



FINLAND & PALESTINE

Proceedings of a Joint Workshop 2008

PASSIA

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem



Foundation
of the Finnish Institute
in the Middle East



REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE OF FINLAND
RAMALLAH

FINLAND & PALESTINE

Proceedings of a Joint Workshop

(22-23 November 2008, Intercontinental Hotel, Jericho)

PASSIA

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs,
Jerusalem

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Forward

This publication is the result of many years of interactions and debates between Finnish and Palestinian scholars, officials, diplomats, religious figures, media and civil society representatives, culminating in a two-day workshop, which was held on 22-23 November 2008 in Jericho. The workshop was organized and hosted jointly by PASSIA, the Finnish Institute in the Middle East, and the Finnish Representative Office in Ramallah – which was celebrating its 10th anniversary at the time. The seminar discussed the history and future of the Palestinian-Finnish relations as well as Palestinian internal politics and the prospects of the peace process.

Once Finland, a member of the European Union since 1995, held its first Presidency of the EU in the second half of 1999, the Middle East Peace Process figured very prominently on the EU agenda. Henceforth, it was deemed appropriate to establish and maintain closer ties to the Palestinian Authority and civil society in order to gain better insight into the development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Finnish Representative Office was also accredited to handle relations towards Palestinian refugees through UNRWA. However, these missions could not have been concretized without the unremitting communication between the Finnish Representative Office and Palestinian NGOs, including PASSIA.

PASSIA's relations with the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thus, goes way back, since the establishment of the Representative Office in Ramallah ten years ago. Without a doubt, the professionalism and quality of interaction between the two have contributed to the documentation of Palestinian unfolding history in many of PASSIA's publications, which helped enriching our library, and continuous to do so. Our work through bilateral meetings and during different international fora deepened our mutual relations and promoted dialogue between our two people.

During the joint workshop in November 2008, more than 50 participants – spanning UN, EU, Finnish and Palestinian institutions, among others – were joining analytical intellect and joyful meetings. The event brought together experts with a wide range of field specialization speaking on pertinent issues and contributing to this work.

Through this publication – containing the proceedings of the said workshop – we hope to share our fruitful debates and experiences on Finnish-Palestinian relations with the wider audience.

Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi
Chairman of PASSIA

**Seminar Finland-Palestine
22-23 November 2008, Jericho**

Opening Remarks

Sirpa Mäenpää
*Deputy Director General,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Helsinki, Finland*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and honour to address this audience and convey to you the greetings of the Government of Finland and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. We are very pleased to be here in Jericho - in such a historical site - and, in this manner, celebrate the excellent relations between the Palestinian Authority, Finland, the Palestinians and the Finns.

I would also like to extend my warmest thanks to PASSIA and the Foundation of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East for organizing and co-hosting this seminar together with the Representative Office of Finland in Ramallah. Finland has cooperated with PASSIA for many years. We are pleased to note the professionalism and quality of the work done by this NGO, which is also reflected in its active role in the Palestinian society. The Foundation of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East plays a central role in promoting the scientific and cultural cooperation between researchers and students in Finland and in the Palestinian Territories.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered for this seminar in order to discuss the history and future of Palestinian-Finnish relations as well as the current political situation in the Middle East.

It is easy for me to state that the relations between the Palestinians and the people of Finland have, throughout the decades, been excellent. The Palestinians and Finns - being two small peoples - have always felt sympathy for each other and this has been clearly reflected in our relations.

Finland established a Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah at the beginning of 1999. We can today celebrate the 10th Anniversary of our Representative Office. During these years, we have witnessed the deepening of the mutual relationship between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Finland. Our political leaders and high civil servants meet each other frequently, bilaterally and in different international fora. There is an active involvement of civil society in promoting the dialogue between our two peoples.

During the past decade, the tasks of the Representative Office have grown, and the number of its personnel has increased. The central tasks of our Ramallah colleagues is to continue developing our bilateral political, commercial and cultural relations as well as to ensure the effective delivery of Finland's development and humanitarian aid to the West Bank and Gaza. In addition to our bilateral cooperation, Finland, as a member of the European Union, channels funds through its different funds and programmes to help the Palestinians. We have, also, an active cooperation with other relevant international organisations - like the World Bank - in order to provide development aid.

Finland's support through bilateral development aid began in 1994/1995 and has continued without a pause since then. In our aid, we focused on education to enable Palestinian children and youth access to good quality education. We focused on water and sanitation to provide equal distribution and management of scarce water resources in the Palestinian Territories. We focused on land registration and management so that, through a clear land registry, Palestinians have the chance to use and develop their land and, through that, contribute to the economical improvement of West Bank and Gaza. We will continue in these sectors in the years to come with the aim of helping the Palestinians build viable institutions for a future independent Palestinian state. We also support the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan both through our bilateral aid, and through the EU's Pegase mechanism and the World Bank's trust fund. Our firm commitment to these goals is demonstrated by the decision to increase our funding to the Palestinians.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finland is devoted to supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the negotiations between the parties. We are engaged in the EU's efforts to support the parties towards a solution in the peace process, and to establish an independent and viable Palestinian state, living side by side with Israel in peace and security. We sincerely hope that the momentum is there to find a lasting solution as the negotiations, in the spirit of the Annapolis process, continue further.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jericho is believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. Its history reaches back 11,000 years. This is the

first time I have visited Jericho and I look forward to discovering her many stories. It is also a fitting venue for our seminar this weekend.

As the weekend's program demonstrates, the relations and interests between Finland and the Palestinians are diverse and wide-ranging. Many issues touch both Finland and the Palestinians. We can share each others' experiences. So, let us take this opportunity to enforce our good relations and learn from each other.

Thank you.

Finnish Orientalists

Dr. Mikko Louhivuori
Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem

Finland is far to the north of Palestine in Scandinavia. In some sense, our country really is “fin land” or the end of land, as our northern most border almost reaches the sea around the North Pole of our planet.

In our own language, we call our country “Suomi,” which is a very ancient name of uncertain origins. It may have something to do with the word “suo,” or marshland, of which we have plenty. Modern archaeology teaches that Finns, or “suomalainen”, are probably the original inhabitants in this region, with roots well in the Stone Age.

Finnish interest in the Near East has included, in chronological order, the study of the Bible and Holy Land, the Arabic language and Islamic culture, as well as ancient Mesopotamia. I only give a short description of some of our Orientalists who have worked in these fields, in order to give a general idea about the subject.

Yrjö August Wallin - Abd al-Wali (1811-1852)

During the 19th century, Europeans actively exploring the world on expeditions were roaming in all parts of the globe, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Pacific islands. In this context, the very gifted Yrjö August Wallin made several to the Near East, then under Ottoman control. His figure and face looked as if he was born here, and he spoke fluent, almost perfect Arabic. He was the first westerner to reach Mecca in 1845, at risk to his life, and was rewarded for reports



of his travels by the Royal Geographic Society in 1850. During his long travels, Wallin visited the Sinai and Palestine, describing the monuments in Jerusalem in his reports.

Valter Juvelius (1865-1922)

Juvelius was a very original and gifted person who knew Biblical Hebrew very well. He heard about the expedition James Parker was planning to Jerusalem and his intention to dig in the Ophel hill. Parker accepted the Finn to his expedition because he was interested in the "secret code" Juvelius had found in the Book of Ezekiel. The Finn said that the secret code gives the location of the treasures of the Jewish Temple that were

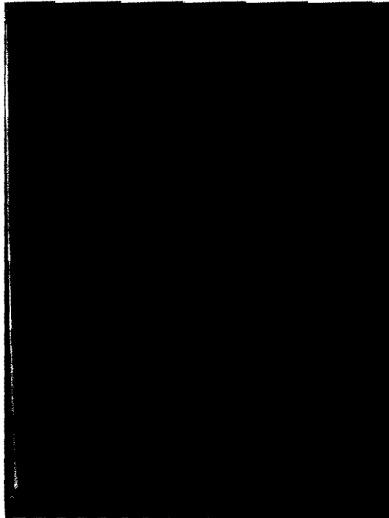


buried when the Romans destroyed it. "Go straight, turn to the left, there is a big stone, turn right..." - a real treasure map!

The excavations were carried out during the years 1909-11, and many workers were hired from the village of Silwan. However, Parker was following advice from Juvelius, and entered deeper and deeper into the tunnels under Ophel, discovering pottery and other archaeological objects. They were, however, moving towards al-Aqsa Mosque and some of the workers got nervous, and told the villagers what was happening. A massive riot followed, and Parker and Juvelius had to escape on horse to Yaffo. The Ottomans never allowed them back to the Holy Land. The leading French archaeologist at that time, L.H. Vincent, in *Ecole Biblique*, said that these two had caused very serious difficulties to the continuing archaeological exploration of the ancient city of Jerusalem. Valter Juvelius remains a mysterious person, but he obviously had a brilliant mind, and the soul of Indiana Jones.

Arthur Hjelt (1868-1931)

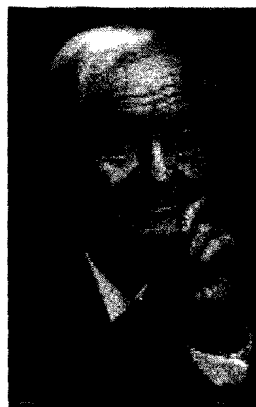
Arthur Hjelt was a professor in Helsinki University teaching the Old Testament. His contribution was much more constructive than that of Juvelius. He organized an expedition in 1910-1911 to photograph a rare Syriatic manuscript of the Bible in the Monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai. The trip was not easy at that time, first by boat to Alexandria, then the necessary permits from Cairo and a



camel caravan across Sinai to St. Catherine. The expedition was a great success, the photography of a palimpsest succeeded and the book in which the photos were published is today well known around the world to scholars of Bible manuscripts. (*Sy-rus Sinaiticus*, Helsinki 1930).

Aapeli Saarisalo (1896-1986)

Aapeli Saarisalo introduced Biblical Archaeology to the Finnish people with his numerous popular books. He was an outstanding student of William Foxwell Albright and wrote under his guidance the dissertation *The Boundary Between Issachar and Naphtali in 1927*. This was based on Geographic survey and he traveled long distances in Galilee searching for evidence of the Iron Age borders and road systems. Because the work was done before the



intensive building going on in modern Galilee, Saarisalo's book is a valuable document about evidence that still existed in 1920'ies but has by now mostly disappeared under modern construction. Saarisalo also studied the Druze language and culture writing about their poetry (*Songs of the Druze*. Helsinki 1932). Aapeli Saarisalo so loved Galilee and the Man of Galilee that he even called his son Sakari Kinneret.

Hilma Granqvist (1890-1972)

Hilma Granqvist is a world famous pioneer of anthropology and woman studies. She lived in the beautiful village of Artas and studied the traditions and habits of Palestinian Arab women. Her series of books, describing birth, weddings and death and funeral is a classic. The relations with the villagers were

excellent and the locals called her warmly "Halime". In my opinion, it would be very useful for modern Palestinian students of Anthropology and Sociology to have access to Hilma's books translated from English into their own native Arabic language. The material collected in the books is fascinating and tells about a world that is quickly disappearing under the cultural attack of television. Who wants to hear old tales when we can see love stories from Istanbul? So the fact that these native traditions have been stored for future generations by Halime is quite significant.



Others

There are too many people to go into more details, our interest in the Bible and the Near East continues. So I only mention shortly that professor Jussi Aro (1928-1983) studied middle-Babylonian and was totally fluent in Arabic. The students still laugh, or cry, when they study his excellent introduction "Arabic without tears".

Heikki Palva (1935) has studied the dialects of Galilee Arabic and his student Kaarlo Yrttiaho lived among the Bedouins near Petra learning their dialects. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila (1963) is a leading expert on Arabic language and Islamic culture.

Haseeb Shehadeh (1944) is married with a Finnish woman and moved to Finland teaching in Helsinki University. His major

subject is the Samaritan community and the publication of their Pentateuch.

Archaeology of the Holy Land has been of growing interest. Eero Junkkaala (1947) has led several groups to join excavations in Israel, joining the digs at Afeq both near Tel Aviv and in Golan with Moshe Kochavi (-2008), in Emmaus-Nicopolis with Michele Piccirillo (1970-2008) and this writer and Karl-Heinz Fleckenstein and elsewhere. Many of his volunteers have joined as assistants and researchers the Tel Kinneret Regional Project, an international archaeological project in Tel Oreime that continues the work of Volkmar Fritz.

Last but not least I mention the interest of Finns in the Assyrian and Babylonian languages. It has its roots in a linguistic error – Finnish is a rare agglunative language that modifies the meaning of words by adding things to the end of words instead of using prepositions as most languages in the world, including Hebrew and Arabic. Ancient Sumerian was also agglunative so some researchers in Helsinki were assuming that perhaps Sumerian and Finnish are relatives.

Well. They are not related. But the interest in Mesopotamian studies began and has beautiful fruits. The current project of publishing the neo-Assyrian royal archives is one of these. This internationally noted project directed by Simo Parpola, *The Neo-Assyrian Corpus Project*, has been going on centered in Helsinki University since 1987.

The Identification of the So-Called Hisham's Palace

Dr. Mikko Louhivuori
Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem

Was Qasr Hisham a Palace?

The Palace of Hisham is among the most important relics surviving from the Early Islamic period.¹ The recent conservation work at this culturally important site, under the leadership of Professor Hamdan Taha, is among the largest projects ever undertaken by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage. This project has greatly enhanced access to the site and helps to conserve this unique monument surviving from the Umayyad period.²

¹ My lecture in Jericho is based on my study of the crucial significance of Qasr Hisham to the study of the origins of iconoclasm in 8th century Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The full article will be published in the forthcoming "Encounters of the Children of Abraham" (ed. Antti Laato and Pekka Lindquist, Leiden-Brill 2010).

² Sabelli, R. "The Jericho Qasr Hisham Archaeological Park." Pp. 237-252. In *Tell es-Sultan/Jericho in the context of the Jordan Valley*. Palestine Department of Antiquities, 2006.

Identification as a palace

*Where an 8th-century Caliph hoped to spend congenial winters.
The excavation of Hisham's elaborately equipped and
gorgeously decorated Palace in the Jordan Valley.*
-- Illustrated London News 1938

This is how D.C. Baramki understood the archaeological remains he studied at Khirbet al-Mafjar.³ The quote from the newspaper nicely defines the general mode of thought that has dominated the interpretation of these impressive, Early Islamic buildings ever since; the monument is a private palace, constructed by a caliph for his personal use.⁴

An exceptionally rich collection of mosaics and art works there have survived, despite the ravages of time and destruction by humans seeking treasure after a massive earthquake destroyed the site in 746/7⁵ and buried it under rubble and sand. Thus, hidden and forgotten, the buildings and art have survived for

³ D.C. Baramki, "Excavations at Khirbet el-Mefjar," *QDAP* 6 (1938) 157-168. Pls. 43-66. The short articles published by Baramki in *QDAP* in 1938, 1942 and 1947 contain the only published information about the pottery found at the site and are, therefore, of great importance.

⁴ The excavation report on this monument was originally published in R.W. Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar: An Arabian Mansion in the Jordan Valley* (With a contribution of O. Grabar; Oxford: Clarendon Press 1959). It is of fundamental importance to Early Islamic architecture and widely discussed in literature on the Umayyad period. See, for example, K.A.C. Creswell, *Early Muslim architecture: I. Umayyads, A.D. 622-750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); idem, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (Revised edition by James W. Allan; Aldershot: Scholar Press 1989). O. Grabar, "Islamic Secular Art: Palace and City," In: O. Gabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1973) 1-44, 139-78. See also the article *Khirbet el-Mafjar* in A.D. Petersen (ed.), *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture* (London, Routledge 1996).

⁵ D. Amiran, "A Revised Earthquake-Catalogue of Palestine 1950-1952," *IEJ* 1 (1950-51) 223-246; *IEJ* 2 (1952) 48-65.

over a thousand years, while, elsewhere, in most parts of the Islamic Near East, only little remains of a once magnificent assemblage of Umayyad decorative, sculpted and painted art.

The palace had spacious living quarters, a mosque, a great “music hall” with swimming pool, and hot baths, as well as a magnificent private room for the use of the caliph. The palace received fresh waters from elaborate aqueducts, reaching nearby springs and wadis. The spacious entrance porticos, “music hall,” and the private room had beautiful mosaic floors and were decorated with elaborate art works including sculpted stucco and painted plaster. The artists used delicate geometric ornaments, but they also sculpted *living things*, plants, and different kinds of animals, and even human beings, that are rarely seen in later Islamic buildings in the region.⁶

R.W. Hamilton was fascinated by the realistic figurative art.⁷ Since the name of Caliph Hisham was found on a small, broken slab of marble, with a letter written to Hisham also found at the site,⁸ Baramki naturally assumed he was the builder.⁹ But, according to Hamilton, this was unlikely, as Caliph Hisham was, personally, a religious Moslem. Therefore, Hamilton suggested the building must actually have belonged to his successor, the widely rebuked womanizer and drinker, lover of the chase, poetry and art, Caliph al-Walid ibn Yazid.¹⁰ Thus, they inter-

⁶ E.P. de Loos-Dietz, “Les mosaïques a Khirbat al-Mafjar prez de Jericho.” *Babesch* 65 (1990) 123-138.

⁷ Hamilton, R.W. “The sculpture of living forms at Khirbat al Mafjar.” *QDAP* XIV (1950) 100-119. Pls. 35-45.

⁸ Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar*: Pl. LVII, 1.

⁹ D.C. Baramki, *Guide to the Umayyad Palace at Khirbat al Mafjar* (Jerusalem 1947).

¹⁰ The interpretation first appears in Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar*, 7-8 as a possibility. The theme was developed further much more forcibly by him in R.W. Hamilton, “Who Built Khirbat al Mafjar?” *Levant* 1 (1969) 61-67. Pls. xvii-xix.

preted the grandiose, almost opulently decorated domed hall at Khirbet al-Mafjar, with its "acoustic vaults" and swimming pool, as a "frivolity hall," or "music hall," built especially to the personal tastes of al-Walid II.

Stacks of roof tiles and window frames were found in several rooms, as if placed there ready to be used by the builders, who then abandoned the palace, and left the unfinished materials where they were. The suggestion that al-Walid II was the patron of the "un-Islamic" buildings and decorations is behind the explanation by these scholars that the monument was never finished. Such a quick departure of the builders could be explained by the sudden death of al-Walid II in 743.¹¹

Baramki's and Hamilton's basic interpretation of *raison d'être* for Qasr Hisham, as an example of the *dolce vita* of an Umayyad elite, has been widely accepted.¹² For example, a recent detailed study of the "desert castle," Qusayr `Amra, in Jordan, by Garth Fowden, leaves the reader overwhelmed by the interpretation that the only person in the Marwanid Dynasty willing to build a hot bath decorated in this manner can be the non-religious, pleasure seeking Caliph al-Walid II.¹³

¹¹ Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar*, 9. The discovery of, not only these frames, but fragments of Umayyad window glass, are one of the valuable small finds that were published much later. N. Brosh, "Glass window fragments from Khirbet al-Mafjar," in: *Annales du Congrès de l'Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre 11* (Amsterdam, 1988: Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre) 19-25.

¹² The theme is further expounded in R. Hillenbrand, "La Dolce Vita in Early Islamic Syria: The Evidence of Later Umayyad Palaces," *Art History* 5 (1982) 1-35. and R. Schick, "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: Palestine in the Early Islamic Period: Luxuriant Legacy," *NEA* 61 (1998) 74-108.

¹³ G. Fowden, "Late-antique Art in Syria and its Umayyad Evolutions," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 17 (2004) 283-304. The argumentation in this funda-

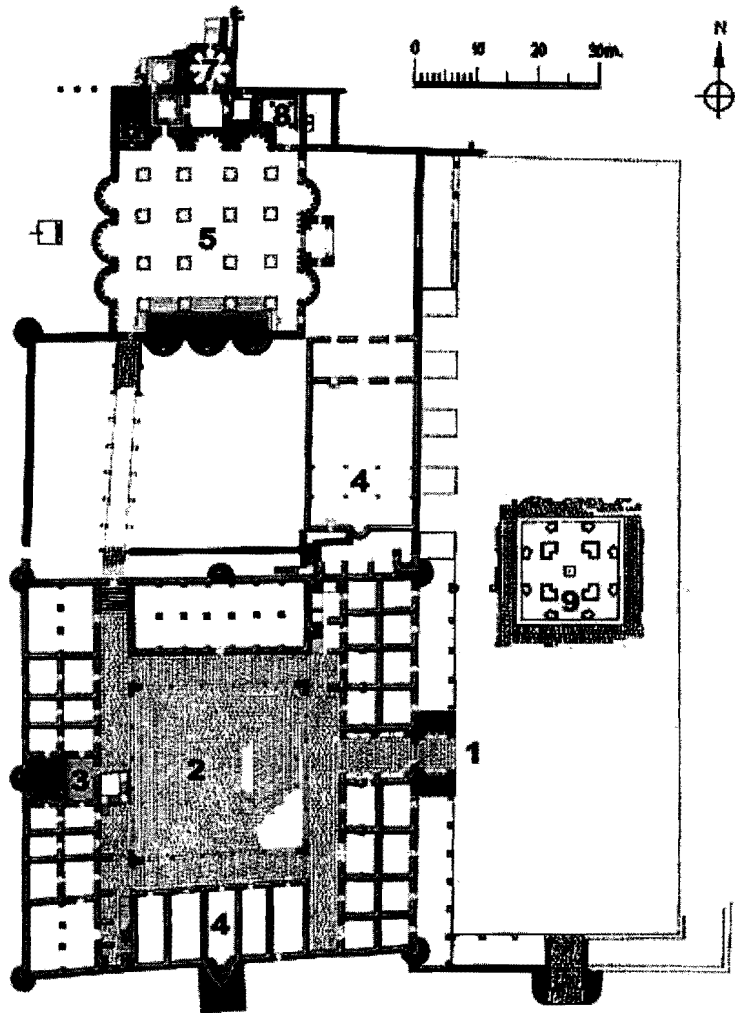
The basic framework for the interpretation of Khirbet al-Mafjar cited above started with the publications by Baramki and Hamilton and has since become widely accepted in modern scholarship. Generally speaking, Hamilton and some of the other scholars interpret archaeological discoveries in the light of literal sources and even poetry. It is an accepted method, which combines literal evidence with archaeological findings. It was so, especially in biblical archaeology, although, more recently, it has been shown that the role of ancient texts in understanding archaeological findings is not as straightforward as it once may have seemed.

It is because Baramki published a very limited number of small objects that that he arrived at a heavily weighted, historical, text-based interpretation that does not take into account the archaeological data. Hamilton concentrates only on the monuments, their architecture and decorative art. He does not at all discuss the mundane pottery or coins; nor does he provide any stratigraphy for the site.

The buildings found at Khirbet al-Mafraj were in three shallow mounds aligned approximately north, south. After the site had been discovered in 1873, local inhabitants soon began to take away building stones for their own houses in Jericho. Thus, the antiquities were much damaged during the period before the excavations began in 1934. However, the ground plan (Fig. 1) has been largely restored except for the most northern mound, which was not excavated at all.¹⁴

mental study of the time is broad, and is not limited only to the characterization of the personal traits of al-Walid.

¹⁴ The plan is taken from the Franciscan web site 2007 <http://198.62.75.4/www1/ofm/sbf/escurs/TS/03GericoHisham3DBig.jpg>



The structures are identified in this ground plan as

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1. Entrance | 4. Mosque | 7. Hot room |
| 2. Atrium | 5. Thermal baths | 8. Latrines |
| 3. Sirdab | 6. Private room | 9. Fountain |

The three main structures in the group are the paved, rectangular area, and associated rooms in the south called the "atrium" in Figure 1 (no. 2), but, originally, the "palace."¹⁵ To the north of the courtyard building there was a mosque (no. 4), and a path to the "bathhouse" (no. 5). Together, these building groups form a structure that is about 100m long. They were apparently protected from the east with a long wall, possibly a barrier against wind rather than a bar to enemies.

Hamilton's "palace", is actually a large, rectangular (60 by 65 m) structure with rooms opening onto a central court. The building may originally have had two stories. But Hamilton himself noticed that something was not quite right and wrote of it:¹⁶

... reflecting in its concentric arrangement of rooms within an outer wall that most ancient Oriental conception of what a house should be, a precinct enclosing within continuous walls a life sheltered from the outside world. In one conspicuous feature, however, the planning of the palace expressed an opposite idea. So far from conveying a warning, as the blind facades of Oriental houses do, that the house was *haram*, a sanctum reserved for the family and its dependants, the front of the palace at al Mafjar, with its wide porch, outward-facing rooms, and gracious, open arcades, seemed to extend to all comers an invitation to admire and to enter.

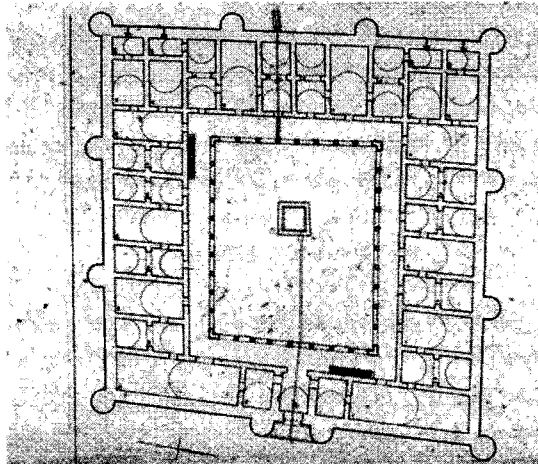
Thus, the public character of the structure was correctly noted by Hamilton, while the identification of this structure as a palace is incorrect. As may be discerned from the entrance, this is a public *khan*, a beautiful *caravanserai* intended for travelers

¹⁵ Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar*, 9-44.

¹⁶ Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar*, 9.

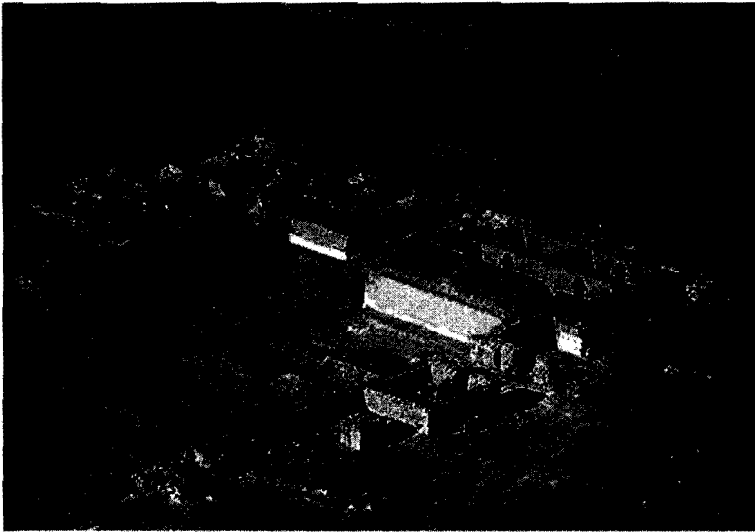
and pilgrims on their way to and from Jerusalem, which the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik, had recently 'crowned' with a beautiful mosque or shrine. This elegant shrine is in keeping with the Umayyad policy of encouraging pilgrimage to Jerusalem as Islam's new Holy City. The building's function as primarily a *caravanserai*, in addition to the many small sleeping and store rooms, is notable in one necessary installation, a place to water camels and donkeys. Indeed, outside the wide eastern porch there are remains of a large, 16.0 m² waterproof pool beneath a dome (Fig. 1:9) with beautifully decorated balustrades.

Caliph Hisham constructed a similar enclosure in Syria at Qasr al-Hayr esh-Sharqi with the entrance from the south, and semi-circular towers around the building. Hamilton discusses Khirbat al-Mafjar in relation to this second Qasr al-Hayr built by Hisham, but he rejects this caliph out of hand as the builder in Jericho because of "the extravagance of the architecture and ornament of the bath".¹⁷



¹⁷ Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar*, 7: "We know by inscriptions that the groups of ruins, each called Qasr al Hayr, between Damascus and the Euphrates, were two of his creations."

A ground plan of the remains of Qasr Tuba in the desert of east Jordan (photo on the right) is also a large enclosure that could be interpreted as an Umayyad complex intended for travelers and pilgrims. It would have been on a trade route assumed to connect to the East, possibly with Iraq, Mecca and Medina, instead of Jerusalem.



These, and other such Umayyad structures for travelers, are, in my opinion, a much better explanation to the southern courtyard at Qasr Hisham. Indeed, there is nothing in the general architecture or arrangement of the rooms, or in the rather mundane small finds, that would force one to accept the original interpretation that this was a palace built for the private pleasures of the mighty Umayyad caliphs.¹⁸

¹⁸ There has been discussion on the function of the Umayyad desert castles and who built them. See for example: Bacharach, J. L. "Umayyad Building Activities: Speculations on Patronage." *Muqarnas* 13 (1996) 27-44. But, to my

Another Umayyad structure provides a point of comparison to Qasr Hisham. It, too, seems to have been a *caravanserai*. It is a large, rectangular (66 x 73 m) Umayyad building at Khirbet al-Minyeh south of the Sea of Galilee.¹⁹ There, an inscription of al-Walid ibn Abd-el-Malik (ruled 705-715) indicates an earlier 8th century date for the original construction of the site. No decorative art has survived from there.²⁰

Identification of a later Mamluk *caravanserai* and an Ottoman khan, Kh. Minya, nearby on the way from Damascus, give weight to the suggestion that the Umayyad "palace" of al-Minyeh was also built to serve travelers and pilgrims, especially as it included a bath and a mosque. Both the trade route passing al-Minyeh, and the one leaving north from al-Mafjar, may have passed Beth Shean (Beisan in Arabic), where an Umayyad mansion, and other evidence of Umayyad activity, has been discovered.²¹

knowledge, the palace identification of Qasr Hisham has not been previously challenged in studies of Umayyad architecture.

19 F. Bloch, *Studien zur spaetantiken und islamischen Keramik: Hirbat al-Minya - Baalbek - Resafa* (Orient Archaeologie 18; Rahden: Marie Leidorf, 2004).

²⁰ Kh. al-Minyeh is, unfortunately, in a bad state of preservation. It was studied 1932-37, with the results of the last season published by O. Puttrich-Reignard, "Die Palast-Anlage von Chirbet el-Minje: Ein Vorbericht ueber die Ergebnisse der im Fruehjahr u. Herbst 1937 u. im Fruehjahr 1938 durchgefuehrten 3. u. 4. Grabungskampagne auf Chirbet el-Minje bei Tabgha am See Genezareth," *Palaestina-Hefte des Deutschen Vereins vom Heiligen Lande* 17-20 (1939) 9-29. In 1959 excavations in the western part of the enclosure established the stratigraphy in this area O. Grabar, J. Perrot, B. Ravani, M. Rosen, "Sondages a Khirbet el-Minyeh," *IEJ* 10 (1960) 226-43. They noticed signs of a Mamluk *caravanserai*, indicating that a trade and pilgrimage route passed here. We may safely assume that, also in the original Umayyad building group, there was a *caravanserai*, mosque and a bath. The Ottoman *caravanserai* Khirbet Minya was serving travelers on an important Damascus-Cairo route.

²¹ O. Sion, "A Mansion House from the Late Byzantine-Umayyad Period in Beth Shean-Scythopolis," *Liber Annuus, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* 52 (2002) 353-367.

Conclusion

The Umayyad Empire was rapidly growing, spreading Islam both to the East and to the West. To consolidate their power, the Damascus-based dynasty of Marwanids wanted to turn the hearts of all believers from Mecca and Medina to Jerusalem. Al-Quds would be the new religious capital of the Islamic Empire and no expenses were spared in building the magnificent Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque. The city was flourishing under Umayyad rule.

In order to enhance the status of Jerusalem also, the routes the pilgrims took to the new religious capital were made as convenient as possible and even luxurious. The routes to Jerusalem from Damascus, through the Jordan Valley, and from the eastern desert, the heartland of Islam, met at Jericho. Travelers, merchants and pilgrims were greeted at this important station by a five star luxurious *caravanserai*. The lower store of the khan provided shelter for the goods and the upper store sleeping places for the travelers. The fountain outside gave water for the animals. In addition, the travelers had a most beautiful bath house with hot rooms at their service. There was also a Mosque where they could pray. Over the entrance to this over 100 meter long, impressive establishment stood the statue of Caliph Hisham himself, the ruler of a mighty empire, and the self-proclaimed leader of Islam.

A massive earthquake, shaking the entire Levant 746/7, put an abrupt end to this monument. At the same time, the Abbasid dynasty took over the rule of Islam and the Umayyad period came to an end. The route to Jerusalem lost its importance, since the Holy City was now, again, Mecca.

The site was not totally abandoned, as analysis of the archaeological evidence shows that there were still people using the

building in the Abbasid period. Even some Mamluk period pottery has been found, indicating small scale use of the ruined buildings. But, the short time of glory for this impressive architectural monument was definitely past. It would take a thousand years before Qasr Hisham would attain the interest of the world again.

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Palestine Research of Hilma Granqvist: An Analysis of Academic Discrimination in Finland

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Introduction

In the early twentieth century, relations between Palestine and Finland were mostly spiritual and discursive from the Finnish perspective. Palestine was first and foremost regarded by the Finns as the Holy Land, which for the Finns meant, the land of the Bible. Scholarly and missionary relations of a more concrete nature also often had the Bible as their main frame of reference. Most Finnish scholars attached to Palestine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were classical Orientalists.

The few Finns who traveled to Palestine those days often contributed to the Finnish discourse on the Holy Land by a popular Finnish tradition of travel writing in newspapers and other journals: it was regarded almost a duty of those who could travel to faraway places to share their impressions with those who stayed at home. Also Hilma Granqvist added to this tradition by giving talks in radio programmes and writing regularly to journals. Reading her non-academic texts about Palestine of the 1920's and early 1930's, gives an impression of a keen observer of international and regional Middle Eastern politics and

events. She was acutely aware of political currents, and, for instance, commented on the immigration by European Jews to Palestine and predicted that major changes were underway in Palestinians' lives and lifestyles.

I started my anthropological research on contemporary Palestinian issues in mid-1990s first after studying the work of Hilma Granqvist and analysing the Finnish scholarship on the Middle East of her era from the perspective of Edward Said's critique of Orientalism (Isotalo 1994). Embarking research on an entirely different topic in the West Bank in 1996, it surprised me that Palestinian academics and folklore activists mentioned Granqvist and her scholarship in my discussions with them almost as soon as they found out that I am a Finn. Often we debated the question why the five monographs of Granqvist, that cover the Palestinian peasants' lifecycle from birth to burial, have not been translated into Arabic. The value of her careful documentation, not only of the village of Artas nearby Bethlehem, but also the local peasant dialect, was pointed out to me. My interlocutors were amused and disbelieving when I mentioned that her usage of local colloquial *darja*, instead of formal Arabic in her citations and documentation of the villagers' lives, was used to criticize Granqvist in order to exclude her from the circles of serious scholars by her Finnish male contemporaries whose research also focused on the Holy Land.

Outside the context of Palestine research, Hilma Granqvist's name is known among scholars of gender, family and kin in the Middle East. Academic dissertations and other analyses that refer to her work are numerous. I have often been queried by such scholars: surely, there is a strong school of Hilma Granqvist in Finland? There is no such school, I have replied to them. This chapter is an attempt to explain, from historical perspective and reasons related to the Finnish academia and society in Granqvist's days, why such a school does not exist, and why

she never achieved any position in the Finnish academia i.e. her scholarly heritage was not passed down the generations via students' work. I hope the reader will be patient with the fact that I discuss the key academic figures of the 'case' of Granqvist in the field of Finnish research of the 'Orient' in the 1930's with no or very brief contextualization: wider elaboration is not possible in the scope of this text. To honour the work of the late Edward Said, world-famous scholar of Palestinian origin, this text speaks in terms of discourse analysis.

The case of Hilma Granqvist in Finnish academia

In order to place Hilma Granqvist's study of Palestine in the field of Orientalist discourse in Finland, I will take a look at her study in the light of two incidents. First, Gunnar Landtman rejected Granqvist's dissertation at the University of Helsinki in 1930. Secondly, Granqvist's application for the post of Docent¹ was rejected at the same university in 1934. During this period, Knut Tallqvist and Gunnar Landtman worked at the University of Helsinki and Edward Westermarck at the privately financed Åbo Akademi. In the context of the policy of making the University of Helsinki more Finnish by diminishing the number of Swedish speakers, one must take into account that Tallqvist, Landtman, Granqvist and Westermarck were all Swedish speakers.²

¹ Docent is a parallel position to Adjunct Professor.

² Outside Finland the fact that Hilma Granqvist belonged to minority of Finns who speak Swedish as a native tongue has sometimes led to mistaken claims about her being Swedish or being discriminated against due to her alleged 'Swedish ethnicity'. Swedish is one of the official languages of Finland. Prior and during Granqvist's era Swedish was, in addition to being the language spoken in the Finnish archipelago and some parts of the Western coastline by most people, the language commonly used by the educated and in general, the upper class of society. Thus the nationalistic campaign to make the University 'more Finnish' in terms of language was constituted in questions of class, wealth, and political ponderings.

For particular reasons (see Isotalo 1994), classical Orientalism was willing to exclude the 'sociological' study of the Orient from its field. Gunnar Landtman was a Docent of Sociology at the University of Helsinki in 1910-27 and a temporary professor in 1927-40. He was also Professor of Philosophy in 1922-46. In other words, he was both Docent of Sociology and Professor of Social and Moral Philosophy for five years. The 1920s and the 1930s was a slow period for research in Finland. For this reason, one might have expected a battle between different fields of research, especially because the scarce financial resources were divided on the basis of arguments related to language. The Finnish nationalist ideology also affected the research in question.

As Hilma Granqvist started planning her dissertation in the 1920s, she studied social and moral philosophy. When Granqvist told her plans to Gunnar Landtman, he approved of Granqvist's idea and suggested that she study women in the Old Testament. Landtman also arranged for Granqvist access to archives in Berlin, so that she could examine her topic thoroughly (Widén 1989, 27). From Berlin Granqvist joined an archeological research expedition to Jerusalem in order to get to know the scene of the Bible at first hand. In Palestine Granqvist came to the conclusion that research was to be done among living people, 'I needed to live among the people, hear them talk about themselves, make record while they spoke of their life, customs and ways of looking at things' (Granqvist 1932, 2). Granqvist stayed in Palestine after the course in Archeology and chose the Muslim village of Artas as her object of study.

That is to say that Granqvist gave up her initial topic of women in the Old Testament. Had she kept her initial topic, she would for one thing have studied the Hebrew and Jewish women in the Bible; for another thing, she would have studied the past.

Along with her initial topic Granqvist abandoned two things: the Christian exegetic aspect which essentially belongs to the identity discourse of classical Orientalism and, methodologically, the reconstruction of the past in the present. At the same time Granqvist abandoned the idea of 'the immovable East', excluding herself from the discourse formation of classical Orientalism in Finland. By choosing to study a single village, Granqvist abandoned both British comparativism and functionalism. The latter began to produce studies of ethnic groups or tribes. Along with this choice, Granqvist practically also excluded herself from the kind of sociological approach adopted by Landtman and Westermarck.

Hilma Granqvist explains her methodological choice to study one village by her desire to produce 'a complete set of material'. She refers here to Westermarck, who at a later stage in his life began to emphasize the importance of monographs along with the comparative method (*ibid.*, 5). Granqvist also suggests a new kind of anthropology, 'A new tendency has appeared in the manner in which material is collected. No longer is one content with general statements only of what custom requires or such indefinite expressions as that "polygynous men are numerous" or that "divorce is frequent"; one insists on having concrete facts, details and figures. One draws up statistical tables and genealogies...' (*ibid.*, 6). To assist her profound study of one village, Granqvist adopts a genealogical method used by Rivers. It becomes a way to approach the marital institution through the history of individuals and families (*ibid.*, 7). Granqvist's methodological solutions can be explained as part of the tendency to emphasize concreteness, which began in German studies of Palestine.

In other words, Granqvist's methodological connections are to be found in German studies of Palestine. The connection of Finnish and German studies of the Orient has been brought up

earlier. This connection manifested itself as frequent contacts between Finnish and German scholars in the 1920s and the 1930s (see e.g. Aalto 1971 and Karttunen 1990; Isotalo 1994 on structures of interpretation). It is also worth keeping in mind that it was to Berlin that Landtman sent Granqvist for the archives. If one looks at the Finnish classical Orientalism of the era through Edward Said's criticism of Orientalism, Finnish classical Orientalism seems structurally uniform with European discourse. In Said's study, however, his choice of material restricts the European Orientalist discourse to British and French Orientalism only. The discourse formations of Finnish Orientalism, the origin of which is mainly in German Orientalism, produced diverse information relying on diverse premises, structures of interpretation and methodological solutions (Isotalo 1994). This allows one further to conclude that Orientalist discourse in Germany was not unified. A careful study of Orientalist discourse in Finland gives reason to further criticize Said's delimitation of material in *Orientalism* (1978) — criticism that Edward Said responded to in works that followed the book which can, from a modern-day viewpoint, be considered a classic. The view on German Orientalism opened up by Granqvist's study of Palestine shows that European Orientalist discourse was not monolithic.

Granqvist returned to Helsinki after her research period in Artas. She was soon to find out that Gunnar Landtman and the other 'Sirs of the Senate' did not approve of her new topic and her methodological solutions. Landtman suggested that Granqvist's topic and problem-setting were 'against common research norms' (Widén 1989, 27-9). Since Granqvist was denied the doctoral degree under Gunnar Landtman's supervision at the University of Helsinki, she resorted to Edward Westermarck, Professor of Philosophy at Åbo Akademi.

Hilma Granqvist got her doctoral degree at Åbo Akademi in 1932. One may ask why the people responsible for Sociology and Philosophy at the University of Helsinki saw a study based on one village as conflicting with research norms, that is, why the study did not fit in with the rules of internal coherence of discourse formations. Granqvist's dissertation had actually been possible if she had chosen the discourse formation represented by Landtman, that is, if Granqvist had kept her initial research plan. I will discuss this issue in the context of the conflict caused by Granqvist's application for the post of Docent.

Hilma Granqvist continued working on the material she had gathered. In 1935 she published *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village, vol. II* and *Det Religiosa Problemet i Nutiden* ('*The Religious Problem in Contemporary Time*', free transl. of the title by the author). In the same year Granqvist applied for the post of Docent in Sociology or Social and Moral Philosophy at the University of Helsinki. Her application was rejected. Gunnar Landtman, Professor of Sociology, told Granqvist to apply for a post of Docent in Social and Moral Philosophy alone (Widén 1989, 31). Rafael Karsten, Professor of Social and Moral Philosophy, however, denied Granqvist's competence in Social and Moral Philosophy, which was Granqvist's original field of study. According to Karsten, Granqvist was a sociologist.

It is worth pointing out that all parties of the conflict had prepared their dissertations under Westermarck's supervision. In addition to representatives of Sociology and Social and Moral Philosophy, the conflict concerned a representative of classical Orientalism, that is, Aapeli Saarisalo, Professor of Oriental Literature at the University of Helsinki. Granqvist and Saarisalo had met shortly in Palestine during Granqvist's stay there (Ulla Vuorela 1993, and personal communication to the author). Saarisalo desired to exclude Granqvist's research from his own field,

the Orient, by denying the scientific value of Granqvist's research (Widén 1989, 31). At this point, one needs to consider Granqvist's gender: Orientalism was traditionally a male-governed area. Saarisalo's view may also have been influenced by his Zionist attitude, which according to Vuorela is implicitly expressed in Granqvist's notes.³ This time, Landtman decided to support Granqvist; in other words, Sociology and classical Orientalism were opposed to each other. Finally, Robert Brotherus, Rector of the University of Helsinki, and Chancellor Hugo Suolahti said the last word and rejected the application (Widén 1989).

One interpretation for the University's rejection of research based on studying one village is to be found in the network surrounding scientific discourse. Demands made on the University of Helsinki to increase Finnishness culminated in a Government bill presented in 1935, and, as mentioned above, financial resources were scarce. It can be presumed that in this context the University was well aware of the demands of nationalist ideology on Finnish science. In the 1930s it was noted in several contexts that research which did not conform to nationalist ideology was left without support. This kind of research was regarded as coloured by disloyal detachment from the nation and also as an end in itself (Klinge 1972, 173). It is an essential issue whether Granqvist's research fulfilled the criteria of science in the name of nationalist spirit. One might say that a study based on Arab women in one village at a given point in time does not meet the requirements of nationalist-spirited science.

Today, Hilma Granqvist's study on Palestine is an internationally renowned classic. Her complete works deal with the life of Arabs as a whole: marital institution, birth, childhood and

³ Ulla Vuorela is writing a scholarly biography on Granqvist.

death. Nevertheless, Granqvist never got an academic post in Finland after taking the doctoral degree. She made her living, for example, by writing articles for *Suomen Kuvalehti*, continuing the Finnish tradition of popularizing Orientalism as mentioned at the outset. Granqvist's Palestine study can be placed in the field of Orientalist discourse in Finland due to the ways of thinking, which the outlined discourse formations aimed to unite - or to exclude from Orientalism.

The conflicts around Granqvist's dissertation and her application for a docentship showed that there were people eager to exclude Granqvist's research from the discourse both of Sociology and of classical Orientalism. While the two areas were pondering their borderline, Granqvist's research was closer to Sociology. Ultimately, Granqvist was excluded also from this field - by the institution to which the discourse formations were related to, the University of Helsinki. One might thus say that the discourse identity of classical Orientalism was at least slightly attached to nationalism in Finland in the 1920s and the 1930s. However, this presumption implies that there was no one unified discourse formation of Sociology. Edward Westermarck approved Granqvist's research on two levels: as a scholar and as a representative of the institution. On both levels Westermarck excludes research done in the name of nationalism from the 'scientific interspace' represented by him (see, also, Westermarck 1900 and von Wright 1982). The discourse formations which rejected research based on studying a single village ultimately approved of the demands made on research by nationalism. On these grounds Granqvist's study on Palestine and Westermarck's on Morocco belong to the same discourse formation. Since Granqvist's and Westermarck's research differ both in methodology and in character, it is perhaps appropriate to speak of a presystematic condition in Westermarckian sociology. From this point of view one may take a look at how Granqvist's study on Palestine relates to the

present; in other words, what its position is in the field of study fragmented by criticism of Orientalism.

Concluding remarks

Demands made by nationalistic⁴ ideologies on science and research are as common and as dangerous globally in 2008 as they were in Finland in the 1930's. Moreover, inside and outside historical Palestine (the Gaza Strip, West Bank and the State of Israel), research on Palestine has not lost its potential for being politically charged since the days of Hilma Granqvist. An analysis of her case, i.e. features of conflicts around Granqvist's academic posts, makes visible some dynamics of scientific and professional discrimination where nationalistic ideology, language, gender, and, as Edward Said taught us, scientific structures of interpretation play a part. Identification of such dynamics may help us to prevent passing such discriminative practices down the generations.

Obviously, Hilma Granqvist's research entails interpretations and analytical shortcomings that can and should be criticised on scholarly grounds (see, for example, Bourdieu 1977, Isotalo 2005). However, a classic is something that each generation finds new layers in, thus making diverse interpretations possible. On such grounds Hilma Granqvist's scholarship (esp. *Marriage Conditions Vol. I and II*) can be regarded as a classic, which is still waiting for a translation in Arabic.

⁴ Also religious ideologies that are often intertwined with nationalism make their demands on science and research. Suffice to say that, like in the case of Granqvist, most nationalistic and religious ideologies' views on gender roles are not based on equity or equality.

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Palestine in Finnish Media - A Broadcast Reporter's View

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In Egypt, everything is *mamnu'a*, forbidden, unless you give the police the right piece of paper with the right stamp on it. In Syria, plain clothes police officers always appear out of nowhere, and you know you're being followed. In Saudi-Arabia, you have to film with a 'minder', a local employee from the Ministry of Information, looking over your shoulder.

In the Palestinian territories, at least in the West Bank, this is not the case. No written permits are needed and filming is allowed, except perhaps near Israeli check points or other military installations. Officials are relatively easy to get a hold of, and you can always get a decent quote. Palestinians want to be heard, they want to tell their story, their struggle, and that's why I would characterise them as quite media friendly.

When my posting in Israel/OPTs began in 2006 it was the aftermath of the Lebanon war, and Israel had made incursions into Gaza because Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit had been kidnapped before the war. Also, the tension between Hamas and Fatah was intensifying, and the security situation in Gaza was volatile. It meant you had to be weary of kidnappings, and that's why I would go in and out quickly, feeling a bit frustrated because I couldn't stay and simply walk on the streets and just talk to people.

Then the factions tried to form a unity government in Mecca, February 8th, 2007. That didn't work out, the unity government was dissolved, the fighting intensified, and there were armed clashes between Hamas and Fatah security forces. It seemed that no one was in control in Gaza; it felt like it was ruled by the law of the jungle. Next month, on March 12th, BBC correspondent Alan Johnston was kidnapped by the Army of Islam, i.e., the Dughmush Clan. This was a huge blow to all journalists because it now meant that anyone of us could be kidnapped.

The fighting between Hamas and Fatah culminated on the bloody Hamas takeover in June 2007 and the expulsion of Fatah leadership to the West Bank. Hamas's first mission was to bring security back to the streets of Gaza. Their executive forces in blue camouflage uniforms replaced the regular police, who were paid by the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah. They stayed at home while the Hamas police directed traffic, confiscated weapons, and quite quickly managed to bring about a sense of security, particularly after the release of Alan Johnston three weeks after the takeover.

You could see banners in Gaza City with a text that said Hamas welcomes foreign journalists and diplomats to Gaza and something about peace and security. Hamas members often advertise this factor - that Gaza is now safe for journalists. This is true, I can walk on the streets and can take a taxi without thinking the driver will kidnap me... of course kidnappings could resume and sometimes we still get warnings, but the situation is completely different and safer than when the worst fighting was going on.

In a sense this has been a propaganda victory for Hamas - they even joke about it. Recently, a Hamas spokesman joked that they could arrange for a kidnapping, and then provide a nice villa where we could start writing the memoirs while we were still in captivity.

Of course this security came with a price. Political dissent has been completely forbidden, and it seems a bit unclear what the division of labour is between the different armed groups within Hamas, especially the military wing, Al-Qassam brigades, who seem to be interfering with internal security. We were once stopped by masked men when we were filming a story on the Hillis clan case. This is a worrying development.

The Hamas takeover meant splitting the Palestinian narrative. The international community condemned the takeover and accepted only the caretaker government of Salam Fayyad as the legitimate representative of PA. Here they overstepped and acted against the Palestinian Basic laws, which are very restrictive when it comes to presidential powers. Basically most decisions need to be approved by the legislative council, but since Israel has imprisoned most Hamas lawmakers Fatah couldn't get a majority vote even if Hamas would have voted in favour of the legislation. These illegal measures were overlooked, however, because there had to be an entity to deal with.

While all this internal fighting was going on - and still is at the political level - Israeli policy as an occupier hasn't changed much, except of course the isolation and suffocation of Gaza has become even worse since the Hamas takeover. Despite the fact that Israel withdrew in 2005, it still controls Gaza borders as it does in West Bank (Please note that this paper was written before Israel's war on Gaza December 2008-January 2009).

In the West Bank, the checkpoints are still there, the fence is there, and the road blocks are still there. In this political framework it is perhaps not entirely surprising that during my posting *every single* report from the OPTs mentioned the conflict. Even the cultural stories mentioned the conflict in a sentence or two, just to put the story in the right framework.

For the seminar, I decided to single out a few reports where the conflict doesn't play the main role. I actually believe that most of the audience in Finland is not that interested in the conflict, and I can bet that many take the remote control and change the channel when they hear the words 'Middle East peace process' or 'Violence in the Middle East'.

My editors and colleagues always ask for stories about the ordinary lives of people, about how they cope and how they live their lives. Therefore, I picked four of my favourite stories, which I think my home audience also appreciated, that revolve around sex, alcohol, big money, and sports.

In November 2008 the Palestinian football team played its first ever international FIFA approved home game against Jordan. Palestine is listed as 180 in the FIFA ranking, Jordan is slightly better at 112 (for the sake of comparison, Finland is number 43). The event coincided with the inauguration of al-Ram stadium, the first FIFA approved stadium in the Palestinian territories. In this story, the conflict was visibly present as the stadium is located some 500 m from the separation/security wall.

Another obvious conflict related point is that Israel controls the movement of Palestinians, so some of the Gazan players received travel permits only one day before the crucial match. Therefore, the Palestinian National Team couldn't really practise together, however they were extremely proud of the fact that they could play a historical home game.

The audience was ecstatic, and it was really a powerful show of national pride. This was a very positive story because firstly it tells Finns that Palestinians don't just throw stones at Israeli soldiers, but they also play sports and now have stadium with international standards. Maybe Palestinians could invite Finland for a friendly match.

The third positive aspect was that even if Gaza and West Bank are separated physically and politically, the people are not. And apparently Hamas's Ismail Haniya called the head of the Palestine Football Association and Fatah big-shot Jibril Rajub to wish him success with the game. To everyone's surprise, the game ended 1-1.

The big money story is about the Palestinian stock exchange in Nablus, which is a success story in many ways. The ten-year old stock exchange is performing quite well as are the listed Palestinian companies. Surprisingly, the Palestinian stock exchange is actually not as risky as other Middle Eastern bourses. There's very little corruption, very few bureaucratic hurdles, and the financial market is well developed. Furthermore, most of the Palestinian companies that are listed don't suffer from the occupation: telecommunications, construction, and pharmaceuticals, where most of the money comes from the Persian Gulf.

Again, this is a positive and surprising story. We hear all the time about many donations, handouts the PA received from abroad, yet this story shows that Palestinians are business-minded people, who can and want to do business within the limits of occupation.

So, the alcohol story. While the Taybeh Brewery is not listed in the stock exchange, it is a success story of sorts. The one and only Palestinian brewery was established by two brothers who returned from the United States after the promise of the Oslo accords and have since built a profitable business. The brewery is located in the Christian village of Taybeh. Unfortunately, the second intifada impeded exports and to this day they sell little of their products to Israel, although many Israelis I've met really like it. This is truly a story my audience can relate to as Finns like to drink. It also breaks stereotypes many people have that Palestinians don't drink alcohol and are all Muslims.

And finally Sex in the City – Gaza City.

One of the most popular items that used to be smuggled into Gaza via the tunnels was Viagra. Egyptian or Indian Viagra is very cheap; about a year ago they were around 4 shekels each. Most pharmacies sell them, and according to the data I collected, most men in Gaza use Viagra. Not that they all necessarily need it, but some take it out of habit, some out of boredom, and some want to 'play it safe' performance wise. However, the new thing is for it to be given to bridegrooms on their wedding night or as a gift to conclude a business deal.

What was interesting about this story was the ease at which men agreed to talk to me. After all, I was asking them very personal and private questions. Two men I spoke with in a lingerie shop said that because they are educated people they don't mind talking about it, but if a friend or an acquaintance walked into the store they would shut up. Maybe I've been away from Finland for too long, but I can't imagine asking Finnish men about sexual performance!

I also needed to get a female perspective regarding this highly fascinating story. Some of the pharmacists had already told me that sometimes it is actually the women who buy it, mix it with food, and serve it to their hapless men. My fixer (this is the word journalists use for a local assistant who will get you the interviews, etc.) looked hard for a woman I could talk to, and finally he found one.

Our meeting must have looked either weird or funny to an outsider. We parked outside a ministry where this 40-something woman was working. It was raining so my fixer ran away as he let the woman into the car. We both just laughed and then started talking about Viagra. She confirmed that women sometimes put it in tea and that unlike what men think

they know if their husbands are taking it secretly. She also told me that she had urged her husband to try it; however, he refused, but he doesn't need it, she said with a satisfied smile.

This was a bitter sweet story. Gazan men have to resort to Viagra either for a real reason or because they are bored, and both reasons are related to the occupation. There also is a human side to this story that everyone can relate to. What do adults do alone? Particularly when there's no electricity, just romantic candle light... And although Palestinians are often portrayed as victims, they have the same desires, weaknesses, and sense of humour as people everywhere.

Gender didn't matter while working on this story, but as is the case in many Arab countries and the Palestinian territories, it is not easy to find women commentators or actors. Most politicians and analysts are men, so usually I interview women in the markets and streets, which is where you can catch them. However, very often women don't think that their opinion is valuable or interesting or they say outright that they are not interested in politics.

Following the Hamas takeover in Gaza, both parties blamed each other for what happened. I was in Ramallah asking people what they thought, but it was very hard to get women to say anything. Finally two friends approached me, and I asked if I could ask something about the situation. They replied that they didn't really follow politics and didn't have anything to say.

I protested and said that I have filmed only men voicing their opinion - what's up with the silent women? Then one of the two turned back, and said, so what do you want to ask? She gave me the most original and courageous sound bite!

What also interests the Finnish audience, a small nation, are stories which have some kind of Finnish element. Although most of the Finnish-linked stories are reports on development aid projects where Finland is the donor and Palestinians are the receivers, they are still positive stories.

My favourite of these is the EUCopps story, where Finland, via the EU, is sponsoring and training the Palestinian police. I particularly liked the part where they were training to maintain public order by running in formation with their riot gear - this is good TV, lots of action! However, this is an important story because it shows the Finnish audience where their tax money is going and what the Palestinians are trying to do to fill their obligations in the Road Map, e.g., take control of security in the West Bank.

But sometimes the Finnish-Palestinian connection comes where you least expect.

A few months ago I was in Gaza and went to the old, recently renovated hammam. After enjoying the heat and making a move towards the door, I was surrounded by little girls aged 10 to 12. They asked me where I was from. When I replied 'Finland', one of the girls nodded and said that a relative of hers lived in Finland. I doubted it because often little children and older men and women have no clue what or where Finland is. They often think that I'm talking about a much fancier place, London.

But this girl then said. "Yes, my uncle works in Finland as our ambassador, Uncle Nabil [Al-Wazir]."

Development of Relations Between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) and the Protestant Churches in the Middle East

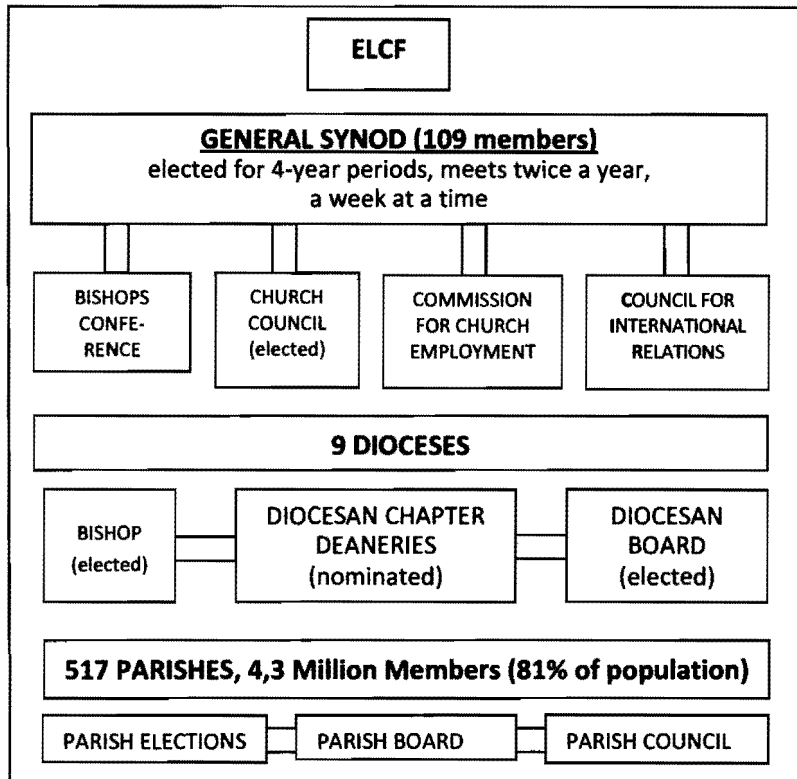
Martti Tuhkanen

Director, Conference Center Paivakumpu, FELM

Introduction of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

In order to understand the present situation between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), and officially recognized protestant churches in the Middle East, and how we have reached it, it is essential to know how the ELCF has organized its activities in and outside Finland. A couple of charts will help us.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is divided into nine dioceses. The number of parishes was 517 in 2007. Each local parish in the ELCF is an independent working unit. The parishes within the same city, or municipality, belong to the same parish union. Parishes in the same parish union have a joint parish board, and a joint parish council, for the common administration of the whole union. In addition, each parish in the union has a parish council of its own, corresponding to the parish council of a single parish.



In the legal sense, the Church, with its parishes, is a public corporation, in the same sense as municipalities and the State.¹

One must keep in mind, that the control of diocese, or church organization, over parishes of ELCF, is very limited. The parishes can, for example, make direct cooperation agreements with churches or parishes abroad, if they wish so.

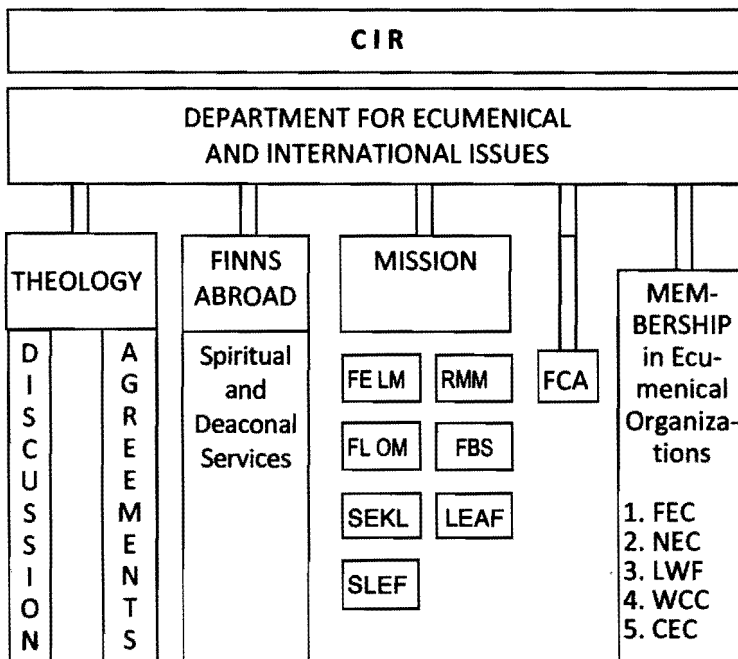
¹ www.evl.fi

Officially, the ELCF operates its contacts and relations to churches, Christian organizations and congregations outside Finland through the Council for International Relations (CIR).

The General Synod of ELCF nominates 11 members to CIR. Its president is the archbishop. The CIR:

- decides for the ecumenical lines of ELCF,
- maintains ecumenical, international and cross religion relations,
- directs the department office.

The present director of the department is Church Counsellor, Rev. Dr. Risto Cantell, who has participated with the ELCF delegation visiting the Middle East a couple of times.



ELCF has a strong Lutheran identity, but it also is ecumenically very active and open. In Finland, ELCF maintains close bilateral contact with the Finnish Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church in Finland, and also with the Free and Pentecostal Churches.

Multilateral contacts are mainly through FEC, the Finnish Ecumenical Council. It is a national, ecumenical, cooperative organization for churches, Christian communities, and parishes in Finland. With its affiliated members, and fellow organizations, it is a large ecumenical network. Its members are:

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland,
- Finnish Orthodox Church,
- Catholic Church in Finland,
- The Anglican Church in Finland,
- Methodist Church of Finland,
- The Evangelical Free Church of Finland,
- Salvation Army, Finland,
- Swedish Baptist Church in Finland,
- Finland's Swedish Methodist Church,
- (Free) Mission Church in Finland,
- International Evangelical Church in Finland.

ELCF membership in other ecumenical organizations include:

1. The Nordic Ecumenical Council,
2. The Lutheran World Federation,
3. The World Council of Churches,
4. The Conference of European Churches.

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is a fellowship of 126 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches, along with 43 associated organizations from all countries on

the European continent. CEC was founded in 1959, and has offices in Geneva, Brussels and Strasbourg.²

ELCF has, at present, only three direct cooperation agreements with churches abroad. They are quite general in nature, where connection, exchange of information, and mutual support, are central ideas. The direct cooperation agreements are with: (1) ELC in Namibia, (2) China Christian Council, and (3) Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria.

Areas of Responsibility

CIR has four areas of responsibility. Each of them has a desk at the headquarters of the church:

1. Theology (4 persons)

A. Bilateral theological discussions (Faith and Order)

A major ecumenical achievement was the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) signed in 1998. This is a cooperation document between the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics. Its main achievement is that the churches annul past condemnations on each other issued some 500 years earlier.

B. Ecumenical agreements between ELCF and other Churches

Fairly well known is the "Porvoo agreement" between ELCF, and the Anglican churches of the British Islands, Scandinavia and Baltic countries.

² www.evl.fi

2. Finnish citizens living abroad, tourists and also immigrants in Finland (4 persons)

There are some 180,000 Finnish citizens and 1 million persons of Finnish origin living outside Finland. Hundreds of thousands of Finnish tourists stay abroad, from a few days to several months. CIR provides spiritual and diaconal services for them in 40 countries.

3. Mission of the Church (5 persons)

Modern terms in cooperation between churches are “partnership,” or “accompaniment,” and the latest is “ownership”. Those have become central themes in global mission, as churches share the task of witnessing and serving in this world.

However, it was a different language some 100 or 150 years ago. Naturally, so was the whole world. Terms as “pagans” or “Negroes” were used with no hesitation, and no one complained. Around 1850, there was a strong revival movement in Europe. Also, in Finland, some active persons started to speak of the importance of spreading the Gospel to places and countries that had not heard it yet. The **Finnish Missionary Society** was established in 1859 by some 150 individuals. Then, later, other similar organizations started. Especially in 1960 and 1970, some new societies became very active in, and outside, Finland. The ELCF was in a situation that was, in the field of mission, in many aspects, out of touch, and out of control.

To balance and clear the situation, the **Office for Global Mission** was established in 1976. Its task is to coordinate cooperation, and prevent overlapping activities, and unhealthy competition between these organizations. The Office of Global Mission tries to guide those involved in mission to exchange information, and to cooperate in activities abroad. It

also tries to keep these organizations between the ecumenical and theological lines that the ELCF has accepted.

The General Synod of the ELCF has granted the status of **“mission organization of the church”** to seven different NGOs. Except for FELM, they represent, mainly, the conservative side of church member body. A couple of them are very critical of ELCF policies, such as the women priesthood.

In general, all of these organizations, even though they are “organizations of the church” can, and do, act completely independently. They have their governing bodies and finances outside the control of CIR. Some, as FELM and Bible Society, follow, fairly well, the guidelines of CIR; some are less obedient.

Six of those organizations have, or have had, personnel in the Middle East. Only LEAF (Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland) has not. As far as I know, all others, except FELM, have not had any kind of official relations to any of the established churches in Middle East.³

4. International Diaconia; FCA

The Finn Church Aid was, until recently, an office of the CIR, but, now, it is a foundation owned by ELCF. As such, it is still closely linked to CIR, but it has its own structure of organization.

FCA working in the Middle East focuses on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and other countries, that are strongly affected by massive population movements caused by famine and wars.

Current projects in Syria and Lebanon improve health and livelihood, and support refugees, by training professionals to care for the victims of torture and conflict.

³ www.evl.fi

About 1.5% of FCA's annual budget is directed to the Middle East (300.000€).

FCA started to give annual financial aid to the ELCJHL in the seventies and continued until 2005.

After 2005, FCA supported a project for the protection of the environment, and gave one-time special help for needy families in 2006.

As for now, FCA has directed all of its ME funds for development projects, according Mrs. Outi Behm from FCA planning office.⁴

Overview of Finnish Church Connections to the Middle East in Five Periods⁵

1. Mission in Mandate Palestine 1924-1948

A foundation for interest and contacts of Finns to the Middle East was first laid by G. A. Wallin in his 7-year exploration, from 1842 onwards. He kept a well-detailed diary, and published books after returning to Finland, which was part of Russia, at that time.

First contacts of a Finnish Christian organization to the Middle East were by Rev. Saarisalo and his wife 1924-1926. They were sent by FELM to Palestine as missionaries. Later Rev Saarisalo became quite famous in the field of archaeology. He may have

⁴ www.kua.fi

⁵ a) I use the term "Middle East" here with a very narrow sense, meaning only areas of Jordan, West Bank, East Jerusalem and Israel.

b) My sources were limited and, as such, they cannot give a comprehensive picture of all contacts, developments, and, especially, of all what actually happened, but my estimate is that they are reliable on issues recorded in them.

had some contacts to Arab Christians, but for certain, we know that he met a number of Druse in the northern area.

Then, after a 6-year interval, FELM sent new missionaries. They were all women: Juvelius 1931, Havas 1932, Moisis 1946. They participated regularly in Lutheran German Redeemer Church, and St. Andrews Scottish church services. Some sources mention that Havas spend some time with Quaker friends in Ramallah. These contacts were mainly with expatriate Christians. Havas studied Hebrew, but spoke also English and German. It is mentioned that she had some contact to two local institutes for the blind in Bethlehem.⁶

2. FELM in West Jerusalem 1948-1967

The border was closed, and contacts to the Jordan side were not possible, except on two occasions yearly; Christmas and Easter.

FELM personnel, now some eight persons, were active exclusively among Israelis. An unofficial document mentioned the visit of an FELM director, 1952.

FELM purchased a building and piece of land on St Paul Street from CMS 1955, with major financial support from LWF, which was also involved in other mission activities at that time.

Important visits are mentioned in sources:

- Archbishop of ELCF, Ilmari Salomies (1951-1964) visited in 1957.
- At the Shalhevetyah Center a new school building was dedicated 1963, bishop Tapaninen and FELM director Vuorela were present.

⁶ FELM yearbooks 1924-1949

- Professor A.T. Nikolainen (bishop of Helsinki 72-82) visited ca. 1965.⁷

The sources did not tell more, who they met, what was the purpose, etc. I think that visits of Salomies and Nikolainen may have been mostly motivated by, theological, missiological, and personal interest.

It is descriptive to the situation, that the establishment of a sister Lutheran church, and its official recognition by Jordan in 1959, is not mentioned in any of the sources. It happened one mile away, but it could have been a thousand miles: it was enemy territory!

Contacts and friendships that were built up before 1948 were, mostly, not possible any more. Interest and energy of new missionaries was totally used to the well-being and teaching of boarding school students.⁸

3. Israel occupies East Jerusalem, connection established, Years 1967-1978

First documented contact with local Lutherans is that some Lutheran families and institutions received help from FELM.⁹ The same year, 1967, Propst Köhler, Rev. Haddad, and Rev. Hukka, director of FELM, met and a connection with ELCJ was established.¹⁰

Some very active persons from the Union of Deacons and some from local parishes in Finland contacted ELCJ. They had decided to grant a stipend for diaconal studies in Finland. Finally, it was agreed to give it to a young student from Jerusalem,

⁷ Nurminen Heikki, interview 28.10.08

⁸ FELM yearbooks 1949-1968

⁹ Pia Flink: Connection between Finnish and Palestinian Lutherans 1967-1999

¹⁰ FELM yearbooks 1968-1978

Munib A. Younan. After completion of a language and diaconal program, he continued with theology in Helsinki University, and was ordained 1976.¹¹

In October 1974, a meeting of Arab Lutheran pastors and FELM assistant director, and ME secretary was held at the Shalheveyah Center, Jerusalem. Discussion was mainly about cooperation and joint projects between ELCJ and FELM.

Summer 1975 a youth group, led by Rev. Naim Nassar, visited Finland. They were invited by Arch Bishop Simojoki, with the hope that relationship between the Churches would strengthen. FELM organized their program.

Then, an important development took place, when the Cooperation Council for Overseas Partners for ELCJ (COCOP) was established in 1977. First, an agreement was signed in Finland by Rev. Haddad, representatives of FELM and Berlin Mission Association (BMA). The following year, the Church of Sweden Mission (CSM) and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (UELCG) joined COCOP. The same year, bishop of Helsinki, professor Nikolainen, and FELM representatives, participated in COCOP meeting in Jerusalem.¹²

Very quickly, after East Jerusalem was occupied, Finns found Christian sisters and brothers there, and church officials had a natural address for visit. This led to a clear, but slow turn, in direction of Finnish church activities. Contacts to the Arab Christians brought better, and more balanced, understanding of the situation in the Middle East. However, the fact that, until 2003, the ELCJ cooperation was reported in FELM annuals, under the title of "Israel," shows the difficulty in changing of attitudes and practices.

¹¹ Munib Younan: *Witnessing for Peace*, 2001

¹² FELM year book 1979

It took far too long, until this relations and cooperation became positively accepted. This period of 10 years, from 1967 till 1978, is the foundation for a partnership type of cooperation, and one person begins to play a central role in these developments: Pastor Munib A. Younan.

Cooperation with the Evangelical Episcopal Church was officially started in 1976, when a missionary couple was sent to Lod. This cooperation was extended, during the following period, to Nablus.

4. Partnership Building, Years 1979-1997

A starting point of official relations between ELCF and ELCJ could be defined to the consecration of Bishop Haddad, November 10, 1979, when Bishop of Mikkeli Diocese, Rev. Toiviainen visited Jerusalem and participated in the ceremony.

What follows is a fairly busy period of contacts and visits. From ELCJ, several persons visited Finland, some of them more than once:

Pastor Younan 1981 and 1992, Pastor Smir 1985, Bishop Haddad in May 1986, Bishop Nassar October 1989. One student from Ramallah was in vocational training in Ylivieska 91-92. Also, Father Ibrahim Elias Ayad, representing the Jerusalem Latin Church and who was, also, a member of the PLO Central Committee, visited CIR offices in Helsinki. He explained the situation of Christians in general, and the Palestinian point of view.

Finnish Bishops, Sariola of Lapua diocese visited 1983, Bishop of Porvoo diocese, Erik Vikström participated in the consecration of Bishop Nassar, 31.10.1986.

Archbishop John Vikström visited Jordan, the West Bank and Israel 1993. In Jordan, he met King Hussein, and received a First Class Medal of Independence. He met, also, Anglican Archbi-

shop Qufity, and Catholic apostolic delegate, Rauf Najjar. In Jerusalem, his program was mainly ecumenical, but he met, also, Finnish UN personnel, and FELM missionaries. He assisted Bishop Nassar in ordaining deacon Kokkonen to be a pastor for Jaffo Lutheran Messianic congregation.

There was still some uncertainty as how to relate to the sister churches in the Middle East: the yearbook of 1982 mentions, as cooperation partners, "Lutheran Arab Church ELCJ" and "Arab Anglican Church AECC". The following year, the same is said of: "Jordanian Lutheran Church" and "Evangelical Episcopal Church".

Two other developments worth mentioning occurred:

1. A new church was built in Amman and it was inaugurated 23rd of August 1987.
2. A sponsorship program of FELM to support low income families in education was started first for 30 students from Beit Jala Boys Home.

This very active period meant many visits to both directions. The list is far from complete. It was not easy to collect this information in Finland, since some of these visits were private in nature, and no records were kept on all official visits.

The year 1979 is very meaningful for ELCJ. To have an Arab bishop meant for the church to have identity and dignity. The church started to be less dependant on German Lutherans only, but also got other friends in Finland and Sweden, and, later, also in other countries. For ELCJ it was now possible to build Church-Church relations, to meet high church officials from European churches on equal footing.

Cooperation was shaped along the idea of partnership; even still it was to a large extent, at least financially, a giver-receiver

relationship. The Finnish support to the ELCJ in manpower and money was high during this period.

The exceptionally good political atmosphere, and open-mindedness of Bishop Nassar made possible a unique development: An Arab, Palestinian, Lutheran Bishop ordained in Occupied Jerusalem, a Finnish missionary to be a pastor for a Messianic Jewish congregation in Jaffo, Israel!¹³

5. Towards Accompaniment, Years 1998-2008

When ELCJ got a new bishop, 5th January 1998, as Pastor Munib A. Younan was consecrated, among assisting clergy was Bishop Riekkinen from Kuopio diocese. The following year, Bishop Younan visited Finland.

At the end of 1999, ELCJ and Lapua diocese (56 congregations, 450,000 members), and FELM signed a 5-year partnership agreement.

Some 6 pilot parishes took the task of being in the forefront in contacts, cooperation and common projects.

The aim was to develop new forms of inter-church contacts by:

- "Increasing interaction and communication between the parties in order to increase mutual knowledge and sharing of experiences.
- More effective theological exchange, e.g. by arranging joint seminars and visits.
- Trying out new ways of cooperation, e.g. by increased exchange of workers and trainees.
- Different ways of sharing in corporate prayer, intercession and worship.

¹³ FELM yearbooks 1980-1998

- Strengthening missionary activity, e.g. by encouraging pilot parishes to develop practical projects for their members, relating to training, diaconia, education or work with drug addicts.
- The diocese of Lapua and the pilot parishes, involved in a partnership scheme, can organize collections etc. to support the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan through the budget of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission.”¹⁴

Plans were made that a chain of activities would be started by a visit of parish workers, pastors, deacons and others to ELCJ in spring 2001. The political and security situation deteriorated, and this did not materialize. All plans were canceled. Good intentions and momentum were lost. Even when the situation improved, the interest in Lapua diocese had turned to other directions. Autumn 2004 Lapua diocese got a new bishop, and this cooperation was not high on his priority list. However some contacts were kept, and after the expiry of the agreement, some funds were still channeled to ELCJHL.

Arch Bishop Paarma visited Syria, Jordan, Palestinian areas, and Israel February 2000. He met Chairman Arafat, and other Palestinian officials, and most of the church leaders in Jerusalem. Scheduled meetings with the Israeli president and minister for Jerusalem portfolio were canceled, and Paarma was able to meet only the Jerusalem minister's special envoy, Daniel Levy.¹⁵

Soon after the archbishop, also Bishop of Lapua diocese visited ELCJ, and Bishop Younan paid a visit to Lapua August 2002. During this visit, he met also Bishop Huovinen of Helsinki diocese, Finnish President Tarja Halonen, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Erkki Tuomioja, ex-President Ahtisaari, and others.

¹⁴ Lapua 19.12.1999, Partnership agreement

¹⁵ Jääskeläinen: Report of Archbishop Paarma's visit

The Council of Lutheran World Federation held its meeting in Bethlehem and Jerusalem on 30th August till 7th 2005. Finnish participants in that meeting were Bishop of Helsinki diocese, Huovinen, CIR director Cantell, Professor Saarinen, and FELM and FCA representatives. The council gave strong support to the ELCJHL and it was reported in Finnish media.¹⁶

A youth group of 20 from Beit Sahour Lutheran School, with 3 teachers and Pastor I. Haddad, visited FELM summer festivals 2008 in Oulu and Pernaja. Archbishop Paarma visited ELCJHL again, autumn 2008.

During this period, the role of FELM became, at least proportionally, less important. ELCJHL got strong support from the US and, later, also from Norway. However, in financial numbers, the support from Finland did not decline.

Even the role of FELM, as the channel between Finnish congregations and ELCJHL, is still very important; there are also direct contacts to ELCF leadership, and, also, to the political leadership in Finland.

Main Forms of Cooperation

ELCJ (later ELCJHL) – FELM (ELCF), 1967-2008:

- Annual financial support for ecclesiastical and later, also, for educational activities;
- Finnish personnel in long-term service with ELCJ in Palestine and Jordan (some 15 persons);
- Stipends for theological and other studies: (pastors Samer Azar, Ramez Ansara and Saliba Rishmawi, teacher N. Tahhan);
- Sponsorship program (1990: 35 students; 2003: 167 students);

¹⁶ www.helsinginhiippakunta.evl.fi/piispa

- Support for projects of community development;
- Short-term assisting groups and individuals;
- Finnish students in training abroad programs.

EECME – FELM (ELCF), 1976-2008:

- Support for Lydda and Ramle youth work;
- Project for renovating Lydda congregation house and kindergarten;
- Health education Nablus;
- Stipend for a student for theological studies (Rev. Fanous, ordination -87);
- Finnish long-term personnel (5);
- Short-term assisting groups and individuals.

Future Prospects

Organizational changes

In ELCF, committees have been working for many years to reformulate a new structure of ELCF mission activities. Three different reports with proposals (Järveläinen 1994, Laulaja 2004, Ripatti 2005) were presented to the General Synod, but they were not accepted.

A new proposal is now being worked out. Bishop Peura is leading the committee. He spoke at the 150th anniversary of ELCF mission on 11.11.2008 in Helsinki, and outlined the proposal.

ELCF will formulate a common mission strategy, and guiding principles for action. Organizations must undertake to follow those, and sign an agreement with ELCF.

The office of ELCF Global Mission will be strengthened, and it will have more authority in its role as coordinator and organizer.

My estimate is that no major changes will be worked out. The restructuring and strengthening the CIR needs only more resources, and a decision of GS. This can be done quite easily. The rest, especially more tight regulation of the relation of mission organizations to CIR, would affect directly, those independent organizations that, so far, have been acting much as they please. There will be strong opposition for this change.

Shift of interest

There is a trend in many Finnish Lutheran congregations to have direct contact between them and churches / congregations abroad. There are many positive aspects in these contacts. However, there are also some negative aspects. Usually, Finnish congregations do not have very much experience, and know-how, of international and cross cultural, foreign language cooperation.

Relations between congregations, on a friendship level, have a good chance to succeed. Normally, then, there is not as much emphasize on financial help and projects, but more contacts of a personal, and spiritual, nature, and friendly visits both ways.

ELCF congregations have 291 official agreements of this kind. They are with Ingrian (91), Lithuanian (8), Hungarian (54) and Estonian (138) Lutheran congregations. Outside these numbers, some friendship relations have been established, also, with Russian orthodox congregations.¹⁷

I discussed the topic with the pastor in charge for these activities in Lapua diocese. He stressed that now, their strategy for ecumenical and international relations has three areas of interest:

¹⁷ www.evl.fi

They want to have contact with three different types of churches:

1. Growing churches,
2. Persecuted churches,
- and
3. Churches that are on the decline.

The goal is to have different types of input into Finnish congregations, and have a variety of options for action.

Growing churches bring new ideas, new energy, encouragement and joy. Persecuted churches can teach steadfastness, faithfulness and show that the Gospel can provide faith, love and hope, even in very difficult situations. Contact with churches that are in similar situations as ELCF may help to find ways of combating the decline.¹⁸

It seems that dioceses and larger parishes have formulated their own strategies, where they define their own interest and needs. The strategy then means that potential cooperation partners must fit to those definitions. This may limit the possibilities of having cooperation agreements with churches, or congregations, in the Middle East.

When we think of future I believe that contacts and cooperation will continue much as before. The role of protestant churches in the Middle East as the initiators will become more important, and FELM will play a central role in actual operations, at least, between ELCJHL and Finnish Lutheran partners.

There has been some interest, by some other ELCF mission organizations, to build similar relations to Middle East protes-

¹⁸ Interview: Rev. Jukka Jämse'n

tant churches – especially to the ELCJHL, but as far as I know, such attempts did not result any lasting cooperation.

Only with the time will we know the outcome of a new, three party agreement between ELCF Kuopio diocese, ELCJHL, and FELM that has been negotiated, and will be signed in February 2009. This new agreement, at least now, seems to have better prospects than Lapua had.

Practical notes

When Finnish Archbishop Paarma visited ELCJHL, some 8 years ago, the Finnish delegation came to the conclusion that “There in no clear picture in Finland about the situation of ELCJ, and what goals the church has set to itself.”¹⁹

There were also 12 recommendations. Some of those have been followed up, but some are probably not. There has been no organized follow up, at least no such records have been found. It may be that the present situation FELM is acting in, between these two sides, creates a sort of semi-vacuum of responsibility.

To overcome this, each time an ELCF/ELCJHL representative or delegation visits, some kind of report should be submitted to CIR in Finland, and to the Church Council of ELCJHL. One person on each side should be nominated to be responsible for keeping notes on the process and follow up. These should be made available, so that, change of personnel would not mean loss of essential information.

¹⁹ Jääskeläinen: Report of Archbishop Paarma’s visit

Advocacy

What we in Finland could do is, to introduce ordinary hospitable, peace-loving Palestinians, and other Arabs, to our citizens. The media, in general, will not do this; it is no news; it does not sell. There may be a few exceptions:

For example, a new development is the cooperation of motorcycle fans in Palestine, Israel and Finland. It has been quite widely reported in Finland and surprisingly, also, here at least in *The Jerusalem Post*. This is certainly a sign of something positive, but, in reality, this kind of cooperation is limited to a very few individuals, and its impact may well remain, largely, only in the level of media.

An important step towards strong, positive, advocacy was the translation of Bishop Younan's book "Witnessing for Peace" to the Finnish, and its publication by FELM 2004. It is making an impact; those who have told me that they have read the book have all said that it was an eye-opener.

The role of ELCJHL in promoting peace and reconciliation, in its schools and congregations, may not affect the majority of Palestinians, but it is an encouraging sign of sensible and brave, ethical thinking, and acting. The role of Bishop Younan, and other church personnel, in promoting reconciliation and peacemaking, goes far beyond the proportion of Lutherans here. I am sure there are many good accounts and examples to be told. The challenge is to find and collect them, and formulate them fitting to the Finnish way of expression. Too much exaggeration and fervent pathos usually make Finns close their ears and hearts.

As for long-term relations between churches, congregations and individuals in Finland and the Middle East, no real normalization is possible without peace. Modern ways of contacts and

relations, via the internet, are of great improvement, but they can never be the same as meeting face-to-face. Traveling restrictions, and other complications, still prevent many Palestinians from visiting abroad. For Finns, traveling is possible and thousands visit the Middle East annually. Only a fraction of them have any contact to local Christians. I know that Bishop Younan has, on many occasions, appealed to Finnish Christians not to forget them, and invited them to visit Lutheran churches. Some of FELM missionaries do the same, but still, few Finns dare to make it. There is too much fear, too much unknown, too much prejudices. There is also some intentional misinformation, and one-sided attitudes against Arabs, in general, and Palestinians, particularly.

One must also say that those who organize tours take their responsibility seriously. If there is a real risk – and there certainly have been such times and situations - they will not endanger the well-being of their customers, and losing their business, and good name.

When we speak of relations between ELCJHL and ELCF, we need to remember that it is not realistic to involve the majority of Finnish Christians to be active in advocacy for their Christian sisters and brothers in here. We need and we have, but we need more of those who know and understand the complicated and delicate situation in which Palestinians live. We need people who are ready to pray with them, and lovingly accompany them, and truthfully advocate for them.

The Development of the EU's Political Role in the Context of Palestinian-Israeli Relations¹

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1. Introduction

*We act not only because there are things we want to have,
but also because there are persons we want to be.*
(Ringmar 1996, 3)

The EU is often criticized for its lack of capacity to act, inability to take a firm stance when needed, and its incoherence, in general. The criticism raises the question of what kind of actor the EU should be. Is it necessary to develop truly common foreign and security policy, in a similar sense to national foreign policies? Or would it be wiser to settle for those fields of action where the Union's strengths clearly are? The European Union, that we currently have, is very ambitious in its search for, what could be called, a foreign policy identity. Originally, however, according to Jean Monnet – a founding father of the Union – the reason for European integration was the intention to challenge the world of nation states.

On the other hand, it would not be justified to say that the EU is something less than the 'sum of its parts'. The Union has at

¹ The text is largely based on my doctoral dissertation (2003) and an article published in 2005.

its disposal the kinds of instruments that individual countries lack – particularly the enlargement policy, and the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument. But, in addition to the fields of the EU's 'traditional strengths', the Union's Member States clearly want the Union to have a greater say in matters related to the foreign and security policy – and even defense policy. Such a desire is understandable, in view of the fact that there are strong links between economic, trade, development, political, and security matters in today's world.

The EU, like any international actor, seeks to ensure that any significant development, or change, is positive/progressive. What can be considered progress, of course, has to do with the interests and values of the one making the assessment. When it comes to the EU, the central values often referred to are democracy, rule of law, separation of powers, respect for human rights, equality, and social security, among others.

However, the EU's foreign policy actorness should not be seen only in terms of the values and interests of the Union and its Member States, but, also, as concerns the institutional identity formation. Identity is the ground from which both values and interests arise. The EU is still a project-in-the-making, and there have been various prospects for the direction, and final form, of the European integration.²

The decisions the EU takes to act usually reflect the various purposes of the EU's actorness in circumstances that encourage or provoke the Union to act. Purposeful action is always about the ways in which the existing realities may be changed. In pragmatic judgement, action that has no practical consequences is meaningless. The purposes are not exclusive, of course, but motivat-

² See e.g. Adler (1997); Peterson and Sjørnsen (eds, 1998); Laidi (ed. 2008); Wiener and Diez (eds, 2004).

ing factors may include the need for formation of the Union's institutional identity, the promotion of its values, and the defense of its (or its Member States') interests. Action is usually multidimensional, in the sense that, it has different purposes, whether or not all of them are stated explicitly.

2. Civilian vs. Military Identity

Now, before going to some examples illustrating the motivating factors in the EU's action in the Middle East, let us discuss briefly the debate that has been going on for quite a while on the Union's essence.

Originally, the term 'civilian power' was used in reference to West Germany and Japan to contrast the growing economic power of the two countries with their military dependence on the United States, and their limited political independence. The 'civilian power approach' was then expanded by François Duchêne who applied the concept to the European Economic Community (EEC) as an opposite to the traditional idea of military power.³

The enlargement of the Union is one of the most vivid illustrations of the influence that non-military means can have. Democratization of Greece, Spain and Portugal in the 1980s, and the transformation of the Central and Eastern European countries in the 1990s, are developments that hardly could have been achieved by reliance on military power. Yet, there has been an increasing sense that, in order to be credible and influential, the Union should develop into a full-fledged international actor.

³ See e.g. Stavridis (2001) for the initial debate around the concept. See also Bull (1982).

The Middle East was taken to the EC agenda relatively early. Already in the 1960s, the Community entered into formal treaties for trade and economic cooperation with some countries in the Mediterranean region. Later on, the commercial and economic relations in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation were accompanied by political dialogues.

When the Document on the European Identity⁴ was published in 1973, its purpose was to enable the member states to define their relations with other countries, their responsibilities, and the place that they, as a community, occupy in world affairs. The document made clear the principle that the Community would act as a single entity, seeking to ensure harmonization of national foreign policies. At the same time, it marked the beginning of a policy that reflected ideals of moral responsibility outside the Community. The Middle East became the first real testing ground of the European Political Cooperation.

It has been 35 years since the Document on the European Identity was issued. The progress in the EU's institutional integration, as well as in the development of the instruments at its disposal, has been significant. However, the Union as an entity still often seems to wrestle in the feather-weight category when it comes to foreign and security policy.

Over the years, the idea of spreading the sphere of peaceful coexistence, beyond the Community's/Union's boundaries, increased expectations that concerned the widening of the scope of activities to foreign and security policy matters. Especially since the 1990s, the expectations on the EU's actorness have clearly changed. The Union is facing a growing pressure to

⁴ Document on European Identity, adopted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the European Community in Copenhagen, 14 December 1973.

strengthen its CFSP, and even to create a credible military capability.

A political objective of the EU, explicitly stated in the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, is "to assert its identity on the international scene, in particular through the implementation of a common foreign and security policy".⁵ The point of departure for developing the Union's foreign, security and defense policy was not in a shared sense of threat, as was the case for Nato. For the EU, the major motivating factor was the need to have political credibility.

Despite the determination and drive for a credible political actorness, the EU is still seen as the paymaster in the Middle East. Among the primary parties in the conflict, the Palestinians, especially, would like to see the EU's political commitment increase to balance its role. But, an active role in dialogue, bold new initiatives, grand plans and world-changing ideas are hard to generate within the Union of 27 member states.

3. The Cornerstones of the EU Action

The EU – like any collective actor – has an institutional identity. The continuous evolution of the Union means that, also, its essence, its identity, is redefined. The latest attempt to re-frame the EU's essence is the Treaty of Lisbon, which has been in a stalemate since the referendum took place in Ireland. The identity construction is an interactive, long-term 'negotiation process,' where a prerequisite for the recognition of the identity is that one becomes recognizable first. Therefore, a Lisbon Treaty type of stock-taking is essential – first, internally, and secondly, externally – in stating the state of the affairs: this is what the Union is now.

⁵ Treaty of Amsterdam, art. B.

It may sound irrelevant to talk about such an abstract term as the EU's institutional identity when we have the unsettled disputes between the Palestinians and Israelis at hand. But, if we consider identity being the basis for all action, it (hopefully) makes more sense to start from such a theoretical notion. Now, let us put the said into the context of the EU's action in the Middle East.

First, the aim is to strengthen the EU as an entity, and have its foreign policy recognized by other significant actors – including the Palestinians and Israelis. Secondly, the EU seeks to contribute to a just solution of the conflict. And, the third element is the safeguarding of the EU Member States' interests in the region (and, to a lesser extent, the interests of the Union as a whole).

When it comes to economic or related activities, the EU has managed to create an image of a rather coherent and influential international actor, while, in foreign and security policy matters, it has suffered from the lack of legitimacy and capabilities to act. Even in its relations with potential or actual conflict regions, the link, usually, is primarily economic, in the form of trade sanctions, development and emergency aid and, in post-conflict situations, reconstruction aid. Although the economic domain has been emphasized in the EU's integration process, both in internal and external relations, the EU has not deliberately chosen to limit its role to that of a paymaster.

3.1. Identity

Involvement in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building has, traditionally, been one of the most difficult questions in international interaction, due to the complex and contradictory relations of actors and their interests, as well as, the question of sovereignty among conflicting parties. The

capacity to act is derived, both, from internal capabilities and external opportunities, and the ability to combine these two.⁶

Generally speaking, the EU as a political actor is still 'in the making,' to a greater extent than states like the US, Russia, India, and the Union's Member States as individual countries. The identity of the Union is continually being shaped by the decisions that its Member States make together. A major decision that was taken to increase the EU's visibility, and the coherence of its external image, with regard to the Middle East, was the Joint Action to nominate a special representative to the Middle East.⁷

In its early years, the CFSP was confined to a relatively narrow set of actions, on which the Member States were able to agree. Against this background, the nominations of special envoys to the world's trouble spots, from 1996 onwards, appeared as significant attempts to learn to speak with one voice in regions where various Member States have traditionally had their national interests at stake.

The fact that the Union has, since 1996, had a Special Representative designated to the Middle East Peace Process, has made it easier to find a common tone. After all, the EUSR is, in a sense, a spokesperson for the Union. The homepage of the Council of the EU states clearly the purpose of having a special envoy. It says that the "role as the EU's Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process is to give presence, visibility and political impetus in the region to the EU's efforts to help bring about a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This has been a strategic priority and a key foreign and security policy goal of the European Union since the post of Special Rep-

⁶ See Ricoeur (1990).

⁷ European Union (1996).

representative for the Middle East Peace Process was created in 1996."⁸

3.2. Values

Secondly, besides the need to construct its own identity, the EU's action, of course, is also motivated by a desire to find a just and lasting solution. The EU has considerable power to create an image of itself as an altruistic civilian power, as opposed, for instance, to the United States that often emphasizes military means, including military assistance.

Involvement reflects value judgements, including underlying assumptions about preferable developments and outcomes. How an international actor gets involved in a course of events, and defines the preferable outcomes, depends on its institutional identity and, further, on the assumptions and expectations that derive from the identity.

The value basis of the European Union can be described as relatively coherent when it comes to issues like human rights, rule of law and good governance, for instance. This can be seen, to a certain extent, in the role of the EUSR, but, even more clearly in the Union's other activities, such as the EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS). The mission's purpose is clearly based on value considerations: maintaining law and order, guaranteeing security and safety of individuals, and contributing to the stability of the area.⁹

EUPOL COPPS has a long-term reform focus. It provides enhanced support to the Palestinian Authority in establishing sustainable and effective policing arrangements. The broaden-

⁸ Council of the European Union, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=452&lang=en (italic added).

⁹ European Union (2005).

ing of the mission to cover a wider set of rule of law and security related issues is in accordance with the EU's principles that are defined, among other documents, in the EU Action Strategy for the Middle East.¹⁰

3.3. *Interests*

Furthermore, third parties in conflict resolution often have significant stakes in conflict and, therefore, may spend remarkable resources to find a solution that is both acceptable to the parties in conflict, and advantageous to the third party itself.

As for the EU's performance in the Middle East, it is clear that there are also selfish motives to get involved. And, this is also openly stated in the EU Action Strategy for the Middle East, which was adopted in 2007. It says: "The EU considers that the present opportunity should not be missed and is ready to take its responsibilities, in accordance with the vital European interests involved."

To what extent we can say that these interests concern the EU as a united actor is a complicated issue, since the interests of the Member States vary. Largely, what are called 'European interests' are still in practice the interests of the Member States to the extent that they are compatible.

It is undeniable that the EU Member States have important interests in the Middle East and are, therefore, willing to get involved in the political process. And, when a common tone cannot be found, the emphasis is on the bilateral relations between individual European countries and their counterparts in the region. These 'multiple voices' of the Union make it sometimes a complicated partner.

¹⁰ European Union (2007).

It is difficult to point out any particular decision, or action, that the EU would have taken, primarily for its own interests. And that, of course, may simply be due to the fact that the Member States' interests are quite divergent. But, theoretically speaking, it is possible to assess the EU action also in terms of political, economic, security, or strategic interests. For instance, the shared desire to have a stable near-neighborhood has to do with the Union's Member States' security interests.

4. Conclusion

The EU, or any international actor, for that matter, always has multiple reasons to get involved in events taking place beyond its borders. The intentions are reflected in the ways the entity chooses to act and use tools at its disposal. The function of these tools is often thought to be directed at reacting to events in order to change their course, either for the sake of the other actors and the external environment itself, or out of the desire to safeguard or promote one's own interests.

But, apart from these value, or interest-based grounds, there is a third, and a more fundamental reason: the need to define one's institutional identity. The element of needing to get recognition for its identity may be less obvious in cases where the actor's identity is strong and relatively stable, such as is the case with the United States. But, even then, there will be some kind of demand, for instance, after the end of President Bush's term, to define what the Obama's United States is like as a foreign policy actor.

Action influences, not only the environment of performance and other parties involved, but, also the actor itself. And for an 'actor-still-in-the-making,' such as the European Union is, this is a particularly significant reason to get involved.

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Reflections on Finnish-Palestinian Relations

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Introduction

The aim of this brief essay is to provide reflections on the official relations between the Government of Finland and the Palestinian Authority since 1999. The first part of the essay will provide a brief sketch of the tenures of the various Finnish representatives in Ramallah, and some of the highlights that characterised their time. This second part of the essay will dwell, at some length, on the development cooperation between Finland and the Palestinian Authority, including civil society perspectives. Finally, some reflections on the politics of aid will be provided. It is worth noting that the essay is not intended to be a definitive account of the official Finnish-Palestinian relations, nor does it reflect the official views of the Finnish government, but it is, rather, a subjective reflection on the state of play of Finnish-Palestinian relations by an insider who served in the Finnish Representative Office in 2005-2007.

¹ Prior to the current assignment Dr. Ruohomäki served as the Deputy Representative of Finland to the Palestinian Territories in Ramallah.

A Roller-Coaster Ride: The Representative Office of Finland in Ramallah 1999-2008²

Relations with the Palestinian Authority were handled by the Embassy of Finland in Tel Aviv prior to 1999. Development cooperation between Finland and the PA started soon after the establishment of the PA. A desk officer was sent to handle growing development cooperation with the PA in the summer of 1997 (Second Secretary Ms. Tarja Fernandez). Finland established the Representative Office of Finland in Ramallah on the 1st of January 1999. The establishment of the Representative Office was done to upgrade the official relations between the Finnish government and the Palestinian Authority.

Finland became a member of the European Union in 1995, and held her first Presidency of the European Union in the second half of 1999. The Middle East Peace Process figured very prominently on the EU agenda, and it was deemed appropriate to establish closer ties to the Palestinian Authority in order to gain better insights into the developments in the Palestinian Territories. The Representative Office was also accredited to handle relations towards Palestinian refugees through UNRWA.

The first Representative was Mr. Jarno Syrjälä, who moved to the Representative Office from the Finnish Embassy in Tel Aviv. His tenure (1.1.1999-31.3.2000) was characterised by a time of optimism. It must be recalled that 1999 is considered a high-point in Palestinian life with the economy doing well. There were a lot of expectations in the air due to Camp David. This was a hectic time for Mr. Syrjälä, as Finland was closely involved in the Tripartite Action Plan negotiations. On the bilateral front, highlights included Yasser Arafat's visit to Finland.

² This section is based on interviews of the various Finnish representatives who worked in Ramallah since 1999. Highlights of their tenure are briefly considered. Development cooperation matters are discussed in more detail in the second section of the essay.

Ms. Eija Rotinen was the second Finnish Representative. The political climate was still positive when she began her tenure in April of 2000. The atmosphere soon soured with the second *Intifada* starting in the autumn of 2000. The rest of Ms. Rotinen's tenure (1.4.2000-31.7.2002) was characterised by a downward spiral in the political climate. She recalls that it was a time of "taking it day by day". The *raison d'être* of the diplomatic presence of most western states represented in Ramallah was very much a symbolic one, as, there was very little prospect of anything else to do, apart from political reporting to Helsinki on the day-to-day developments in the Palestinian Territories. Ms. Rotinen decided that, given the political climate of the time, it would not have been appropriate to hold Finnish Independence Day celebrations in Ramallah, something that is usually a standard practice of diplomatic offices and embassies. Almost all the development cooperation that had been ongoing between Finland and the Palestinian Authority came to a stand still. Most of the aid was directed towards humanitarian and emergency needs.

Mr. Keijo Ruokoranta took over the office in August 2003. During his tenure (1.8.2003-31.7.2005), the violence of the second Intifada started to run out of steam, as both parties grew wary of the constant hostilities. Nonetheless, the building of the Wall began, and talks of a two-state solution picked up speed. The political situation started to gradually stabilise, and, with the death of Yasser Arafat, and the subsequent election of Mahmud Abbas as the new Palestinian President, a new chapter in the political scene began. A visit by the Finnish Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee marked an important event in terms of bilateral relations. This visit also highlighted the importance of understanding the Middle East Peace Process within Finnish foreign policy agenda. Development cooperation picked up speed, albeit, that much of the cooperation was still in an emergency mode.

The fourth Representative to hold office was Mr. Heikki Hannikainen (1.8.2005-30.9.2008). As Finland was gearing for her second Presidency of the European Union, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs deemed appropriate to assign a Deputy Representative to the Representative Office of Finland in Ramallah. Hence, Mr. Hannikainen was joined by Dr. Olli Ruohomäki (1.8.2005-31.7.2007). Israel had just disengaged from Gaza in August, and the autumn of 2005 was generally characterised by a renewed optimism in the political climate of the Palestinian Territories. The idea of a two-state solution was advanced by the Bush administration. Former World Bank president, James Wolfensohn, was leading a team of international experts planning the rebuilding of Gaza, and there were talks of building a link between Gaza and the West Bank. Development cooperation between Finland and the Palestinian Authority was in full speed, with a major bilateral education sector programme signed by the two parties.

The Palestinian parliamentary elections were held in January 2006. Contrary to expectations by the Palestinians themselves, the Israelis, and the international community, Hamas won the elections. The European Union electoral monitoring mission declared the elections as free and fair. Nonetheless, the Quartet decided to enforce sanctions on the new Palestinian Authority government formed by Hamas. The political climate quickly soured, and a downward spiral began. 2006 and 2007 can be characterised as a period of chaos. Subsequently, most relations between EU countries and the Palestinian Authority were either suspended, or limited to technical level contacts. Finland did not suspend relations, but no official contacts at a ministerial level were conducted. The Finnish EU Presidency in Ramallah had an intense time coordinating EU political positions at a local level through the EU Heads of Mission and EU Heads of Cooperation meetings and reporting developments to the headquarters. Soon, it became apparent that internal splits

within the Palestinian political scene led to violent clashes between Fatah and Hamas, with the West Bank gradually emerging as 'Fatahstan', and Gaza as 'Hamastan'. Furthermore, during the period 2005-2008, there was a clear fragmentation in the economic space of the Palestinian Territories.

Ms. Pia Rantala-Engberg took over from Mr. Hannikainen on 1.10.2008 and Ms. Outi Saarikoski took over from Dr. Olli Ruohomäki on 1.8.2007.

Investing in People, Water and Land: Finnish-Palestinian Relations from the Prism of Development Cooperation

The Middle East Peace Process forms the basis for development cooperation between Finland and the Palestinian Authority. Aid is never devoid of politics, but this is particularly true in the case of the Palestinian Territories.

Although the Palestinian Authority is not yet a full-fledged state, it has all the characteristics of a fragile state, which include weak territorial control, safety and security, weak capacity to deliver services, weak capacity to manage public services, and weak ability to protect and support the ways in which the poorest people sustain themselves. Economic space in the West Bank and Gaza remains highly fragmented. The coping strategies for the poorest segment of the Palestinian population are being increasingly stretched to the limit. Despite commendable efforts by the Palestinian Authority, in many fields, the quality and coverage of basic social services are severely under stress. Hence, the Finnish aid package is directed towards improving the living conditions of the Palestinians, and building the capacity of the Palestinian institutions.

Sectors

Finnish support to the Palestinian Territories from 1995 to 2008 totaled approximately € 100 million. This includes € 43.3 million in bilateral programmes, € 46.3 million in humanitarian aid, € 1.2 million through Finnish NGOs, and approximately € 2 million out of the average of € 40 million annual EC budget for the Palestinian Territories.

The three main sectors of Finnish bilateral cooperation, with a focus on capacity-building include: education, water and sanitation, and land administration. People, water and land are the main resources of the Palestinian Territories and, hence, Finnish aid supports the development of these strategic assets.

Education forms the basis for social and economic development for a future Palestinian state. Finland has supported the Primary Education Development Programme (1997-2009) and the Education Development Strategic Plan 2009-2013. The first two phases concentrated on improving the quality of primary education and the efficiency of education administration. The third phase focused on improving the capacity of the Ministry of Education. Finland also supported the printing of school textbooks, which will be discussed later. Finland has also been an active member of the Education Sector Working Group, which is a forum for policy discussion and coordination. Most recently, Finland is one of a group of donors currently involved in developing a sector-wide approach for the education sector, together with the Ministry of Education.

Water resources management is a crucially strategic field in terms of the peace process. Finland has supported the development of the water and sanitation sector since 1995, first, through the UNDP and, later, through a bilateral engagement. The focus has been in supporting the capacity-building of the Palestinian Water Authority. This, through the provision of

technical assistance for the design, management and supervision of investment projects financed by the European Investment Bank, World Bank, and various bilateral agencies. The next phase of support will focus on the construction and rehabilitation of water infrastructure networks in a cluster of villages northwest of Jerusalem.

Land is a key asset for economic growth and private sector development. Finland is one of the few bilateral actors active in the field since 1997 together, in partnership, with the World Bank. The focus has been on building the capacity of the Palestinian Land Authority, particularly, land administration and registration.

The Representative Office of Finland in Ramallah has had an instrument titled "Fund for Local Cooperation" through which civil society initiatives have been supported. Partners have included the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), the Israeli-Palestinian Centre for Research and Information (IPCRI), SAWA Center, Elderly Community Services Centre in the Old City, Palestinian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, and the International Centre in Bethlehem.

Humanitarian funding has been channeled through UNRWA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and the ICRC. In addition, Finland was a key contributor to the World Bank administered Emergency Support Services Programme to sustain basic service delivery during the second Intifada. Finland also contributed to the EC-administered Temporary International Mechanism (TIM), through which salaries of the Palestinian Authority personnel were paid during the difficult post-2006 times. In addition, Finland has supported the EC's Pegase Mechanism and World Bank's Palestinian Reform and Development Plan Trust Fund, which basically paid for the Palestinian Authority recurrent expenditures and investment projects.

More recently, Finland has supported the reform of the Palestinian security sector through the EUBAM in Rafah and the EUPOL COPPS mission. The support includes secondment of police and judicial experts, and funding for projects through the Civil Police Development Programme Fund.

Aid and Politics

As noted earlier, there is no such thing as aid devoid of politics. Firstly is the case of Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority. The rise of Hamas to power in March 2006 led to the Quartet's three conditions. This meant that EU member states had to take a stance vis-à-vis their aid portfolios. The stance within the EU member states present in the Palestinian Territories was by no means uniform. While all agreed that direct budget support to the Hamas-led PA would no longer be possible, many did continue aid programmes on a technical, albeit restricted, level. Finland lowered her profile on a political level, restricting contacts with the PA to the Director General level, but continued with the provision of technical assistance programmes in education, water and sanitation and land administration. It was thought that freezing aid in these sectors would have been very counter-productive in terms of the very capacity-building objectives that had been originally agreed upon. Finland was not alone, as many other EU Member States also continued their aid programmes, albeit with slight alterations.

Secondly is the case of Palestinian school textbooks. As noted earlier, Finland and some other EU member states have supported the printing of Palestinian school text books. An organisation called Palestinian Media Watch/Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace made allegations that the school textbooks contained incitement of hatred towards Israel. These allegations caught the attention of some conservative members of the Finnish parliament, who made parliamentary questions

asking why Finland had used taxpayers' funds to support such textbooks. Independent research by the Israeli-Palestinian Centre for Research and Information cleared the allegations as unfounded. In addition to this, and politically more significantly, an EU Heads of Mission statement concluded that some of the problematic quotations can be traced to Jordanian and Egyptian textbooks. It noted that the PA school textbooks are not perfect, and certain aspects can be debated, but that EU supported textbooks are free of incitement of hatred towards Israel. Supporting the aspirations of the Palestinians towards an independent state is bound to be a politically challenging endeavour, as the two aforementioned cases demonstrate.

Conclusions

The Palestinian Territories are both a very interesting and very challenging context for foreign diplomats to work in. The interest comes from the fact that the Middle East Peace Process remains at the heart of international politics. Whenever armed violence, conflict, security policy, terrorism, state-building and the like, are debated, the discussion often touches the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Middle East Peace Process is also one of the permanent issues of the EU's foreign and security policy agenda.

The challenge comes from the fact that it is difficult to plan anything ahead, as the political situation is so volatile, making long-term planning almost a futile endeavour. Another important aspect of working in the Palestinian context is the fact that it is difficult to be an aloof outsider observer of events. Albeit, diplomats must strive to have an objective understanding of the conflict; subjective interpretations and experiences of the reality do influence one's views. House demolitions, military check-points, IDF incursions into the West Bank and Gaza cities, the Wall, and settlements, are all part of local realities. Also there is a danger of being in the wrong place at the wrong

time, as terrorist activities inside Israel are a reminder of the political violence of the region.

Will there be peace in the region? Will the vicious cycle of violence end? Will the Palestinian Territories become a full-fledged independent state one day? These are standard questions most diplomats face upon completing their assignments. Yet there are no simple answers to these difficult questions.

To me, it appears that both the Israelis and Palestinians are caught in the "prisoner's dilemma."³ Although there are parties on both sides wishing to have a permanent settlement to the conflict, the trust needed to build the relations to obtain this objective seems to be an elusive goal. Each time progress is made, spoilers on both sides of the conflict undo the progress achieved.

Nonetheless, I do hope that Palestine will one day be an independent state. In the meantime, Finland will continue to assist the state-building process, but it is envisaged that, in the course of time, relations between Finland and Palestine will be normalised, with emphasis on private sector ties, cultural cooperation and tourism.

³ The **prisoner's dilemma** constitutes a problem in game theory. In its classical form, the prisoner's dilemma ("PD") is presented as follows: Two suspects are arrested by the police. The police have insufficient evidence for a conviction, and, having separated both prisoners, visit each of them to offer the same deal. If one testifies (defects from the other) for the prosecution against the other and the other remains silent (cooperates with the other), the betrayer goes free and the silent accomplice receives the full 10-year sentence. If both remain silent, both prisoners are sentenced to only six months in jail for a minor charge. If each betrays the other, each receives a five-year sentence. Each prisoner must choose to betray the other or to remain silent. Each one is assured that the other would not know about the betrayal before the end of the investigation. How should the prisoners act?

Visions of a Real Multiculturalism: Some Reflections on Palestinian “Vision Documents” in Light of Finnish Experiences

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In a globalized world, the character and identity of nation states have become a constant source of debate. Such debates typically concentrate on citizenship, immigration, the status of minority groups, and state-religion relationships. Further stimuli are new types of supra-national constructions, such as EU in Europe. In the Middle East, the reemergence of confessional and local (tribal etc.) identities on the one hand and a growing recognition of (universalist) civic democratic rights on the other are also of importance. A significant instance of a global consciousness of civic rights is the UN General Assembly’s “Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.” In the Palestinian context, the nation formation is much complicated by the fact that Palestinians are without a sovereign state and divided between several political entities. Thus, identity must be constructed in various diverse circumstances. This article briefly tackles recent identity formulations within one of the most complicated categories of Palestinian identity: Palestinians

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who hold Israeli citizenship. In line with the goal of this publication, I will draw some parallels between the Israeli Palestinian case and the position of the Swedish-speaking (“Finland-Swedes”) minority in Finland, even though I am fully aware of the great differences between these communities.

Israeli Palestinian Vision Documents

Importantly, recent years have witnessed the publication of several documents that are worthy of attention when analyzing the changing attitudes of the Israeli Palestinian minority towards their status in the Jewish state. The positions taken by Israeli Palestinian intellectuals and political elites are presented in four documents from 2006-2007 that have been dubbed “the future vision documents” or “vision(ary)documents.”² The documents are as follows: “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,” “The Democratic Constitution,” “An Equal Constitution for All: On the Constitution and Collective Rights of Arab Citizens in Israel,” and “The Haifa Declaration.”

Perhaps the most important of the documents, “The Future Vision” was published under the auspices of The High Arab Monitoring Committee (or High Follow-Up Committee) and was sponsored by the National committee for the leaders of Arab local authorities in Israel. The bodies that endorsed the document represent most political streams of Israeli Palestinian society. Notably, however, the popular Islamic Movement was not involved in the drafting of this or any other of the documents under discussion. It is likely, as assumed by Amal Jamal, that any Islamic Movement document would differ on certain points,³ particularly secular ideas about gender equality that have been criticized by the movement. Also the Druze and

² Jamal 2008, 4; Abulof, 2008, 30; Waxman & Peleg, 2008, 57.

³ Jamal, 2008, 12-13, 15.

Circassian minorities, traditionally "pro-Israeli," have rejected the document.⁴ As opposed to other Arabic sub-groups within Israel, the Druze and Circassians are ready to accept Israel's Jewish character.

The "Democratic Constitution" issued by the Adalah Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel is a constitutional proposal which should, in the opinion of the drafters, be included in the future constitution of Israel. The Adalah document is clearly the most specific and polished of the vision documents. The Haifa Declaration, of Mada al-Carmel – Arab Center for Applied Social Research, aims in its own words to be a "draft of a consensual statement of a collective vision that Palestinian citizens in Israel articulate about themselves." "An Equal Constitution" is a position paper defining ten collective rights that must be addressed in any future constitution.

The Background of the Documents

As for the political and sociological background of the future vision documents, several factors are of significance. First, we need to bear in mind what has taken place within the Israeli Jewish population. The question concerning the character of Israel has been very much on the national agenda since the beginning of the Oslo peace process. As an important part of this self-characterization process, the constitutional project continued in the 1990s with the enactment of some highly important basic laws, the most important of them being the 1992 basic law on human dignity and liberty, in which Israel was for the very first time officially defined as "Jewish and democratic state."

⁴ Abulof, 2008, 46.

Furthermore, in recent years there have been several attempts to present an unofficial draft-constitution. The most important of these was the so-called "constitution by agreement" project spearheaded by the Israeli Democracy Institute.⁵ Another unofficial draft is a document entitled Kinneret Covenant, which was published in early 2002 by an organization known as the Forum for National Responsibility.⁶

In addition to these unofficial projects, the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee began, in 2003, discussions aimed at writing a formal constitution.⁷ Importantly, the "Arab sector," as the Palestinian Arab citizens are often called in Israel, was mostly excluded from these projects. It is, perhaps, illuminating that the Knesset Committee formally invites the worldwide Jewish community to present their points of view on central constitutional issues, but totally ignores Israeli Palestinians, a fifth of the population.

It is clear that the appearance of these Jewish documents have reinforced the need for Israeli Palestinians to present their ideas about the character of the state and their place within it.⁸ Rouhana and Sultany even speak of a renewed emphasis on the Jewishness of Israel since 2000,⁹ a phenomenon with evident ramifications for the Palestinian minority. An important single factor that sharpened the conflict between the Jewish majority and Palestinian minority was clearly the events of Oc-

⁵ See, e.g., Polisar 2005.

⁶ Jamal 2006, 5.

⁷ Cook 2004.

⁸ The influence of the Jewish visions was explicitly mentioned by Shauki Hatib, the Chairman of the National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel and Chairman of the Supreme Arab Monitoring Committee, in an "Arab-Jewish Encounter on the Future Vision Document" held in The Peace Library of Givat Haviva, April 18, 2007.

⁹ Rouhana & Sultany 2003, 6-7.

tober 2000, when 13 Israeli Palestinians were killed by Israeli police. As noted by several scholars and commentators, the events of October 2000 must be seen as major catalyst that forced the Palestinian leadership to reformulate their positions. Importantly, the Sharon government totally ignored the conclusions of the Or Commission, which investigated the reasons behind the October 2000 events. All this led to further frustration and disillusionment with the Israeli authorities and with the Jewish population as a whole.

The Contents of the Documents

Several insightful and detailed analyses of thematic, stylistic, and narrative elements of the vision documents have already been published.¹⁰ Irrespective of some differences between the documents, they generally converge in their basic outlook.¹¹ The salient features of the vision documents may be enumerated as follows:

- (1) The Palestinian Arabs in Israel are the indigenous people of Palestine and integral part of the Palestinian people. As pointed out by Waxman and Peleg,¹² the traditional Israeli non-national label "Israeli Arabs" is thus rejected.
- (2) The Zionist enterprise and Israel are depicted as the "outcome of a settlement process initiated by the Zionist-Jewish elite in Europe" and backed by colonial powers promoting Zionist immigration.
- (3) Israel is fully responsible for the Palestinian *Nakba* and it should acknowledge this injustice. Some of the documents call for it to recognize the Palestinian right of return.

¹⁰ The most important are Jamal 2008; Abulof 2008, and Waxman & Peleg 2008.

¹¹ Waxman & Peleg 2008, 57.

¹² Waxman & Peleg 2008, 58.

- (4) In line with the analysis and terminology of Oren Yiftachel, Nadim Rouhana and As'ad Ghanem, the present state of Israel is not labeled as a democracy but as an "ethnocracy."¹³ The formal and non-formal identity of Israel as a Jewish state is identified as the root cause of the inequality suffered by the Israeli-Palestinians. As long as this identity is maintained, real equality is impossible.
- (5) Based on this analysis, the vision documents call for a profound reformation of the Israeli state. All of the documents agree that Israel should cease to be a Jewish state. They offer a number of envisioned outcomes of this transformation. These include "consociational democracy" (consensus democracy) in the Future Vision, "a bi-national state" (the Haifa Declaration), or a "bilingual and multicultural state" (the Democratic Constitution).¹⁴

The last point is without a doubt the most important new element in the vision documents. According to the Future Vision, only consensus democracy would guarantee both individual and collective rights. Accordingly, in addition to their full civil rights, Palestinian Arabs need self-rule or autonomy in terms of education, culture, religion, and language. Further, the document calls for a chance to "create national institutions relating to all domains of life." It also states that the two groups "should have mutual right to veto and self-administration," and that Israel should recognize the complete equality of the Palestinians on "a collective-national basis." The Democratic Constitution proposes a far more concrete vision in this respect. In its important paragraph 20 on power-sharing in decision-making, it proposes several possible models by which representatives of the Palestinian minority may veto any bill which, in their opinion, violates the fundamental rights of the Arab minority.

¹³ See e.g. Yiftachel 2006 and Ghanem, Rouhana & Yiftachel 1998.

¹⁴ Waxman & Peleg, 2008, 62.

As pointed out by several commentators,¹⁵ the vision documents represent a significant change of emphasis. The documents are by far the most explicit indication that the Palestinian establishment no longer believes that even fully-developed liberal democracy could change/improve their position in Israel. The emphasis in our texts is not on the familiar liberal democratic concept of a "state of all its citizens" but on the model which approaches to the concept of non-geographic federalism, in line with the models established in Belgium, Macedonia, and in Northern Ireland since the Good Friday Agreement (1998).

Stormy Debate

The Israeli Jewish reaction to the vision documents has in most cases been very negative.¹⁶ The evident Palestinian nationalistic narrative of the documents has been seen as a threat to Israel's self-definition and justification for a Jewish nation-state. By defining Israel as the outcome of a colonial project, the Zionist-Jewish narrative is totally ignored. Even most of the liberal voices in Israeli Jewish society strongly reject some of the salient ideas of the vision documents. Typically, the concept that "Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people" is understood as a red line.¹⁷ Further, many critics state that it is illogical to recognize the legitimacy of a Palestinian nation-state (on the occupied territories) while denying Israel's legitimacy as a Jewish nation-state. If in the future there were a Palestinian nation-state in the West Bank and Gaza alongside Israel that, in turn, would be transformed into a bi-national state or consensus democracy, Palestinians would have one

¹⁵ See, e.g., Waxman & Peleg, 2008, 58.

¹⁶ Waxman & Peleg, 2008, 64.

¹⁷ See e.g. Gavison 2007 and Rubinstein 2007. For some exceptions, see Kaminer 2007.

and half states.¹⁸ Several commentators have dubbed the vision documents declarations of war that reflect Palestinian separatism.¹⁹ Another frequent feature of the Jewish reactions has been an attempt to underline a possible difference between the “radical” leaders of the Palestinian Arab community and “moderate” grass roots. Some polls indeed suggest that the majority of Palestinian Arabs in Israel support a constitution that would maintain Israel’s character as a Jewish and democratic state.²⁰

Finland: An Instance of Ethnic Power-sharing

Uriel Abulof has interestingly examined “the political ethics” of the vision documents by comparing the Israeli Palestinian case with two other instances of inter-state conflicts, notably the strife between Anglophones and Francophones in Canada and the Macedonian intra-state conflict between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians. Abulof’s choices are partly explained by the fact that the vision documents themselves refer to these instances as positive models in solving ethnic conflicts.

In what follows, I will add a further instance to the discussion, namely the strife between Finns and Finnish Swedes in Finland. Both the Israeli (Jewish) and Finnish nationalisms basically represent ethno-nationalism in which the nation is understood to be based on ethnic ties (*jus sanguinis* principle) *contra* state-nationalism according to which the state forms a nation (*jus solis* principle). Even in Finland, the law provides the right of return to ethnic Finns from the area that was controlled by the former Soviet Union. Despite this basic typological similarity,

¹⁸ See e.g. Waxman & Peled 2008, 66 and Stern 2006.

¹⁹ See e.g. Avraham Taf’s article entitled “This means war” in the daily Haaretz 08/12/2006.

²⁰ See e.g. Haaretz 29/04/2007.

the differences are evident. Israeli nationalism is one of the most stridently emphatic in terms of ethnicity among the states representing ethno-national model. Due to the highly ethnic nature of the Israeli polity, several scholars classify Israel either as an "ethnic democracy" or as an "ethnocracy," in the latter case altogether denying its democratic nature. Another anomaly of the Israeli case is the exceptionally strong overlap between national and religious identity. Hence, the Israeli law of return also confers an automatic right to citizenship on every immigrant who is Jew by *conversion* (i.e. to non-ethnic Jews as well). The highly ethnic character of Israeli state with strong religious undercurrents renders it problematic in terms of ethnic minorities. There has been no attempt to create an *Israeli* nation or overarching national identity that would also include the Israeli Palestinians. Democracy is a fully majoritarian one, and no ethnic power-sharing is practiced.

The Finnish state, despite a clear ethnic component in its identity, is clearly at the other end of the continuum in terms of ethnic power-sharing. Among the democratic states with a significant ethnic minority, Finland is the only one that uses power-sharing techniques despite the fact that the minority constitutes less than 20 percent of the population.²¹

Alongside the Finnish ethnic majority ("ethnic Finns") in Finland, there is a Swedish-speaking minority, which represents about 5.5 percent of the total population (2005).²² About half of this minority population is concentrated in areas where Swedish is the predominant language. As opposed to other areas, the Åland Islands between Finland and Sweden com-

²¹ Dowty 1998, 210–212.

²² This article includes general facts about the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. Following books/articles were consulted: Allardt 2000; Allardt & Starck 1981; Lojander-Visapää 2008; Modeen 1999; Pentikäinen & Hiltunen 1995 and Ståhlberg 1995.

prise an autonomous Swedish-speaking area. A century ago, the proportion of the Swedish-speaking population was higher (about 15% in the 19th century) and, due to historical reasons, Swedish was the only official language until 1853. The change in the official status of the Finnish language (the language of the vast majority even then) was closely connected to the rise of Finnish nationalism in the 19th century. Notably, the early Finnish nationalists came mainly from the Swedish-speaking cultural elite (e.g. Johan Vilhelm Snellman). These families typically adopted Finnish family names and began using Finnish as an everyday language.

The question about the status of Swedish vis-à-vis Finnish, however, gave rise to a linguistic conflict that continued well into 1930s. This strife was also complicated by the Aland crises of 1917-1921. When Finland declared independence, the vast majority of the Alanders supported secession from Finland in order to be annexed to Sweden. One of the reasons for this was fear of anti-Swedish prejudice in Finland. Finally, the League of Nations decided that the "sovereignty of the Aaland Island is recognized to belong to Finland."²³ Even before the final decision by the League of Nations, Finland granted political autonomy to the Aland Islands with a protected status for the Swedish language.

As noted above, Finland practices extensive ethnic power-sharing vis-à-vis the Swedish-speaking minority. The Swedish language has a constitutionally guaranteed position as an official national language alongside Finnish. Any municipality in which more than 8 percent of the population speaks a minority language (whether Finnish or Swedish) is considered bilingual. In bilingual municipalities, all civil servants are required to

²³ Decision of the Council of the League of Nations on the Aland Islands including Sweden's Protest 1921, Article One.

know both languages. Swedish may also be used when communicating with state authorities. There are Swedish universities, and the main Swedish “ethnic” party (The Swedish People’s Party) has maintained a constant presence in Finland’s governments. Both Finnish and Swedish are obligatory subjects in the school. The maintenance of a kind of “status quo” in terms of language policy has been essential to the Swedish-speaking minority, and the presence of the Swedish People’s Party at coalitions has been understood as a guarantee that the rights of the minority are respected. At times, the demographic fears of the minority have also been taken into account in formulating policy. Notably, hundreds of thousands of ethnic Finnish refugees from Karelia after the Second World War were mainly settled in Finnish-speaking areas.

The identity of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland has been, and remains, a complicated question. Basically, the minority meets the main criteria of a separate ethnic group,²⁴ and the majority of the Swedish-speaking population has, at least to some extent, a distinct identity. In different periods there have, however, been various viewpoints. Such concepts as the Swedish-speaking population’s formation of a separate national group or sub-group of the Swedish nation have become less common. In addition to geographic distinction from Sweden, it is clear that pressure from the majority has played an additional role in this development. Instead of being “East Swedes,” the Swedish-speaking minority have come to be seen as Finns who speak the Swedish language. A potential ethnic or even national minority has more or less become a mere linguistic minority (perhaps with the exception of the Alanders). It is highly likely that the power-sharing policy of the state has been an important factor in this development, along with oth-

²⁴ Cf. Hutchinson & Smith 1996, 7.

er factors.²⁵ One should note that a citizen's registration with the authorities as Swedish-speaking or Finnish-speaking is solely a matter of personal choice and can be changed at anytime. In general, one may argue that the treatment of the Swedish minority in Finland is part of the established tradition of "integral nationalism" in Finland according to which the integrity of the nation is essential to its survival as a small nation.²⁶ In the Finnish constitution (1919, 2000) and Finland's language laws (1922) the equality of the Swedish-speaking minority is guaranteed. Yet, on the other hand it may also be argued that this equality led to the dilution of a (potential) Swedish national identity in Finland.

Swedes in Finland and Palestinians in Israel

The Finnish case is one instance of a solution to at least potential conflict between two ethnic groups. The overall situation is of course very much different from Israel/Palestine. First, in Finland both groups are established "native" people in the same area with a common history.²⁷ By contrast, the ethnic conflict in Palestine is strongly complicated by the fact that in addition to being an ethnic conflict, it is clearly a colonial conflict between recent Zionist colonial settlers and a native local population. In this kind of situation, the mutually recognized legitimacy essential to resolving a conflict solution is difficult to attain. Secondly, as opposed to the Palestinian conflict, the regional aspect has been mainly absent from the Finnish case. Only during the Aland Islands crises did the regional aspect play a role with growing tensions between Finland and Sweden.

²⁵ One factor is definitely the fact that Finns from all backgrounds participated in the war against the Soviet Union during the WW II.

²⁶ For Integral nationalism in Finland, see Smolander 2001.

²⁷ Swedish-speaking people in Finland are hardly ever treated as settlers representing past Swedish imperialism and colonialism.

Despite these significant differences, the Finnish case may nevertheless be of some relevance to the debate within Israel. The creation of a common nationality that manages to encompass both ethnic groups by transforming them into linguistic groups has been a key to the success of the Finnish model. Even though such a development is not a realistic in Israel in the short run, some elements may, however, be applied to it. The Finnish case is an instance of a majority that has been exceptionally ready to take the minority's interests into account. One factor explaining this policy is Finland's (especially earlier) strong volition to be a member of the community of Nordic countries where Scandinavian languages are a norm, a Finno-Ugric Finnish being in the clear minority in the region.²⁸ One could strongly argue that a flourishing and satisfied Palestinian minority within Israel would facilitate Israel's integration into the mainly Arabic-speaking Middle East. The second class position of the Palestinians in Israel and also the denial of the "Jewish Arab" identity category for oriental Jews have definitely made the integration even more complicated than it would have been otherwise.²⁹

It should be noted that a number of elements present in the vision documents are in some form applied in Finland vis-à-vis the Swedish-speaking minority. Most importantly, Finland is bilingual by law, and the study of a minority language is compulsory for all citizens. This is very different from the Israeli reality reflected by the words of Zvi Zameret, Director General of Yad Ben-Zvi, who wrote in a Haaretz OP-ed: "If we [i.e. the Israeli Jews] accede to the demand of bilingualism, we will wipe out the fundamental basis of our unity."³⁰ The official sta-

²⁸ Earlier such a pronounced willingness to identify with other Nordic countries was also linked to the security policy.

²⁹ For the "Jewish Arab" identity, see Shenhav 2006.

³⁰Zameret 2007

tus of Swedish is also strengthened by the presence of Swedish universities. Further, the constant participation of the main Swedish ethnic party in government coalitions is in line with Arendt Liphard's ideas about "grand coalition" and the minority's veto right on vital political questions.³¹ So far, as is well known, no Israeli Palestinian party has been present in the Israeli coalitions and only one Palestinian Arab has held a ministerial position in a government.

A further important aspect of the Finnish model is the inclusivity of state symbols. One should, in particular, note that one of the official state holidays is the Finnish Swedish Heritage Day, established as early as 1908. When language was still a contested issue, street fights happened between Finnish and Swedish groups on that day, but nowadays such things could not be imagined. For the Swedish-speaking minority, the day symbolizes bilingualism and the right to express oneself in Swedish. The need to create "Israeli" holidays shared both by Jews and Arabs is often mentioned as a means to integrate the Palestinian minority into the Israeli polity.³² All in all, political and historical realities very much influence a divided society's ability to create equality for all its ethnic groups. The position of Palestinian citizens in Israel is highly complicated and far from equal, whether in theory or in practice. In the struggle for an equal society, the historical experiences of other states, including Finland, may be of some relevance both for the Palestinians and Israeli Jews.

³¹ See Liphardt 2004:107.

³² See, e.g., Dowty 1999, 12.

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Women's Role in Building a Society – A Finnish Perspective on the Palestinian Developments

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This article will address the role of women and, especially, the role of feminism in building a society. I will make some remarks about different kinds of feminism, both in Palestine, and in Finland, and then try to evaluate the meaning of these discussions in the process of building a viable and successful state.

With the concept of feminism, we usually refer to the theories of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes on the one hand, and the organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests on the other. In Arabic, feminism is usually called *nisa'iyya* or *nazariyya l-musawah bayna l-jinsayn*.

The women's movements in Palestine – as in other Middle Eastern Muslim countries – can roughly be divided into two or three¹ overlapping categories:

1. secular women's movement;
2. Islamic feminism / Muslim feminism or Islamist feminism.

¹ Some writers make a distinction between Islamic feminism and Islamist, or Muslim, feminism. Since the line between Islamic and Islamist in this context, is quite fluid, I have decided to keep only two categories: secular and Islamic. See Tohidi 2002 for a discussion on terminology.

It is not at all easy to differentiate between these two categories. There are features of the secular and the religious in both discourses. The pioneering secular feminisms in Arab countries have always had space for religion. The founding Egyptian feminist discourse was based, simultaneously, in the discourse of Islamic reform, and that of secular nationalism. Some Muslims claim that the demands and arguments secular feminists made, while seeking women's rights to education, work, and political participation, were well and truly Islamic arguments, not only secular nationalist, humanitarian, and democratic arguments.

Secular feminism

Nadje Al-Ali discusses the problems of categorization in her book *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East* (2000). She asked women in Egypt what they thought secularism was. Some of them associated secular, 'almani, with people who are not part of a religious establishment; some said that it means the separation of the state and religion.²

Secular feminists generally ground their discourse outside of the realm of religion, and place it within international human rights discourse. Religion is respected as a private matter, but it has nothing to do with formulating an agenda for women's rights discourse, or having a role in formulating family law.³

Fadwa Allabadi is Assistant Professor in Gender Studies and Social Development, and Director of INSAN Centre for Gender Studies at Al-Quds University. She has written extensively about feminism in the Middle East. In her view, the secular

² Al-Ali 2000:128-142.

³ Although secular feminists do not oppose religion as such, one of the interviewees of Al-Ali claims that Egyptian Islamists use the term 'almani as a synonym for *mulhid*, atheist or *kafir*, infidel. Al-Ali 2000:129.

women's movement in Palestine started in 1965, when the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) was established as a body within the PLO.

In the late 1970s, a new form of women's organization emerged known as the Women's Committees. The initial goal of the women's committees was to mobilize large numbers of Palestinian women around the issues of national rights and women's rights. These committees are affiliated to various Palestinian factions and political parties. Most of these committees are said to be socialist in their political orientation. They have developed various programmes, such as running a domestic violence hotline, and have been actively campaigning on issues of violence against women, as well as, working on issues of democracy. The committees work together with various NGOs.⁴

In the early 1990s, another form of secular women's organization was established to meet new needs identified by independent women scholars. These organisations have different, more specific, goals. Among these organizations are the Women's Studies Centre, which invests in relative research and the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), which provides legal aid services, social work and health counselling.⁵

When the Oslo Accords, also known as the 'Declaration of Principles', were signed in September 1993, Palestinian women drafted and approved a 'Document of Principles on Women's Legal Status', also called the 'Women's Charter,' or 'Women's Declaration of Principles'. They aimed at drawing up a women's Bill of Rights for the autonomous period and the independent state, based on the International Bill of Human Rights, and the

⁴ Allabadi 2008: 182.

⁵ Ibid.

UN CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).

The Charter has served as a basic document for the women's movement strategy and action plan, particularly for those groups affiliated to Fatah and to the left-wing factions. They also use it in their lobbying and networking within the Palestinian Parliament - the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) - to change the legislation relating to women. In addition, Palestinian women's organizations have been somewhat successful, as well. They have succeeded in achieving the right to be elected to Palestinian governing bodies. Within the past decade, Palestinian women have played a significant role in the 1996 and 2006 national elections.

Palestinian women succeeded, in 2005, in achieving a quota for women of 20 percent for both the legislative and municipal elections. Two seats per local council were set aside for women. The quota system has proven to be an important means of increasing women's representation, not only in parliament, but also in the local councils. It has also given the political parties a stimulus to recruit more women into their ranks, ultimately gaining recognition for a new quota system aimed at correcting historical gender imbalances in their society.⁶

In Palestine, as in many Arab societies, secular women bring pressure to bear on the authorities to enforce a secular family code, instead of a *Shari'a*-based law, which many secular feminists see as weighted against women's rights.

The main concerns of these feminists are issues like:

⁶ Allabadi 2008: 188.

1. The right to initiate divorce;
2. the right to maintain custody of children, even after the age of ten;
3. equal right of inheritance;
4. freedom of movement.

These concerns are, of course, not the privilege of secular women alone. Islamist feminists tackle these same questions, especially divorce rights and custody, but in a different way. For example, whereas secular women oppose any restriction on women's mobility, most Islamist women believe that women should have their husband's permission to travel, and unmarried women should have the permission of their male guardians.

When a widespread debate on the Palestinian passport law was going on throughout the country, Islamist women supported the law wholeheartedly. In their words, "it is the man's obligation to protect his female relatives, according to our religion, and we must respect this." However, secular women opposed this law, and described it as reactionary and discriminating against women.⁷

Islamic feminism

Dr. Margot Badran, a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, defines Islamic feminism as a feminist discourse, and a practice articulated within an Islamic paradigm. According to her, Islamic feminism derives its understanding and mandate from the Qur'an, seeks rights and justice for women, and for men, in the totality of their existence.⁸

⁷ Allabadi 2008: 190–191.

⁸ Badran 2002.

The term "Islamic feminism" began to be visible in the 1990s in various global locations. Iranian scholars Afsaneh Najmabadeh, and Ziba Mir-Hosseini, explained the rise and use of the term Islamic feminism in Iran; Saudi Arabian scholar Mai Yamani used the term in her book *Feminism and Islam*, in 1996. Turkish scholars, like Nilüfer Göle in *The Forbidden Modern* (published in Turkish in 1991, and in English in 1996), used the term "Islamic feminism" in her writings to describe a new feminist paradigm they detected emerging in Turkey.

Some Muslim women describe their project of advancing gender equality and social justice as Islamic feminism. Others do not call this Islamic feminism, but describe it as a project of re-reading the Qur'an, or women-centred readings of religious texts. The producers of Islamic feminist discourse include those who may, or may not, accept the Islamic feminist label or identity.

The basic argument of Islamic feminism is that the Qur'an affirms the principle of equality of all human beings, but that the practice of equality of women and men has been impeded or subverted by patriarchal ideology and practices. Islamic jurisprudence, *fiqh*, consolidated in its classical form in the 9th century, was, itself, heavily saturated with the patriarchal thinking and practices of the day. It is this patriarchal jurisprudence that has had an effect to the various contemporary formulations of the *Shari'a*.

The *hadiths*, the reported sayings and acts of the Prophet Muhammad, have also often been used to shore up patriarchal ideas and practices. Sometimes the *hadiths* are of questionable provenance or reliability, and sometimes they are used out of context, thus distorting the original purpose of the *hadith*. One of the priorities of Islamic feminism is to go straight to Islam's holy text, the Qur'an, in an effort to retrieve its egalitarian message, or to critically examine the tradition and sort out un-

reliable or misunderstood *hadiths*. Some researchers focus exclusively on the Qur'an, others examine the various interpretations and formulations of the Islamic Law, while others focus on re-examining the *hadith*.

The basic methodologies of this Islamic feminism are the classic Islamic methodologies of *ijtihad*, independent reasoning, and investigation of religious sources, and *tafsir*, interpretation of the Qur'an. Used along with these methodologies are the methods and tools common to Western research, i.e. linguistics, history, literary criticism, sociology, anthropology etc.

In practice, Islamic feminist hermeneutics have taken three approaches: re-reading the verses of the Qur'an to correct false stories in common circulation; citing and emphasizing the verses that enunciate the equality of women and men; and deconstructing verses attentive to male and female differences that have been commonly interpreted in ways that justify male domination.

In re-examining the Qur'an and *hadith*, Islamic feminists are, by promoting the notion that violence against women is indeed anti-Islamic, providing convincing arguments that Islam does not condone violence against women. This alone will not put an end to violence, but it is one among many weapons against it, and is crucial in the process of changing the attitudes of men and women towards violence in general, and domestic violence in particular.⁹

Margot Badran is, no doubt, one of the researchers who regard Islamic feminism in an extremely positive way. But, some other researchers and activists take quite a different approach to

⁹ Badran 2002.

Islamic feminism, and, especially, to the idea of mixing religion and politics. Dr. Fadwa Allabadi is one of the latter.

Dr. Fadwa Allabadi also dates the emergence of Islamic feminism in the early 1990s, but she relates its development to the global escalation in Islamic fundamentalism.

A number of women's Islamic organizations affiliated with Hamas and Islamic Jihad were launched in the 1990s, and they have attracted many female Muslims. Affiliating themselves with these political movements has given these women access to educational and job-training programmes funded by Hamas, and encouraged them to finish school, and to attend university. Yet, at the same time, their legal rights are restricted to those laid down in the Qur'an.

Muslim feminists have decided to uphold *Shari'ah* as the basis of the legal system. Even though agreeing with certain amendments on personal status law, their struggle is to ensure proper implementation of Islamic law. They also focus on adequate levels of education, so that women are aware of their legal rights.

Islamist feminism in Palestine is similar to other Islamist feminisms in the Middle East. They construct their discourse on gender by trying to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, and reconcile two sets of principles: the traditional and patriarchal religious conception of women's nature, role and rights, and the new modern understanding of Muslim women's social and political roles.¹⁰

According to Allabadi, Hamas admitted for the first time in 1999 that women were oppressed, and that they had reason to

¹⁰ Tohidi, 2002.

struggle against discrimination.¹¹ Now, female Hamas candidates say they have inherited the mantle of women's rights. "It is your role to fight corruption, make reform, and avenge humiliation, like the women who took revenge on the streets of Tel Aviv, Netanya, and Jerusalem," University Professor Mariam Saleh, a Hamas candidate, exhorted at an all-women Hamas rally in Nablus, a week before the Palestinian vote.¹² Some moderate women speak in calmer words, but the fundamental principle for Muslim feminists seems to be "Islam is the solution to all our problems in life," as Mariam Saleh has put it.¹³

In its election agenda, Hamas addressed women's rights in education, work, inheritance and the right to take up decision-making positions. It emphasized women's roles in society as equal to men's roles.

The majority of Palestinians are Muslims, and many will be content with talk of enhancing the influence of Islam. These trends, however, affect secular feminists, as well as Christian Palestinian women, and their struggle to achieve women's rights.

There seems to be an active struggle between secular feminists and Islamic feminists in Palestine. Secular feminists seem to be frustrated because they have worked in politics for decades and now find many young women turning to a starkly different Islamic vision of empowerment and equality. Some feminists are of the opinion that the promotion of secularism is, therefore, an important vehicle to protect society from religion's intervention in people's lives. They fear that women's rights will be trampled under a new form of patriarchal Islamic fundamentalism that has swept through the nation.

¹¹ Allabadi 2008: 194.

¹² Cambanis 2006.

¹³ Cambanis 2006.

Some Muslim feminists have suggested modifications to *Sharī'a* law. They believe in the possibility of gender equality and minority rights within an Islamic reformist framework, and propose a compromise solution. Other Islamic women reject any amendments, and emphasize that Islam must be the determining source of legislation.

The secularists, however, reject the consolidation of the *Sharī'a* law, as it gives patriarchal authority more power over the private sphere of Palestinian civil society. Instead, they argue for a platform of secular and legal rights for women to be decided in the PLC.

In the first national elections, the argument according to Professor Allabadi was between secular feminists and men who wanted to protect their domination of political and social power. Ten years later, in the second national elections in 2006, the debate turned to one between secular women and Islamist women. Dr. Allabadi argues that the involvement of Islamist women in politics is not aimed at enhancing women's political and social power, but an attempt to legitimize the state's gender policy. In other words, "Islamic feminism works with the political system of Hamas, which restricts personal freedom. Islamic feminism legitimizes this system, and ignores the repressive contexts of the social and political climate in Palestine."¹⁴

Many secular feminists were worried after the 2006 elections, because they did not want to be subjected to religious restrictions. Many of those committed to a democratic system noted that they have to accept the results of the elections, although they do not want religion to dominate their lives. Many women who support secular, radical groups respect Hamas women

¹⁴ Allabadi 2008: 193.

candidates and their ideology, but are wary of their wish to dictate how other women should live their lives.

There is a diversity of women's movements and feminist ideologies in Palestine. Not all women see the solution for the improvement of women's position in society in the same way; neither do all women live in similar conditions in Palestine. It takes sincere and open negotiations between the groups to avoid an open clash between secular feminism and religious feminism.

Islamic feminism advocates women's rights, gender equality, and social justice, using Islamic argumentation as its paramount discourse. Secular feminists stress the distinction between personal observance of religion and the political sphere of institutionalized religion. Nevertheless, some of the specific goals of Islamic feminists are the same as those articulated earlier by secular feminists, such as changes in various national, Muslim, personal status codes.

Finnish feminism

Finland's reputation as a pioneer of women's rights is based on its position as the first European country in which women gained the right to vote and stand in parliamentary elections. A strong tradition of parliamentary representation has been maintained until the present day, since the proportion of women MPs is still relatively high. Until the late 1970s, it was higher than in any other Western country. The representation of women in the Finnish Parliament is now third in the world after Rwanda and Sweden, but it is first in the number of female ministers.

In Finland, the central issues debated by feminist movements have been, for example, ending the formal custodianship of the husband over his wife, which was effective until 1930, co-education for girls and boys, improving the status of illegitimate children, raising the age of protection for girls, eliminating prostitution, improving women's education and opening new professions to women.

More recently, a minor, but highly symbolic, debate around women's rights concerned the reform of legislation governing family names, i.e. women's right to keep their family names in marriage.

The Law on Marriage of 1929 had provided that a wife took her husband's name on marriage, or combined his name with hers. A government measure to modify this scheme in the interests of gender equality was submitted to Parliament in 1981. The proposition was that husband and wife would either retain their own names, or adopt one of them as a common family name. The family names issue attracted considerable public attention in Finland. The government's proposal was opposed on the grounds that all family members should have the same name, although this was also an option in the reform.¹⁵

The government was compelled to withdraw its proposition, but the measure was resubmitted in 1984 with a modification - the possibility of combining names on marriage - and it was passed the following year. The strong emotions around this discussion illustrate the strength of patriarchal thinking in Finland still present in the 1980s.

Issues currently debated by Finnish feminists include issues like:

¹⁵ Bradley 1998: 209.

1. Equal salary for equal jobs;
2. equal possibilities of upward mobility in working life;
3. high quality day care services;
4. equal rights for sexual minorities and gender minorities.

Many feminist organizations arrange public seminars and discussions on current topics, cultural events, and exhibitions of female artists, thus, making women's culture more visible. But, as in Palestine, they also offer concrete help to women through various services, like legal counselling or crisis centres for women who have been sexually abused.

The vast majority of Finnish people belong to the Lutheran Christian church. Religious feminists in Finland are involved in politics but their goals are not centred on establishing legal reforms. It would be misleading to say that religion has nothing to do with Finnish family law, but the discourse around legislative changes is seldom openly religious. However, strong religious arguments were used in the spring of 2009, when the Finnish Parliament proposed an amendment to the adoption law allowing second parent adoption.¹⁶ The most intense arguments against the amendment have been based on religious grounds, although the Finnish Lutheran Church has declared that second parent adoption might be accepted in cases where it is in the best interests of the child.

In the Middle East, the relationship between Muslim activists, and the established religious authorities, is sometimes quite critical. In Finland, this is the case between religious feminists and the state church. Female priests were accepted officially in 1986 in Finland, but some of the male priests still refuse to officiate the service with a female colleague. Christian homosex-

¹⁶ A legal procedure that allows same-sex couples (gay and lesbian parents) to adopt their partner's biological or adopted children.

ual activists often criticize the church harshly for not fully accepting homosexual couples.

Finland is often presented as a model country of gender equality. Some religious Finns think that it is because Finland is a Lutheran majority country. My own opinion is that Finland has achieved a great deal in the field of gender equality, but it is not because of any religious affiliation. I am convinced that the more secular a society is, the more chance it has to create a situation of equal rights, not only for women, but for all minorities as well.

Feminism in Finland, nowadays, is a complex phenomenon. There are feminist groups who object to the so-called state feminism of the country. State feminism means the assimilation of feminist efforts and inclinations into the general politics of the state, and the way in which women's movements act in co-operation with the state, working from inside the state structures, and aiming to change the society from the inside. This kind of state feminism is not unknown in the Middle East either; the way Syrian secular feminist movements have worked for several decades is very close to this model.

Some groups think that Finnish state feminism consolidates the existing power relations between the genders and, in fact, only re-assert the present situation. There are new trends in feminism in Finland, as in many other Western countries. We speak about post-feminism, which refers to feminists who consider simply that "women are people". Thus, views that separate the sexes rather than unite them are considered sexist, rather than feminist.

We speak about postcolonial feminism, which argues that oppression relating to the colonial experience, particularly racial, class, and ethnic oppression, has marginalized women in post-

colonial societies. They challenge the assumption that gender oppression is the primary force of patriarchy. Postcolonial feminists object to portrayals of women of non-Western societies as passive and voiceless victims, and the portrayal of Western women as modern, educated and empowered.

There are anti-pornography, sex-positive, radical, liberal, multi-racial, social, Marxist, libertarian, post-structural and post-modern feminist movements. In addition, there are Christian feminist movements which base their ideology on the Christian faith, but, at the same time, criticize the gender policies of the church. Every one of these has its own place in the socio-political discourse in Finland.

As we have seen, women are an extremely heterogeneous entity – to the point that the precious ambitions and goals of some women's groups might be the nightmare of some other groups. In a process of building a viable and equitable state or society, the most crucial concern is to allow free debate between different interest groups. There is no one voice that could represent all women in Palestine, or in Finland. No one group should ever have the right to represent all women in the society, on the other hand, the voice of no women's group should ever be silenced. This is one thing that unites women all around the world.

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The One-State, One-Society Option: The Only Solution to Restore Genuine Palestinian Rights

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I want to start with two comments:

- (1) What I present below is a personal position of a concerned Palestinian, which is a result of long years of reflection, thought and soul searching. I hope that these deliberations will provoke equally deep thoughts and reflection among all those concerned about our future. I am not a member of any of the Palestinian political factions competing for control of an imaginary authority, nor do I subscribe to the positions they hold. I am, however, committed to struggling, with all who share these views, for a Society-State that is democratic, just, non-exploitative, self-generating, self-reliant, free and independent from external domination, in historical Palestine. In other words, I am committed to struggling for the dismantlement of the existing system of colonial apartheid, and all forms of racist political, spatial, economic, and psychological separation on the historical land of Palestine.
- (2) I have been, and I am now, focusing on the One-State-Society option in historical Palestine, not because the proposed, so called "two-state solution" has failed to materialize; it was a failed idea from the outset, because it does not come close to provide a **just** solution to the historical evil of

ethnic cleansing and continued apartheid, which was, and continues to be practiced against the Palestinian people. I believe that the ultimate solution should emanate from clear “strategic objectives” to our struggle, to which we ought to be committed, and with which any proposed solution should be coherent.

The overall objectives of our collective national struggle, to which I am committed, seek to achieve the legitimate historical Palestinian rights, which, as used here, are the right of **all** Palestinians to live free and independent in their **historical land**, understood to be an integral part of the whole Arab Homeland (*Watan*), without the hegemony of any force, be it political, economic, or military.

This is premised on a number of prerequisites:

- **All** activities resulting from the illegal and criminal Zionist-Western colonization of Palestine, since Palestine was targeted at the turn of the twentieth century, including land and water theft for exclusive Jewish-Zionist settlements, political and legal structures, displacement and replacement of indigenous populations, privileged access and exploitation of natural resources, etc, are null and void, and should be dismantled.
- The **unhindered return** of all Palestinian individuals and groups who were forced by the Zionist colonial enterprise, with the active support of the Western imperialist centers, to abandon their homes and properties; and to exercise their inalienable natural right to **acquire these properties back**;
- The unobstructed productive use of their lands and other natural resources for the indigenous development of the society;

- The total freedom of all the people of historical Palestine to chose the type of their governance system, without any coercion or prejudice;
- The safeguarding of the seminal principle of separating religious beliefs from the political system, and the use of religion as the basis of government;
- The legal guarantee of equal rights of individuals and groups for all minorities living in the new Palestinian Society;
- The insistence on the basic principle that majority-minority relations must be based on equality and non-exploitation.

It is clear that the essence of this discussion is about the type of Future Society I (and, hopefully, we) aspire to see developed in the land of Palestine. My focus is not, necessarily, on the type of the “nation-state” for which we should be longing. Basically, I believe that “nation-states” are anachronistic, and will eventually disappear as organizing structures of human groups. This, therefore, is a discussion at the level of concepts; it is not meant to be a discussion about a “political plan” that may be implementable over the next decade or so. It is my belief that unless basic concepts, and our understanding of them, are clarified and internalized, no “political plan”, whatever it is, can be sustained. Moreover, and to be crystal clear from the outset, this discussion does not, nor should it, undermine or minimize the urgent need for heightening the serious ongoing popular struggle against the Zionist-American occupation and domination of our lands (and against all their local and international agents and brokers), and all its symbols and structures (for example, the illegal Wall of separation, the illegal Jewish-Zionist colonies, etc.).¹

¹ See, for example, my latest article on 15 July 2008 in <http://www.palestinechronicle.com>.

From this perspective, a number of essential components require **deconstructing and careful reconstructing**, in order for us to proceed, comprehensively and without ambiguity. I focus, primarily, on three main components:

1. The nature of the **Territory** of Palestine (in the spatial-historical sense);
2. The composition of the **People** existing on the Territory of Palestine;
3. The type of **Entity**, i.e. the Political-Economic-Social Structural configuration organizing people's existence.

The Territory

1. Since the Arab region was atomized into non-coherent and unviable units of "nation-states" by the Sykes-Picot arrangements of 1916, and since the historical land of Palestine was targeted for take-over by the Zionist, Western colonial enterprise, all proposed solutions for the "Palestine Question", since the Peel Commission recommendations in 1937, through the UN Partition Plan in 1947, and culminating in the Oslo Accords in 1993 (and following), that were premised on dividing the land of Palestine, were unjust, and did not satisfy the basic human, social, cultural and economic rights of the Palestinian people. Their objective was, and continues to be, to arrive at an arrangement acceptable to the Western capitalist centers and dominant powers, which will help create a beachhead in Palestine, by supporting the establishment of a Zionist-Ashkenazi regime that required the "dismantling of Palestinian communal life and the pauperization of the bulk of its people"².

² Khalidi, Walid, "Thinking the Unthinkable: A Sovereign Palestinian State", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 4, July 1978, New York, P. 697.

2. I am using the **Territory of Historical Palestine** to refer to the areas of “Southern Syria”, which were labeled as “Palestine” by the end of WWI. Thus, Historical Palestine, as used here, encompasses the entire area which the British, under pressure from the Zionist movement then, insisted to have placed under its Mandate in 1922, or what is referred to currently as the West Bank, Israel, and the Gaza Strip.
3. This Territory was an organic and an inseparable part of the Arab Homeland (*Al-watan al-Arabi*) for the Arab nation, including the Arab Palestinian people. Currently existing Arab “nation-states”, or “mini-nation-states” in the region are artificial configurations created by, and reflecting the power balance of, competing dominant Western imperial forces of the time.

The People

The Future Society in Palestine will be composed of:

- All Palestinians and Jews who lived in the land of Palestine before 1948, and who continue to live in it;
- All Palestinians who were expelled, or were forced to flee, as a result of the ethnic cleansing process and dismemberment of indigenous Palestinian society, in preparation for the creation of the Zionist-Ashkenazi State in 1947-1948;
- All other population groups, regardless of their religious or sectarian affiliation, who accept, and are committed to the essence of the “Strategic Objectives”, delineated above.

This is premised on the following principles:

1. As a Palestinian, I maintain that the indigenous Palestinian Arab population is willing to make a historical concession, stating that in spite of the criminal and unjust suffering they were subjected to by the creation and maintenance of the

Zionist-Ashkenazi State, they are willing to live with the non-Zionist Jews in Palestine as equals.

2. The just “Right of Return” (UN resolution 194) of all willing Palestinians is implemented and enforced, and the racist and exclusivist “Law of Return”, which the State of Israel legislated in 1952, for the benefit of Jews only, is annulled and dismantled.
3. The notion of the “Jewish people”³ is a historical myth, created and perpetuated by the racist Zionist settler colonial movement, to justify the colonization and theft of the land of the indigenous people of historical Palestine, and the creation of a beachhead for the extension of Western imperialist hegemony, under the pretext of “in-gathering” of Jewish “exiles”.
4. The non-Zionist Jews in the Future Society in Palestine constitute an ordinary group of people, distinguished only by adherence to a religious belief. Accordingly, they do not constitute an “ethnic” or “national” group, just like the Christian minority in Palestine, or the Muslim population in France, the US, the UK, Germany, Finland, etc, nor will they

³ See, for example, the article by Tom Segev “An invention called ‘the Jewish People’” in www.haaretz.com (1.3.2008), which is a commentary on the new book by Tel Aviv University historian Shlomo Zand under the title *When and How Was the Jewish People Invented?* (*Comment le peuple juif fut inventé* (Fayard, Paris, 2008), and the interview with the author in *Haaretz* (13.7.2008), and Professor Zand’s article in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 2008. Dr Zand argues that the idea of a Jewish nation – whose need for a safe haven was originally used to justify the founding of the state of Israel – is a myth invented little more than a century ago. He argues, further, that the Jews were never exiled from the Holy Land, that most of today’s Jews have no historical connection to the land called Israel.

be eligible to claim a “right of self-determination”, as if they constitute a “national” group.⁴ If they chose to live with us, they will have the guaranteed right to exercise their cultural and religious values and customs, with freedom and respect, like any other minority with different religious beliefs and values.

5. Populations of Jewish faith existing in other parts of the world are an integral part of the countries in which they exist; they have no historical or religious claim over the land of Palestine, as if they were part of a “disbursed people”. The “historical disbursal” of the “Jews” from the land of Palestine, as has been shown recently, is equally mythical; their “coerced” claim, so far, has been putative and fabricated.

The Entity

During the last hundred years, or since the onslaught of the Zionist project, a number of proposals about the nature of the entity (primarily political) to organize the life of the population in the land of Palestine were advanced.⁵

⁴ On this and related issues, the reader is directed to see the illuminating lengthy study by Professor of Law, W. T. Mallison, titled “The Zionist-Israel juridical claims to constitute ‘the Jewish people’ nationality entity and to confer membership in it: Appraisal in public international law”, 32 *George Washington Law Review*, 1964, pp. 983-1075. “The ‘Jewish people’ membership claim is invalid, consequently, under the existing criteria of public international law. In the same way, supposed nationality concepts such as ‘the Christian people’ would be equally invalid.” (p. 1060).

⁵ For a summary of the evolution of the “bi-national” idea in Palestine, see Irene Gendzier, “Palestine and Israel: The Binational Idea”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. IV, No. 2, Winter 1975, pp. 12-35. For a summary of the evolution and debate of the “Non-sectarian, Democratic State”, see Alain Gresh, *The PLO: the Struggle Within*. London: Zed Books, 1985, esp. Part I, pp. 9-57; and the position paper titled *Towards a Democratic State in*

I shall focus my discussion today on the proposal that shows the most promise of being coherent with what I elucidated above as our “strategic objectives”. Then, I shall elaborate briefly on the reasons why the “two-state” idea and the “bi-national state” idea are incoherent with the “strategic objectives” to which I aspire.

First, The option that shows the most promise in being coherent with our “strategic objectives”: The “Democratic ‘Secular’ State-Society” Idea

This idea surfaced early in the heart of the Palestinian revolution, following the military defeat of the Arab states in 1967 and the Israeli military occupation of the rest of Palestine, the Egyptian Sinai and the Syrian Golan. Premises of this idea generated a “lively debate” over four years, until 1971.⁶ However, the debate ended around then, by and large; as it was replaced a few years later by the active discussion of the “two-state” idea; and it was never resurrected again in force until the last 10-15 years, and without much elaboration. The earlier attempts to infuse more clarity in its premises were not sustained, and thus it remained nothing more than a slogan. The basic premises of this idea, and the problems they generate, are the following:

- The establishment of a modern “democratic” (and non-sectarian) state in historical Palestine, where the emphasis is on “democratic” and not much on “secular”.

Palestine for Moslems, Christians and Jews, which was contributed by Fateh to the Second World Conference on Palestine, held in Amman, 2-6 September, 1970. For an elaboration of the “Socialist Solution in Palestine”, see the series of articles in www.Kanaanonline.org.

⁶ See Alain Gresh (quoted earlier), p. 50, for the most comprehensive discussion of that period.

- Palestinian acceptance that “Israeli Jews”, as a religious group, had a place in the “future Palestine”, just like the “Christians” and the “Muslims”. The conceptual problem lies not with the “Jews”, “Christians” or “Muslims”, who are the indigenous subjugated constituents of historical Palestine, but with the “Israeli Jews”. Thus, the earlier attempts focused on distinguishing between “Jews”, as a religious group, and “Zionists”, as the enforcers of an oppressive, colonizing, ideology. Hence, there was an earlier emphasis on “secular” or “non-sectarian”. Without further clarifications of this premise, however, the problem remains in dividing the population into sects and in terms of religious identities.
- Since this was perceived from the outset as a “liberating” idea, it was made amply clear that a pre-requisite for the realization of this idea is the dismantlement of the existing Zionist structure in Palestine, i.e. its legal, economic, and social apartheid components, and all its illegal results since 1948. Note here the distinction between “the structure”, or the overarching formal apparatus, and the “people” living under that structure, i.e. you can dismantle the “structure” without eliminating the “people”.
- Another pre-requisite for the realization of this idea, is the successful implementation and enforcement of the Palestinian Right of Return. Although it was not emphasized as a precondition, in the original formulation; but it was assumed, by implication.
- Thus, with a clear and sober elaboration, I believe that a **Democratic, Non-Sectarian State-Society** in historical Palestine is the only idea that has the potential of being coherent with our “strategic objectives”. This is the only idea that could release current Palestine from the grip of Zionist-Ashkenazi-Western political and economic domination, and could return the natural resources of land and water, and the means of production to the legitimate control of the people for the indigenous development of their society.

Second, why the “Two-State” and the “Bi-National State” ideas are incoherent with our “strategic objectives”:

The “two-state” idea, which has been advanced by the PLO since 1988, is premised basically on the following: the physical partitioning of the historical land of Palestine; the actual dividing of the Palestinian people into disconnected and isolated political-spatial categories; the acquiescence to the non-applicability of the Right of Return; the continuation, maintenance and reward of the racist Zionist-Ashkenazi state on our stolen land; the continued exploitation of the marginalized and poor classes, and the increasing gap between the rich who dominate available resources through corruption and cooperation with Zionist capitalists, and the poor, who are steadily becoming poorer; and the submission to the hegemony of the US and other major Western imperial powers over Palestine and the entire Arab and Muslim region.

On the other hand, the basic and major premise of the “Bi-national State” idea is that there are two competing “nationalities” in Palestine/Israel, a “Jewish nationality” and a “Palestinian nationality”, and each should be recognized as having a right for political and cultural autonomy that would lead to self-determination. This premise assumes parity between the two “nationalities”, and no domination of one group over the other. This raises a number of serious and problematic ambiguities:

- It starts by accepting the existing current Zionist structure of control, discrimination and domination, and it does not challenge the Zionist-Ashkenazi State that was created by force, and through ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Palestinian population, but it rewards it by accepting it.
- The “bi-national” idea is based on the same Zionist mythical premise that the Jews of the world constitute a “people”, or

a “nationality”, and that they have a historical and religious claim to the historical land of Palestine.

- There is no clarity about in which territory this “bi-national” idea will be applied: within the “borderless” existing Zionist-Ashkenazi State, or within the territory of historical Palestine. Each has implications to the “potential” of realizing genuine Palestinian rights.
- The dismantling of the existing Zionist structure of apartheid and its illegal, unequal, and unjust control over natural and material resources, and the means of production, is not assumed to be a precondition for it.
- The Palestinian Right of Return is not emphasized as a precondition.
- “Bi-nationalism”, according to these premises, has the potential of being another form of continued apartheid, and not necessarily democratic.

And finally, why do I support the idea of One Democratic, Non-Sectarian, Socialist State-Society in historical Palestine?

Because I support a just, moral and sustained solution that embodies the potential of restoring genuine Palestinian rights in their historical patrimony. Such a solution:

1. **Rectifies** the historical and continuous evil and injustice done to my Palestinian people;
2. **Preserves** the geographical and territorial integrity of Palestine as part of the Arab Homeland;
3. **Insists** on the Right of Return of all Palestinians to their lands and properties from which they were forcefully and criminally evicted;

4. **Dismantles** all Zionist and Jewish-Israeli structures and laws that were built on inequality and on the exclusion of Palestinian Arabs, with the purpose of imposing and maintaining a hegemonic control of the Zionist-Ashkenazi state over the entire region;
5. **Allows** and encourages mutual living and existence between the Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews in the historical land of Palestine, within a democratic, non-sectarian, equal, non-repressive, non-exploitative, just and open society;
6. **Promises** genuine and sustainable development of the territory of Palestine, for the benefit of all its inhabitants, especially the poor and the marginalized, by focusing on the effective, productive and purposeful use of land and water, for the full employment potential of its workers;
7. **Sets** an important human example of how antagonists may live together harmoniously in a delineated physical space, once racist and exclusionary ideology and practices are expunged.

Fateh at the Crossroads: Opportunities and Possibilities

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1. Introduction

Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fateh), which espoused a Palestinian nationalist ideology in which Palestine would be liberated by the actions of Palestinian Arabs became the dominant force in Palestinian politics after the 1967 Six-Day War. It joined the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and won the leadership role in 1969, and represented since then the mainstream of the Palestinian politics.

Fateh, like any other political and revolutionary movement, has gone through stages. But this movement and due to many reasons has ended up with a crisis or a deadlock at different organizational, structural and political levels. This crisis reflected itself in the 2006 elections when Fateh lost the elections and consequently its role as the dominant political movement. In fact, there is a feeling among many of its members that Fateh is at a crossroads.

In this contribution, we attempt to seek opportunities and possibilities for Fateh. We explore this issue from different angles, and discuss the deep political and generational crisis. Fateh's cadre feel the need for reform and renovation at financial, organizational, political and strategic levels. This has been ex-

pressed in many internal meetings and within the organizational bodies like the Revolutionary Council (RC) and the Central Committee (CC) and of course more strongly at the grassroots level. But setting the course of this agenda means challenging the *status quo*.

Fateh is considered by most of secular and national political movements and parties as the back bone of the Palestinian National Movement, as pioneers in the revolution, Intifada and negotiations. Most of the Palestinian prisoners in the Israeli Jails are from the cadre of Fateh. Therefore, Fateh was not seen by any means as an internal Fateh affairs but a public political affair for all national movements. Henceforth, a number of public debates and discussions took place to review the roots and explore solutions for Fateh's crisis. In some occasions, major components of the movement namely vision, structure, governing body and a gap across generations in terms of ideology, missions and positions of the hierarchy has been debated.¹

Fateh led the struggle to achieve the independent decision. In fact, since it was established it refused to be dictated to by any party, Arab or otherwise, that aimed to achieve its regional goals at the expense of pan-Arab interests. Fateh believes that the Zionist movement constitutes the biggest threat against not only the Palestinian national security but also against the security of the Arab world. It also believes that a legitimate Palestinian entity forms the most important weapon that Arabs have against Israel.

Fateh confirmed also the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people include the right to self-determination, the right of return, the establishment of a sovereign state with Jerusalem as its capital. It also launched the revolution that will inevitably

¹ See PASSIA, 2005.

lead to the liberation of Palestine. This revolution takes different forms to be carried out at the organizational, military, political, and diplomatic levels. The complementary nature of the different forms of revolution guarantees the continuity of the struggle until victory is achieved. The 1987 Intifada as a popular revolution imposed some changes at the local, regional and international levels. It led to the declaration of independence after the disengagement decision made by Jordan. The Intifada also forced Israel to recognize the PLO as a peace partner with whom it had to sign a peace agreement based on UN resolutions 242, 338 and the principle of land for peace. Once these resolutions are implemented, a Palestinian state will be established after the removal of the Israeli occupation and its settlements.

The stalling and deception policy Israel has practiced since the peace project started emptied the project of its positive aspects. Israel continued to build new settlements and expand the present ones as part of a systematic attempt to impose the version of peace it envisages. It aimed to divide the occupied territories into cantons surrounded by settlements. Such a situation will not allow for any kind of territorial continuity that is the pre-requisite for establishing the Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital on the basis of UN Resolution 181.

At Camp David II², the moment of truth that the two parties arrived at led to a confrontation. The Palestinian leadership refused the Clinton-Barak's proposals that ignored, among other things, the right of return and the Palestinian interests in Jerusalem. When Barak's government failed to impose its

² A Middle East Peace Summit at Camp David of July 2000 took place between U.S President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. It was an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to negotiate a "final status settlement" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

'peace plan', it used its military capability to lower the ambitions and expectations of the Palestinian people.

Some senior cadre believes that the roots of the current problems of Fateh is political and as far back as the controversial 1993 Oslo Accords. While the early euphoria of a new peace was the ideal climate for holding elections and consultations on Fateh's political platform, but this there was a fear of exposing its rifts. Fateh was like a sick person, afraid of life-threatening surgery; half of the members of the CC opposed the Oslo Accords, without the consensus building that was called for, the secret deal negotiated by Arafat and a few confidantes became the faction's litmus test for survival.

Others believe that the deadlock of Fateh is a mixture of political and organizational factors. The two state solution, Fateh's platform since difficult deliberations in the late eighties, is being slowly diminished by the annexation wall that Israel is constructing in the West Bank. This wall effectively divides the dream of Palestinian statehood into several severed cantons. The Palestinian National Authority (PNA), the institution that Fateh touted as the kernel of Palestinian statehood, has been diminished by repeated Israeli incursions into Palestinian areas of control, Israel's refusal to refund most Palestinian tax revenues since the start of confrontations in 2000, and the failure of negotiations. In addition, Fateh was associated to all faults of the PNA as some people believed that Fateh is the PNA and the PNA is Fateh.

Furthermore, some people believe that the problem is in the selection of tools. In fact, many saw the Intifada as Fateh's means of stopping the slow drain of support. The majority of Palestinians supported both negotiations with Israel and an armed revolt. Out of this understanding, two latent tendencies in Fateh were encouraged to grow: one that posed itself as the

vanguard of the revolt against the Israeli occupation and a loyal advocate of political reform within the Palestinian leadership, and another that maintained the steady course of moderate dialogue with Israel and its American allies. This fact added another dimension of split of the movement tendencies.

2. Fateh Deadlock

The core question is to identify the elements of the crisis in Fateh and to seek opportunities or possibilities for a way to democratize the rules in the movement as a path to overcome it to explore the future of Fateh and its direction.

2.1 Crisis of Renovation

The petition to hold a new strategizing conference and elections is the rallying cry of Fateh's rank-and-file. It has been about two decades since the faction held its last elections. Membership in Fateh's most prestigious leadership bodies, the CC and RC, is contingent on nearly two decades of service and there are now dozens of party faithfuls that qualify. The current pressure is some type of stampede of generations. More common, however, is the linking of a generational handover to the broader goal of democratization and reform in Palestinian society itself.

2.2 Crisis of Identity

The sum of these calls to revamp Fateh are a challenge to the legitimacy of Fateh's CC. Fateh's political positions embrace the crafters of the Geneva Accords³, as well as the command-

³ It is an extra-governmental and therefore unofficial peace proposal meant to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It would give Palestinians almost all of

ers of the Aqsa Brigades, with little centralized authority to bind them. The result is slowly approaching chaos. What Fateh salvages from this current confusion will mark the faction's future course. Fateh is in trouble if that new course does not promise something new.

2.3 Crisis of Performance

Fatah has suffered from being associated with the perceived corruption and incompetence of the Palestinian Authority. The loss of the unifying Yasser Arafat has also allowed a rift to develop between the party's "old guard" of former exiles and its "new guard". The division became so bad after disputed party primaries in 2006 that the "new guard" initially registered their own list of candidates for the January legislative elections.

2.4 Crisis of Leadership

President Arafat consolidated his leadership by focusing on achieving complete control of the state apparatus that the Oslo process afforded the Palestinian Authority. Through his remarkable ability to manipulate and frustrate any potential dissenting elements within both the Fateh movement and the PLO/PNA leadership, President Arafat as the maestro of tactics, has succeeded in reducing government colleagues or political partners to mere employees and followers. This suspension of vital internal Palestinian political debate has contributed to a political cul-

the West Bank and Gaza Strip and part of Jerusalem, drawing Israel's borders close to what existed before the 1967 war. In return for removing most of the Israeli settlements in those areas, the Palestinians would limit their right of return to Israel to a number specified by Israel and will drop all other claims and demands from Israel. The Accord was officially launched on December 1, 1993 at a ceremony in Geneva. Amongst its creators are Israeli politician Yossi Beilin, one of the architects of the Oslo accords, and former Palestinian Authority minister Yasser Abed Rabbo.

ture in which any challenges to the leadership of the movement as a whole PLO/PNA or to the leadership of any of those political entities comprising the contemporary Palestinian scene, such as Fateh or Hamas, have been dismissed as diverting attention away from the Palestinian goal of national liberation. Thus, democratic politics has been equated with divisive and unpatriotic activity. As the leader of the Palestinian national movement for more than three decades, Arafat has inevitably become the symbol of Palestine and its people's struggle for independence. But as the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people becomes frailer physically and the movement he commands faces mounting internal and external challenges, there remains a conspicuous absence of any obvious successor.

Therefore, President Abbas inherited Fateh and PLO/PNA that was designed to a unique style of Arafat leadership. The two men had very different charismatic personalities and talents. In fact Abbas inherited divided movement, and unpopular authority with weak institutional setup. While accelerating events on the ground required proactive, popular and aggressive style of leadership, President Abbas seemed to be procrastinating in facing the real challenges at both Fateh and PNA dimensions. He has been viewed like a confused old man lost in the swirl of the uptown traffic. The once assertive being is now reduced to a mere cork upon a turbulent sea trapped between the many currents, and while he dithers Palestine slips away unnoticed as each hope is squelched. This style compromise strategy in solving the internal problems of Fateh created new value system based on usurpation and party spirit and led to lack of commitment in regard to the instructions and decisions of Fateh's governing bodies⁴.

⁴ Lack of commitment was seen in a number of occasions, amongst when a number of Fateh members gone for elections as independent candidates when they were not selected on Fateh's list despite of the decisions of the CC

3. Outcome of the Crisis

Fateh formed a Committee to Evaluate Elections 2006 outcome (CEE2006). This committee concluded that the political decision of going to the elections was hasty despite the fact that postponing the elections might not change the outcome. There is dualism in the position for most of the CC and RC members within and outside the framework. CEE2006 showed that on the eve of 2006 elections, Fateh was in a deep structural crisis and there was a continuous and systematic weakening to its legitimate references which threatened its hierarchy. All efforts to revive Fateh after elections were not effective, and lacked institutional and follow up mechanisms.

CEE2006 concluded also that the crisis was seen clearly in the performance of the central internal primary elections committee which was unable to integrate its work with the regional Fateh offices and failed to undertake transparent primaries. The primaries showed the conflict across Fateh's generations and frameworks and expressed the tribal behavior of candidates. The formation of two lists for the elections contributed to deepening the gap and the compromising approach of uniting the two lists contributed to the loss of elections through encouraging a number of Fateh members to go for elections as independent candidates which led to dispersion of votes⁵. Furthermore, a number of Fateh cadre were effectively working for candidates from other political factions. The CEE2006 mentioned also that all the divisions in Fateh on the eve of the elections and afterwards has nothing to do with the political positions; most of the differences were related to organizational

to dismiss each Fateh member who goes for elections as an independent. This was also seen when a number of Fateh legislators did not follow the instructions of the movements during the law making of 2006 elections.

⁵ The dispersion of votes led to losing 16 seats from Fateh to Hamas according to the CEE2006. .

matters and issues related to the competition on who should be in the driving seat.

The conflict appeared also in the management of the elections campaign where different personalities worked in different directions, and candidates were conflicting and negatively competing, the candidates worked each against the other. The election campaign did not integrate its work with regional offices of Fateh which led to dispersion of effort and consequently led to a poor elections campaign.

The CEE2006 recommended that importance of unifying the political message across different governing bodies, and activating internal bylaws including those related to the CC and RC. The position in the CC and the RC should not be prestigious but leading positions to activate Fateh and its dominant role in the Palestinian politics. It pointed out the importance of coherent and integrated work across different bodies and the importance of institutionalization of the governing bodies and their permanent committees. The work on the grassroots level was also recommended.

4. The Crossroad of Fateh

The analysis the Palestinian politics' map, and considering the perception of the Palestinian people, and taking into account most of the internal and external factors that affect Fateh, I can not see that Fateh is at a political crossroad; Fateh have never been a united ideological party; it is a typical Arab Palestinian tribe that is motivated by flock instinctive, where it gathers when facing external danger and tends to engage in internal interactions and competition during normal times. This in no way means that Fateh is in a good shape; it needs revolution of internal re-organizational movement to answer core

questions and meet the expectations of the Palestinian people, and to assume its historical role. But in all cases the answer of these questions is not likely to make dramatic change on its political line or organizational behavior.

5. Opportunities

Fateh has a historical opportunity to renovate and update; most external influential factors are in favor of successful conference for Fateh. All national movements and parties are praying for the success of Fateh because the failure means the failure of all national movements. After June 2007, all were uncovered, therefore President Abbas had a historical opportunity to make dramatic change on the movement structure, leadership and organizational levels, but this requires proactive and some times aggressive initiatives adopted by war leaders.

6. Possibilities

Fateh is divided on almost every thing, the need and ways of reform, the renovations schemes, tools of national struggle, and the place of the heavy weight mass of the movement (Homeland-Diaspora). But there is a consensus now that the conference is the kick-off towards exploring answers and solutions. Therefore, all possibilities are linked to the conference of Fateh; and here are the most likely scenarios:

1. If Fateh does not go for conference, the most likely scenario (scenario I) is that movement is likely to be divided into at least two different movements, one to assume the center in the Palestinian politics and one to maintain the current identity of Fateh.

2. If Fateh goes for the conference, two scenarios are envisaged:
 - Scenario II: Success of the conference and renovation of Fateh's leadership.
 - Scenario III: Failure of the conference and splitting Fateh into a number of small movements which is most likely to converge with scenario number one after a period of time.

In fact, the likelihood of each scenario depends in the first place on the way the CC will organize the conference, and if there will be maestro of tactics to run it smoothly. All the technical preparations has been already accomplished, including the political paper, national building programme, and the basic internal bylaws. But the most important exploding items that are not identified yet are the place of the conference (in homeland or in the diaspora) which reflects the conflict on the place of the center of gravity for the movement, and membership of the conference which reflects the conflict on who should be in the driving seat. Therefore, at least until now, Fateh is not fighting or debating its political line.

From the history of Fateh, and the indicators on the ground, one might predict a mixture of the above mentioned scenarios, where none will be fully satisfied and none will have a level of un-satisfaction that motivates a split in Fateh.⁶ In my opinion a modified improved version of the status quo is more likely to take place; i.e. new leadership mixed with all categories of Fateh with almost the same internal interactions and conflict of interest and with the same debate on the political line.

⁶ All Fateh senior cadre realise very well the history of the movement where all attempts during the last four decades to split Fateh or control it failed.

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The Agenda of Hamas

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“Hamas” is part of the Palestinian people movement against the Israeli occupation; it is also an extension of the international Muslim Brotherhood Movement. Failing to notice these two realities, it would be impossible to assess or understand the role of Hamas. The fact that Hamas is part of the Palestinian people movement needs to grow deeper and prevail over the fact that Hamas is part of the of Muslim Brotherhood; otherwise, Hamas will remain circling in a maze confused between adopting the Palestinian national project and the Islamic project which extends from Palestine to the Arab world, Indonesia and Pakistan, with Palestine making up a small drop in that sea.

The Muslim Brotherhood has been known as a conservative movement holding alliances with moderate countries, which have friendly links with the United States, against the Soviet Union and the Communist parties. But Hamas realized the importance of assuming a pure Palestinian role and making contributions to the Palestinian resistance against the occupation after the Iranian revolution and the demise of the national and communist movements and the rise of political Islam. It is well known that Hamas shunned away from the Palestinian struggle until the eruption of the first popular rebellion (Intifada) in December 1987. Had Hamas succeeded in integrating into the

Palestinian political system after the 2006 legislative elections, the national factor in Hamas would have overwhelmed the impact and influence of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Prior to the first Intifada, the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Palestine followed the international Muslim Brotherhood approach in the Islamization of the individual as a prerequisite before taking over authority and the Islamization of the society. The Muslim Brotherhood focuses on the individual rather than the ruling system since it believes that when Islam spreads among individuals and when people who follow Islam become a majority, it would be easier to seize power and declare Islamic Caliphate at which point it would be possible to defeat the occupation, and even eradicate Israel and liberate Palestine as an Islamic Waqf because the Jihad to liberate the land of Palestine is a duty entrusted to every Muslim. The fact that the Muslim Brotherhood focused on the individual and Islamization of the society before seizing power marked it as different from the Islamic Liberation Party which led a separate philosophy based on focusing all attention on power and rule and on the resurgence of the Islamic Caliphate which will find it easy to Islamize the society.

In order to comprehend what distinguishes Hamas, we need to know that Hamas emerged outside the realm of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and it did not show any interest in joining the PLO. Even when Hamas was forced to talk about this matter or when pushed to engage in a Palestinian internal dialogue, such as al-Khartoum Dialogue in 1990, it posed almost impossible conditions, such as the need to be represented with a ratio of no less than 40% in all PLO institutions (The Palestinian National Council, the Palestinian Central Council, and the PLO Executive Committee). Hamas was not serious when it posed this ratio, but used it as tactics with the aim of not assuming any responsibility for not joining the PLO, which is

viewed as a secular entity under the control of enemies of Islam: the nationalists and leftists.

After the second Intifada, the ideas and policies of Hamas witnessed a strategic transformation. Hamas realized that the Oslo Accord, although it has and still rejects it, has become an inevitable political reality. Hamas also realized that there is an Arab-international decision not to allow the establishment of an alternative or new PLO, and that there was no option but to join the PLO instead of creating an alternative entity as it always dreamed since its establishment until 2005. Hamas accepted the Cairo Declaration, which is in fact an agreement between the PLO, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad to reform the PLO so that it can represent all sides. The failure of the Oslo Accord assisted Hamas in making up its mind on this matter. The failure of the Accord weakened the party that has always signed and defended it; thus, opening the path towards a new era where political Islam can dominate the Palestinian political movement.

In order to prepare for such a commitment (i.e. participating in the Palestinian political system in preparation for leading it), Hamas conducted a series of changes in its positions and program, such as:

- Hamas affirmed its approval on the establishment of a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders and stressed that it can accept a settlement that includes the establishment of such a state in return for a long-term truce with Israel.
- Hamas accepted a truce with Israel as Abu Mazen was in the process of forming his government in 2003, and the aim was to assist the government's success; Hamas renewed the truce several times between the years 2005, 2008 and 2009.

- Hamas joined the authority which it boycotted in the past and called for its dismantling because it was one of the results of the Oslo process.
- Hamas accepted in the prisoners document “National Reconciliation Document” in 2006, and in a letter to former US President Jimmy Carter in 2007, to commission President Abu Mazen and the PLO to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people on condition that the resulting agreement would be presented to the new Palestinian National Council or to a national referendum.
- Hamas affirmed, in the program of the government it formed after the Palestinian Legislative Council elections in 2006 and in its participation in the national unity government formed in 2007, that it respects the Arab and international legitimacy and the agreements signed between the PLO and Israel, without accepting in clear terms the Israeli conditions that have become international conditions.
- Hamas agreed to participate in a national unity government without assuming the main ministerial portfolios although it enjoys the majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council.

But Hamas didn't find any encouragement from Israel and the United States for its moderation; on the contrary, both Hamas-led government and the national unity government faced sanctions and boycott, thus Hamas was not given a chance to rule as it faced a situation where the ministries and the security services showed allegiance to Fatah Movement; thus, pushing Hamas to execute the coup against itself and against the authority, leading to the military option in Gaza. This culminated in the Palestinian political and geographical split with a situation open to bad scenarios, including the scenario of having two authorities with two presidents and two legislative councils and two governments with the sole aim of fighting each other, forgetting about the occupation and trying to appease

the occupation with each side trying to prove that it can perform better in providing security to the occupation.

If we move now to understand the current agenda of Hamas, we have to answer the following question: "Why did Hamas refuse to participate in the Cairo dialogue which was scheduled on November 9, 2008?" Then "why did it agree to participate on February 26, 2009?"

Hamas says that it refused the national dialogue at first because of the following reasons:

- 1- The need to release Hamas political detainees in the West Bank.
- 2- The need for President Abu Mazen to participate in the dialogue as a party and not as a sponsor of the dialogue and the need for Abu Mazen to attend all sessions and not only the opening session as was planned.
- 3- The need for Egypt to accept the comments submitted by Hamas on the Egyptian paper before going to the dialogue.

As for the Hamas' main comments on the Egyptian paper, they can be summarized as follows:

- The agreement to be reached must be a whole package.
- To separate between the Palestinian internal matters and the matters related to the Palestinian-Israeli relations, such as the truce and the negotiations.
- There should be no condition imposed on the new government or on Hamas participation in the government or in the PLO, such as the need to accept the three international conditions.
- To respect all Palestinian legitimate institutions: the presidency, the Palestinian Legislative Council, and the PLO after the joining of Hamas and the other factions.

One can notice that Hamas comments are firm. Following the split, Hamas kept demanding for one whole year unconditional internal dialogue while Abu Mazen and the PNA kept talking about the condition of ending the coup first.

In the recent months, Hamas became the party that sets conditions before engaging in the dialogue because it believes that achieving reconciliation won't play into Hamas interests. Achieving reconciliation after some developments would be better, such as:

- Concluding the prisoners exchange deal.
- - Barack Obama became the US President.
- The Israeli elections, which are expected to bring the Israeli right wing headed by Benjamin Netanyahu to power.
- The fate of Fatah Movement and whether it will hold its conference and unify its ranks.
- The Iranian file and the Syrian-Israel negotiations and the American-Syrian relations.

Currently, Hamas seems less staunch because the situation has changed and matters has not developed the way it desired in terms of the truce, the prisoners exchange deal, Gaza reconstruction or gaining Arab and international recognition. Hamas nowadays is not enthusiastic about giving up its control over Gaza without securing full participation in the PNA and the PLO. Gaza as a bird in the hand is better than ten birds on the tree in the West Bank, especially that the West Bank is occupied and Israel is the main player there and will not allow Hamas to seize control over the West Bank or even full partnership with Fatah in the PNA unless Hamas recognizes the Israeli conditions.

Therefore, Hamas prefers to remain in control over Gaza Strip along with efforts to gain Arab, Israeli, European and interna-

tional recognition. Hamas is also counting on time thinking that it serves its interests while in fact time is working against everyone, and most importantly against the Palestinian cause.

One important point needs to be clarified: Hamas is not subordinate to Iran and Syria; in fact, the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially in Jordan and Egypt, is more than the influence of Iran and Syria.

Two examples to illustrate this:

- 1- Syrian President Bashar al-Assad tried on more than one occasion to get Hamas approval on the Arab Peace Initiative, but he failed.
- 2- When Annapolis Conference was organized, Iran called for a counter conference to be held in Tehran, but Hamas rejected the idea despite the approval of several Palestinian factions; Hamas said it would not accept opposing Annapolis from the gates of Tehran, i.e. from a non-Arab gate.

Hamas and the Recent Gaza War

We cannot really understand the current position of Hamas without reading the events of the recent Gaza war. Hamas did not want that war and tried to avoid it, but it committed a media mistake when it announced that “it does not want to extend the truce that expired on December 19, 2008” and informed the Egyptians and proposed Turkish mediation, as stated in public by Turkish PM, towards extending the truce.

Hamas remained steadfast in the recent Gaza war despite the blatant imbalance in terms of military power. This war can be classified as the Israeli-Palestinian war that Palestinians engage in while they are divided and under Hamas command and not

under the historical leadership represented in Fatah Movement which was headed by the late president Yasser Arafat. Hamas did not collapse and Israel did not achieve all its objectives. Hamas continued to fire rockets, even after the ceasefire declaration, and it also clung to its conditions on the release of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit; moreover, Hamas refused to be part of the ceasefire based on the conditions included in the Security Council resolution.

Despite the human and physical losses incurred in the Gaza Strip and despite the losses that Hamas suffered, Hamas claimed that it achieved victory; the fact of the matter is that Hamas did not achieve victory but at the same time, it was not defeated. Following the international wave of sympathy with the Palestinians during and after the war on Gaza, Hamas was able to impose itself on real grounds as a basic Palestinian player and continued to control the Gaza Strip. The Israeli troops did not topple Hamas authority and there was no Palestinian intifada against Hamas authority. Hamas felt that it gained more popularity but failed in investing it into political gains.

Hamas could not conclude the prisoners exchange deal although it came very close during the last days of Olmert's government. Hamas could not achieve a truce through Egyptian mediation and was forced to abide by a truce without an agreement to the point that it prevented other factions from firing rockets and started accusing those who fire rockets as people acting against the national interest, and this was a major weakness sign that Hamas has shown in the recent months, which indicates that the rules of the game have changed in Gaza after the war.

Hamas could not cause serious losses to the Israeli troops or Israel; the Israeli losses in the recent war were very limited compared with major Palestinian losses. This situation pushed

the Palestinian citizen, especially the Gazan citizen, to wonder about the goal behind this war and about the balance of profits and losses.

The balance of losses in the war shows that either Hamas was not ready for the war as it claimed because it talked a lot about preparing surprises for the attacking Israeli troops or that Hamas was ready but the Israeli troops were more prepared and learnt important lessons from the recent Lebanese war from which Israel came out defeated. The first strike that was launched against Gaza which resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives shocked and paralyzed Hamas command to a certain extent and this prevented Hamas from regaining control, containing the strike, and organizing effective resistance that can cause serious losses.

The West Bank did not witness a third Intifada against Israel or against the PNA as Hamas demanded, although Hamas benefited from the weak and negative position of the PNA regarding the Israeli aggression. It seemed like the PNA was counting on the Israeli war on Gaza. The PNA did not consider the war as an offensive launched against it. The PNA restricted the popular moves and protests against the war and continued to arrest Hamas members even during the war and continued with security coordination and deemed it adequate to declare the halt of the negotiations which were already frozen because the Israeli government was preoccupied with the preparations for the Israeli elections, and called on all Palestinian factions and parties to meet in Ramallah and not in Damascus or Cairo, which is a sign indicating that the Palestinian leadership was not serious in investing the war to exert serious efforts towards the end of the split.

Time passed after the war and Hamas could not transform the benefits into political gains; it failed in concluding the prisoners

exchange deal and it failed in ending the siege and in achieving a truce agreement and it failed in launching Gaza reconstruction process. It also failed in reaching Palestinian reconciliation. Moreover, Hamas failed in achieving concrete progress on the path of Arab and international recognition despite some meetings with American and European delegations and despite the visits made by European, American and international figures and delegations to Gaza Strip.

Thus, Hamas' crisis escalated and pushed it to show lenience in its positions regarding the Palestinian national dialogue, especially the bilateral dialogue with Fatah Movement. Hamas had set in the past a condition of releasing the political detainees in the West Bank before starting the dialogue, but it continued with the dialogue even when the arrest campaigns were escalated and despite its permanent threats that it will not resume the dialogue and that it will not reach an agreement before releasing the detainees.

Hamas wanted in the past a national reconciliation government to be led by a Hamas figure, but later it agreed to allow an independent figure close to Hamas to head the government.

Hamas threatened that it will not recognize the legitimacy of Abu Mazen after January 9, 2009, but then it recognized his legitimacy through accepting the idea of holding legislative and presidential elections no later than January 25, 2010, and this means implicit approval to extend the term of the president for one additional year.

Hamas insisted in the past on rebuilding the security services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but then it accepted the formation of a joint security force in Gaza Strip only.

Hamas insisted in the past on forming a temporary leadership that could replace the PLO leadership during the interim phase that starts from the moment of signing the agreement until holding the Palestinian National Council elections, and then it agreed to the idea that this temporary leadership would not have any impact on the status and role of the PLO institutions.

Hamas insisted in the past on holding the Palestinian Legislative Council elections based on the mixed electoral system (50% for proportional representation and 50% for constituencies), but the indicators show that Hamas will accept the Egyptian proposal which is based on 75% for proportional representation and 25% for constituencies.

Hamas is facing a difficult situation but it has not reached the level of collapse and is not even close to it. Hamas is trying to compensate for all this through proving that it can maintain order and security in the Gaza Strip in a manner better than the PNA.

Hamas received the Egyptian proposal on establishing a factional committee to supervise the implementation of the agreement after they failed to agree on a national reconciliation government because of a dispute over the government's program between Hamas position which insisted on the use of the expression "respect the agreements" as mentioned in the Mecca Agreement and in the program of the national unity government and the position of Fatah and President Abu Mazen, who insist on the term "abide by the agreements". The danger of this factional agreement is that it can become a coordination framework between the governments of Ramallah and Gaza and this will consolidate the split instead of ending it.

We need not rush into conclusions and say that Hamas and its control over Gaza Strip is a matter of days; Hamas is weak, but not to the point of accepting anything offered to it. Hamas will only accept an agreement which provides benefits to all sides, or an agreement that leads to coexistence with the split, which really means recognizing the control of Hamas. Moreover, Hamas counts on time since the Israeli intransigence will frustrate the American and international efforts that try to solve the conflict, and this will be a net profit in favor of Hamas and will weaken the opponent.

The Speech of Khaled Mash'al: Staying on the Change Track

In order to realize the size of change that Hamas introduced on its program, we need to carefully study the speech of Khaled Mash'al delivered on June 26, 2009.

For the first time, the program of Hamas matches in very clear terms with the program of the PLO since Mash'al said that Hamas agrees to the establishment of a full sovereign Palestinian state with al-Quds as its capital on the borders of June 4, 1967 after the withdrawal of the occupation troops and the removal of all settlements and the realization of the right of return. Khaled Mash'al called this the joint minimum ceiling program and not the interim program which Hamas used when it talked about its approval to a Palestinian state within the territories occupied in 1967.

Khaled Mash'al did not mention the long-term truce that Hamas usually poses as a way out of the issue of recognizing Israel. Instead of the recognition, Hamas posed the issue of a long-term truce.

The tone of change can also be noticed in Mash'al's speech about the methods of resistance and struggle and not only

about the goals of the struggle. When talking about resistance, Mash'al said resistance is a means and not an end and he used the term "insightful and rational resistance". He also talked about the need to combine between resistance and negotiations using terms like "sound resistance and negotiations". With such rhetoric, Hamas is taking another step towards presenting itself as part of the solution and not part of the problem.

Mash'al also chose to return greetings to US President Obama when he thanked the US President for the change in the US position vis-à-vis Hamas, especially in the speech Obama delivered at Cairo University. Mash'al said: "We appreciate the new American language towards Hamas; we can feel the change in the US rhetoric towards the region and towards the Islamic world and we welcomed this and we do appreciate any change in an objective manner, but we are not infatuated with speeches; we seek to see changes in the policies on the ground. The US language today about freezing settlements and the Palestinian state is good but this is not new and not enough. We welcomed the change in Obama's language, but we have to say it very clearly that we will not cross this limit as long as the change remains in the language."

In his speech, Khaled Mash'al came close to the PLO in terms of the real content and core. He talked about the goals and program of the struggle and defined the methods of struggle with a new positive spirit and advanced positions, and this provides a good solid foundation for the unity of the Palestinian people and for a new American, European and international position to deal with Hamas on condition that they give up the conditions and dictations.

Hamas is changing but this change is not met with positive changes in the US, European, international, Israeli and Palestinian policies. Having Hamas as a positive factor will embarrass

Israel and all those who support its occupation, expansionist and racist policies.

They need Hamas to remain “extremist” and “terrorist” so that they would find it easier to fight it and evade the peace process commitments.

Finally, the agenda of Hamas can be summarized as follows: Hamas wants to be a full partner in the PNA and the PLO without making core concessions on its identity and all qualities that distinguishes it. If this does not work, Hamas prefers to keep control over Gaza until conditions change for the better or become less dangerous.

Hamas has moved halfway towards becoming a basic legitimate Palestinian player. Having accepted the PLO program, the right of return and the state, Hamas has shown readiness to make implicit recognition of the state of Israel.

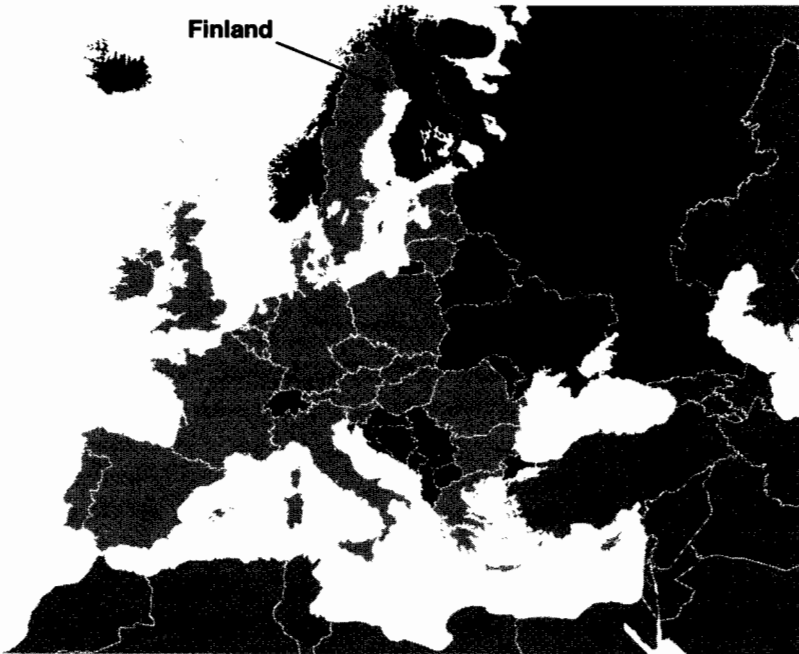
Hamas has held several truce agreements, indirectly and through Egyptian mediation, with Israel since 2003. Nowadays, Hamas is abiding by a truce without agreement and as it repeats the calls for a long-term truce, it is coming close to meeting the condition of halting violence and terrorism.

Hamas affirmed in Mecca Agreement and in the national unity government program that it will respect the agreements and it participated in the authority that it deems void because it was based on Oslo Accord; thus, Hamas came close to accepting the agreements although the other side in these agreements – Israel – circumvented them long time ago, in particular since the assassination of Rabin. When the right wing headed by Netanyahu assumed power in 1996 it considered the Oslo Accord a disaster and sought diligently to get rid of it.

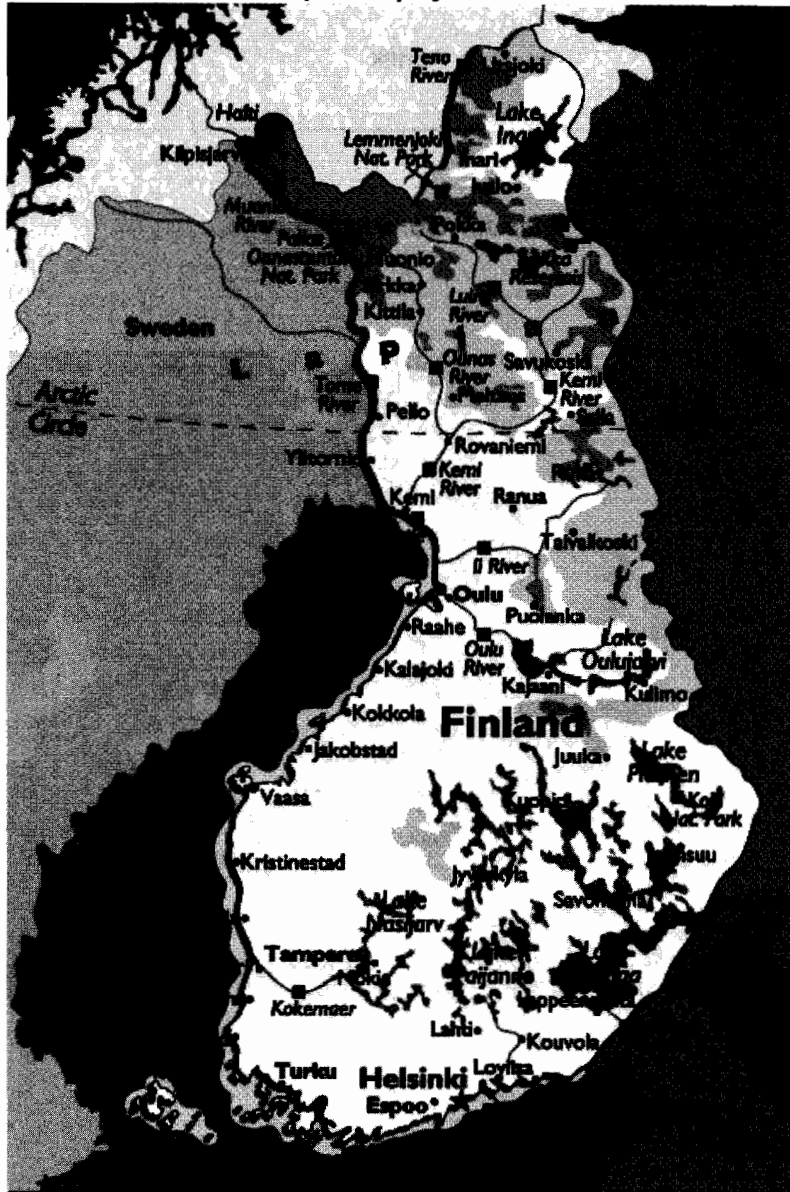
Annex



Map 1: Finland in Europe



Map 2: Map of Finland



Finland at a Glance¹:

Geography

- Total area:** • 338,000 km², of which 10% is water and 69% forest;
 • 187,888 lakes, 5,100 rapids and 179,584 islands;
 • Europe's largest archipelago, including the semi-autonomous province of Åland
- Distances:** 1,160 km north to south, 540 km west to east
 Finland's 1,269 km-long land border with Russia is the eastern border of the EU.
- Climate:** Finland has cold winters (till -20 Celsius) and fairly warm summers (around +20 Celsius). In the far north the sun does not set for about 73 days in summer and remains the horizon for 51 days in winter.

People

- Population:** • 5.3 million, 15.7 inhabitants per km²
 • 71% live in urban, 29% in rural areas
 • Main cities: Helsinki (564,000), Espoo (235,000), Tampere (206,000), Vantaa (189,000), Turku (175,000) and Oulu (130,000)
 • Finland has a Sami (Lapp) population of 8,700.
- Languages:** Official languages: Finnish (91.5% of the population) and Swedish (5.5%). Sami (Lappish) is the mother tongue of about 1,700 people.
- Religion:** 82.4% Lutheran and about 1.1% Orthodox

¹ Material in this section was taken/adapted from:
<http://finland.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=160032&nodeid=41803&culture=en-US>, last updated in May 2009.

Some important events in the history of Finland:

- 1155 First crusade to Finland by the Swedes. Finland becomes part of the Swedish realm.
- 1809 Finland is handed over to Russia by Sweden and becomes an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian emperor.
- 1917 December 6: Finland's declaration of independence.
- 1919 The present constitution is adopted; Finland becomes a republic.
- 1939-40 The Soviet Union attacks Finland ("Winter War").
- 1941-44 Fighting between Finnish and Soviet forces resumes in the "Continuation War." Finland cedes some territory to the Soviet Union but is never occupied and preserves its independence and sovereignty.
- 1955 Finland joins the United Nations
- 1995 Finland becomes a member of the European Union

The head of state: President of the Republic, who is elected for a six-year term by direct popular vote. The incumbent President Mrs Tarja Halonen was elected in 2000 and 2006.

Parliament: One chamber with 200 members, who are elected for a four-year term by direct popular vote under a system of proportional representation. Following the last parliamentary elections in March 2007, eight parties were represented: Centre Party (23.1% of the vote), National Coalition Party (22.3%), Social Democratic Party (21.4%), Left Wing Alliance (8.8%), Green League (8.5%), Swedish People's Party (4.6%), Christian Democrats (4.9%), True Finns (4.1%), and Others (2.3%).

The Government: 20-member coalition government appointed on 19 April 2007 by President Halonen and headed by Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen.

In 2008, Finland's net income per capita was approx. €29,500.

Trade (2008)

Region	Exports	Imports
	<i>% share of total</i>	
EU-countries	55.9	54.9
Euro Zone	29.9	30.9
Rest of Europe	17.9	20.9
OECD	67.4	65.8
North America	7.0	4.1
Central & South America	2.4	2.6
Middle East	3.7	0.2
Rest of Asia	9.7	15.4
Africa	2.3	0.9
Oceania	1.0	1.1

Most important trade partners in 2008

Countries	Exports	Imports
	<i>% share of total</i>	
Germany	10.0	14.1
Sweden	10.1	10.1
Russia	11.6	16.3
USA	6.3	3.0
United Kingdom	5.5	4.1
Netherlands	5.1	4.2
France	3.5	3.4
China	3.1	7.0
Italy	3.3	3.0
Estonia	2.2	2.2
Norway	3.0	2.7
Spain	2.9	1.3
Belgium	2.5	2.3
Denmark	2.1	2.3
Japan	1.6	2.0

Exports: mainly electro-technical industry products (24.7%), metal products, machinery and transport equipment (33.7%), and wood and paper products (20.2%). Trade with developing countries accounted for about 15.7% of total exports in 2006.

Imports: raw materials (37.6%), investment goods (21.0%), energy (15.5%), and consumer goods (26%). In 2006, trade with developing countries accounted for 16.7% of imports.

Currency: Since 2002 the euro.



Foundation
of the Finnish Institute
in the Middle East



REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE OF FINLAND
RAMALLAH

Workshop on Palestine & Finland

22-23 November 2008, Intercontinental Hotel, Jericho

Program

SATURDAY, 22 NOVEMBER

9.00-9.30	<u>Opening Remarks</u> <i>Sirpa Mäenpää, Deputy Director General for Middle East and Africa, MFA Finland</i>
	<u>SESSION ONE: HISTORY OF RELATIONS</u>
9.30-10.15	The Identification of the so-called Hisham Palace by R.W. Hamilton <i>Dr. Mikko Louhivuori, Rockefeller Museum</i>
10.15-11:00	Hilma Granqvist's Research: Reflections on Historical and Contemporary Relevance in Finland and Palestine <i>Dr. Riina Isotalo, University of Helsinki</i>
11.00-11.15	Coffee Break

11.15-12.00	<p>Palestine and Finnish Media – A Reporter’s Perspective <i>Sanna Negus, Middle East Correspondent, YLE, Finnish Broadcasting Co.</i></p>
12.00-12.45	<p>Cooperation between Palestinian and Finnish Churches <i>Martti Tuhkanen, Director, Conference Center Paivakumpu, FELM</i></p>
13.00-14.00	<p>Lunch Break</p>
	<p><u>SESSION TWO: FUTURE CHALLENGES</u></p>
14.00-14.45	<p>The Development of the EU’s Political Role in the Context of the Palestinian-Israeli Relations <i>Dr. Flora Kurikkala, Foreign Ministry</i></p>
14.45-15.30	<p>Finland & the PA: Official Relations Since 1995 <i>Dr. Olli Ruohomaeki, Foreign Ministry</i></p>
15.30-15.45	<p>Coffee Break</p>
15.45-16.30	<p>The Palestinian Minority in Israel and Minorities in the Future Palestinian State: Thoughts in the Light of the Finnish Experiences <i>Dr. Hannu Juusola, University of Helsinki & Foundation of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East</i></p>
16.30-17.15	<p>Women’s Role in Building a Society – A Finnish Perspective to the Palestinian Developments <i>Dr. Sylvia Akar, University of Helsinki</i></p>

SUNDAY, 23 NOVEMBER

**SESSION THREE: PALESTINIAN INTERNAL
POLITICS**

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9.00-10.00 | Visit to Hisham's Palace, Jericho |
| 10.15-9.45 | Introduction
<i>Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Chairman of PASSIA,
Jerusalem</i> |
| 10.45-11.00 | Hamas and its Agenda
<i>Hani Al-Masri, Head of Bada'el Research
Center, Ramallah</i> |
| 11.00-12:00 | Fateh at the Crossroads
<i>Dr. Loay Shabaneh, Director of the Palestin-
ian Central Bureau of Statistics, and Mem-
ber of Fateh</i> |
| 12.00-12.15 | Coffee Break |
| 12.15-13.00 | Chances and Challenges for Palestinian Na-
tional Unity
<i>Dr. Ghassan Al-Khatib, Vice-President of Bir-
zeit University</i> |
| 13.00-14.00 | Lunch Break |

**SESSION FOUR: PANEL ON THE IMPASSE IN
THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND
THE PROSPECTS FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE**

14.00-16.00

*Speaker: Dr. Khalil Nakhleh, Senior
Researcher and Author on "The One
State Option"*

