations

Combatants for Peace

<http://www.combatantsforpeace.org>

Friends of Freedom and Justice Bil'in

<http://www.ffj-bilin.org>

Holy Land Trust

P.O. Box 737

529 Manger Street

Bethlehem

Tel: +972 (2) 276 5930

Fax: +972 (2) 276 5931

<http://www.holylandtrust.org>

Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace

P.O. Box 20961

Samiramis Street

Um Sharayet

91202 Jerusalem

Tel: +972 (2) 583 5146

Fax: +972 (2) 583 5127

<http://www.lownp.com>

Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy

P.O. Box 66558

Jerusalem-Ramallah Road

Beit Hanina

East Jerusalem

Tel: +972 (2) 656 7310

Fax: +972 (2) 656 7311

<http://www.mendonline.org>

The Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People

P.O. Box 24

Schools Street

Beit Sahour

Tel: +972 (2) 277 2018

Fax: +972 (2) 277 4602

<http://www.pcr.ps>

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center

P.O. Box 49084

Al Husseini Bldg., 1st Floor

Shu'fat

91491 Jerusalem

Tel: +972 (2) 532 7136

Fax: +972 (2) 532 7137

<http://www.sabeel.org>

Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center WIAM

P.O. Box 1039

Al Karkafeh Street 231

Bethlehem

Tel: +972 (2) 277 0513

Fax: +972 (2) 277 7333

<http://www.planet.edu/~alastah>

APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire

Topic	Questions	Context
Personal motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did you personally first come in contact with the concept of nonviolence? • How do you personally define nonviolence? • Do you feel there are instances when violence is justified? • Does your faith have a role to play in your decision to engage in the nonviolence movement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was the decision to get involved in the nonviolence movement motivated by specific people or specific events? ▪ Is nonviolence seen as a strategy or a moral principle; as principled or pragmatic? (For example the issue of youths throwing stones) (see Brian Martin 2003: 115)
Goals/Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which goals does your organisation want to achieve through nonviolence? • Which message do you want to get across with your nonviolent activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is demonstrating moral superiority one of the goals? ▪ According to Brian Martin (2003) effective nonviolent action needs a target
Methods/Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which tactics does your organisation use to achieve your goals? • Why do you use these particular tactics? • Do you try to use tactics which establish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do Palestinian nonviolence groups use only a certain repertoire of tactics or are they flexible? ▪ Mubarak Awad (1984) divides nonviolent

	<p>points of contact between Palestinian citizens and the Israeli authorities, for example the Israeli army?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organisation use confrontational tactics, such as property damage, pie throwing or taunting the police? • If yes, what is the reaction to this? • Do you use creative tactics? • Were there tactics that you applied but stopped using? • If yes, why did you stop using these tactics? • How do the tactics used today differ from the tactics used during the 1987 intifada? 	<p>methods into demonstrations, obstruction, refusal to cooperate, harassment, boycotts, strikes, support and solidarity, alternative institutions, and civil disobedience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which tactics have proven successful? ▪ Which tactics have not been successful? ▪ According to Mubarak Awad (1984) points of contact highlight the oppression on the one hand and lead to a useful and meaningful confrontation on the other hand ▪ Mubarak Awad (1984) calls this harassment or psychological warfare and includes denunciation and provocation in this ▪ Mubarak Awad (1984) suggests protest prayers, fasts, silent demonstrations, using powerful symbols such as yellow armbands, commemoration services for martyrs, guerilla theatre, etc.
Target audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is your target audience? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For example the international press, local Palestinians, the military government, the Israeli public

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ According to Brian Martin (2003) effective nonviolent action needs a target
Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which sectors of Palestinian society are most active in the nonviolence movement? • Is the nonviolence movement a movement of intellectuals or a grassroots movement? • How does your organisation mobilize Palestinians to take part in nonviolent activities? • What frames are most effective in order to mobilize Palestinians to take part in nonviolent activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the nonviolence movement have the potential to mobilize and unite large segments of Palestinian society? ▪ According to Abigail Fuller (2005) possible frames are religious messages or messages highlighting the human cost (in terms of human life) of continuing a violent uprising; Mubarak Awad (1984) suggests that broad mass support reduces the dangers and sacrifices for any one individual, and that suffering and pain can be useful in forging unity among the Palestinians to resist oppression (solidarity within)
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organisation have a strategy for involving women in nonviolent activities? • Does your organisation have a strategy for making your work known outside of Palestine? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ According to Brian Martin (2003: 5) communication (inside Palestinian society, but also with outside groups and outside media) is a key for effective nonviolent action
Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you cooperate with other Palestinian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the nonviolence movement have the

	<p>nonviolence groups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, what works well in this cooperation and what does not work quite so well? • Do you cooperate with Israeli nonviolence groups? • If yes, which are the Israeli nonviolence organisations that you work with? • How does this cooperation work? • If no, why not? • Do you cooperate with international nonviolence groups? • In your opinion, what is the importance of outside activists to the Palestinian nonviolence movement (if any)? • How could international nonviolence groups support your work (more)? • Do you think that boycotting Israeli products would be a useful tool for international activists to show solidarity with the Palestinian nonviolence movement? 	<p>potential to work on a national/international scale?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Galtung's great chain of nonviolence (see Brian Martin 2003: 138-140) ▪ Is cooperation with Israeli groups or Israeli individuals possible? Desirable? ▪ What works well in the cooperation with international groups and what does not work well?
<p>Successes/Limitations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you name instances when Palestinian 	

	<p>nonviolence worked successfully?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, why did it work successfully at that particular time? • How do you measure success? • What are the limits of nonviolence in the context of the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation? 	
<p>Reactions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do ordinary Palestinians react to nonviolence in general? • And how do they react specifically to the work which your organisation does? • Does the Palestinian Authority endorse nonviolence in general? • Does the Palestinian Authority endorse the work your organisation does in particular? • In your opinion, is there any merit in the linkage of Palestinian nonviolence organisations with political factions in order to engage the Palestinian Authority in the nonviolence movement? • Do you have any experience of how the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the nonviolence movement have the ability to affect people outside of the movement? ▪ Are Israeli soldiers less easily mobilized against nonviolent resistance as opposed to violent resistance? (see Brian Martin 2003: 123) ▪ Does the Israeli military use infiltrators (agent provocateurs) to foment violence? (see Brian Martin 2003)

	<p>Israelis react to Palestinian nonviolence; including the Israeli civil society, the military, and the government?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you deal with violent Israeli reactions to your nonviolent activities? 	
Political positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are embracing the principles of nonviolence, does this automatically mean embracing a two-state solution over a secular democratic state in all of Palestine? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ According to Mubarak Awad (1984) this is not necessary
Further research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you see the need for further research about Palestinian nonviolence? 	
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your vision for the future of Palestinian nonviolence? • What is your vision for Palestine? 	
Any other comments, thanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any other issues that you would like to discuss that haven't been raised yet? 	