
DIALOGUE

REVIEW FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN ARAB AND JEWISH ACTIVISTS OF PALESTINE

**IN DEFENCE OF THE RIGHT OF RETURN, FOR THE ONE STATE SOLUTION
END OF TERM REPORT PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH, ARABIC, HEBREW AND FRENCH**

Introduction

Appeal to an international conference. Right of return, equality of rights within a single state. Is there any other option ? Let open the debate.

The next intifada, by Miko Peled

Palestinians in Israel: from the margins to nation re-building players, by Ameer Makhoul

"The spirit of Gaza in Geneva": the challenge of Archaeology to Occupation and War in the City of Peace, by Claudine Dauphin

october 2007

3\$ 2£ 3€ number 19

Introduction

The American administration, whose close relations with the Israeli State are well known, has decided to convene a new international conference next November in Annapolis in the United States. The first question to come to mind is: what can be expected from a new conference? Is it a question of taking even the smallest step towards resolving the crucial problems which face the Palestinian people? For the weekly newspaper Al Ahram, *“a high placed American official has attempted to lower expectations by saying that the conference would not be ‘negotiations on the final status’ but only a step ‘towards negotiations on the final status’ ”*. How many other conferences of this type will there have to be?

The review Dialogue is an open forum of labour activists, trade unionists, democrats who have decided to discuss freely the problems raised in the Middle East and in particular in Palestine. This discussion aims at defining a solution which would put an end to an intolerable situation, that of the Palestinian people, of those millions of women, men and children deprived of all rights and living like pariahs. A situation that no democrat can accept. As the subtitle of our review indicates, we are, we always have been in favour of one State founded on the recognition of equal rights for the two component parts, Arab and Jewish.

Let us reflect an instant on the “final status” notion. How can one claim that the setting up of a pseudo State on less than 12% of the territory of historic Palestine and the denial of the right to return for all refugees can possibly constitute a “final status”? On the contrary isn't it just prolonging the tragic situation of the Palestinian people, under threat of extermination and famine in the Gaza strip, of ethnic purification in the West Bank, of being abandoned in refugee camps, under threat of repression and expulsion within the State of Israel?

Would this policy benefit the Jewish population? For Ran Eretz, President of the teachers Union of Israel, interviewed by Israel Valley (6th October), *“there is to-day among young people, an increase in violence, alcoholism, drugs and attempts at getting out of military service etc. Why? What's happening? this is what is happening. For the last six years the Education Budget has had cut backs of 4 billion shekels. A 20% reduction. Which means for secondary education, 8.5 less lessons a week. In real terms this means that the government has cut off a years' teaching in Israeli pupils' schooling.”* We do not as Ran Eretz does, consider in the same way drugs and “getting out of military service”. Isn't it a question of refusing a brutal society that offers no future? The daily newspaper Yediot Aharonot dated last 20th July reporting on an opinion poll, indicated that *“half of Israeli adolescents want to live abroad. (...) 68% say that the situation in Israel is “not good”*. The recent Social Security report shows that Israel, which counts 800 000 children classed as poor, was at the 27th place in 2006 on the international scale of developed countries for public expenditure in the social field, after having been at the 21st place in 2003. Don't these facts demonstrate that Israeli State policy, aimed above all at preparing new wars and crushing the Palestinian people — for the greater profit of the military-security industry — has a destabilising, demoralising effect on the Jewish populations, contributing to the break down of society?

60 years of the carving up of Palestine, 60 years of Nakba and war. Shouldn't a balance sheet be clearly drawn up? It is in this framework that the following appeal for an international conference figures, with on its agenda, the question of the right to return for all refugees and their families being respected, and the question of one state for all, with the same rights on the historic territory of Palestine. Dialogue will publish shortly a letter giving information on the preparation of the conference, where we shall propose the opening of large discussion together with wide spread endorsement of the appeal and effective organisation of this initiative.

Palestine : Appeal to an international conference

2007 marks 60 years since the UN voted in favour of the partition of Palestine.

At the same time as the 60th anniversary of the Naqba (Catastrophe) of 1947-8 is being commemorated, reminding us of the partition of Palestine that saw hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven from their lands and villages, the 40,000 refugees of the Nahr el-Bared camp are under fire from the Lebanese army as it pursues its conflict with the Fatah el Islam group.

Once again, the Palestinian refugees are being forced to flee and seek refuge in other camps. Is this not a clear reminder of the scenes that took place in 1948, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their homes to become refugees?

Since Palestine was partitioned in 1947-8, there has been nothing but one war after another, one wave of repression after another, a succession of killings and cease-fires, and yet more explosions.

How is it possible for millions of children, women and men to live like this, facing the permanent threat of death? For decades, we have heard talk of peace, of peace-plans, of a route-map for two states to co-exist. But what has been the result? Yet more dead and wounded everywhere we look. How can this go on?

Is the solution supposed to lie in building a wall that destroys villages and crops in its wake, splitting up hundreds of thousands of people, confiscating their lands and creating new refugees?

Is the solution supposed to lie in the 75 permanent checkpoints, 150 temporary barriers and 400 roadblocks that exist in the West Bank? Is the solution supposed to lie in the fact that 75 percent of the Palestinian population are refugees or displaced persons, creating a diaspora of 6,400,000 people?

Is the solution supposed to lie in the fact that within the 1948 borders, the number of people living below the poverty threshold has increased from 1.1 million in 2000 to 1.6 million in 2005, while unemployment benefits have been reduced by 47 percent?

Is the solution supposed to lie in the pursuit of all those “peace” policies that have simply resulted in an increasing number of conflicts?

For our part, we think that the broadest possible discussion should take place, so that we can all contribute, together, to the search for a solution. We must debate all of these questions freely, without any preconditions.

As part of that discussion, we submit this question: For peace to be re-established, is there any path other than that of the constitution of a single state covering the whole territory of Palestine, a free, secular and democratic state that will guarantee equal rights for all its citizens, whether Arab or Jewish? And to achieve this, is it not necessary to guarantee the right of return for all Palestinian refugees?

We put this question forward because it involves the future of millions upon millions of human beings.

This is why we propose that an International Conference be held in the first quarter of 2008, 60 years after the Naqba, to discuss these questions and to define a perspective that is in keeping with the demands of peace and democracy.

Daniel Gluckstein Review Dialogue

Salah Salah Chairman of refugees standing committee - Palestinian National Council

Initial endorsers :

ALGÉRIA : **Hacène Djemam**, General Secretary International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU) ; **Louisa Hanoune**, General Secretary Workers Party ; **Mahieddine Khelifa**, lawyer ; **Tahar Ouettar**, writer ; **Ramdane Taazibt**, vice president of the National Popular Assembly. **BRAZIL :** **Misa Boitto**, member of the Workers party 's executive committee State of Sao Paulo, deputy member of the Workers Party's National executive committee; **Julio Turra**, member CUT national executive committee . **BRITAIN :** **Zarina Bhatia**, Palestinian activist ; **Claudine Dauphin**, Honorary Professor in Archaeology and Theology , the University of Wales, Lampeter; **Michael Loughlin**, Reader in Applied Philosophy Manchester Metropolitan University; **Nat M. Queen**, School of Mathematics. University of Birmingham, University and College Union, pers cap. ; **Derek Wyatt**, Member of Parliament (LP). **BURUNDI :** **Paul Nkuzimana**, trade unionist STUB pers cap . **FRANCE :** **Jacky Bara**, trade unionist, pers cap ; **Paul Barbier**, trade unionist pers cap ; **Jean-Pierre Barrois**, Dialogue Review ; **Mohammad H. Yakoub**. writer , association Mémoire d'Exilé- Right of Return Congress. **INDIA :** **H Mahadevan**, AITUC General Secretary . **LEBANON:** **Association Aïdoun**. **PAKISTAN :** **Ghulzar Ahmed Chowdhury**, General Secretary APTUF ; **Rubina Jamil**, Working Women Association. **PÉRU :** **Mario Huaman Rivera** General Secretary CGTP ; **Julio Lazo Tovar** President National Federation of University Professors; **Erwin Salazar Vasquez**, General Secretary CGTP Lambayeke region. **PHILIPPINES :** **Edgar Bilayon** General Secretary Railworkers Union. **SPAIN :** **Angel Campabadal**, FES-UGT federal committee ; **Luis Gonzalez**, General Secretary CCOO Health Union –Sevilla ; **Luis Lozano Mercadal**, trade unionist public services –UGT. **SWEDEN :** **Jan-Erik Gustafsson**, trade unionist. **SWITZERLAND :** **Alexandre Anor** former member of the Parliament of Geneva. **SOUTH AFRICA :** **Tiyani Lybon Mabasa** President SOPA. **SYRIA :** **Association Aïdoun**. **TOGO :** **Gbikpi-Benissan Tétévi**, trade unionist UNSIT, per cap. **USA:** **Alan Benjamin**, Editor The Organizer ; **Monadel Herzallah** trade unionist ; **Francesca Rosa** (for ID purposes only) member SEIU 1021/ delegate San Francisco Labor Council.

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E-mail / phone :.....

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Please return to **DIALOGUE** : dialoguereview@yahoo.com
87, rue du Faubourg-Saint-Denis – 75 010 Paris - France

First signatories (updated sept,20) :

ALGERIA : Brahim **Saahraoui**, writer, Algiers University. **GERMANY** : Nabil **Bushnaq** ; Claudia **Karas**, membre de l'Alliance pour une paix juste en Palestine. **AUSTRIA** : Dr Georges **Nicola**, Palestinian Community in Austria. **BRAZIL** : Nilson **Mourão**, Deputado Federal do PT ; João Paulo **Uriartt**. **BRITAIN** : Abdullah **Abueid**, Professeur of international Law ; Gustavo **Barbosa**, London School of Economics ; Glenn **Bowman**, University of Kent, Department of Anthropology; Haïm **Bresheeth**, University of East London ; Stewart **Crehan**, University of Manchester ; Michael **Donning** ; Trish **Hayes** ; Ghada **Karmi**, writer ; Saladin **Meckled-Garcia**, University College London; Ghazala **Mir**, University of Leeds ; Fawzia **Mir** ; Bahadur **Najak**, University of Durham ; Janet **Shapiro**, member UCU, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, CND and Labour Party ; Ruth **Shepherd**, University of Manchester ; Alan **Story**, University of Kent. **CANADA** : B. Ross **Ashley**, membre SEIU local 1, NDP Socialist Caucus ; Raffa **Touhami-Rachid** ; Bruce **Katz**, co-Président Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU) ; Rezeq **Faraj**, PAJU ; Paul **Naccache** ; Abraham **Weizfeld**, Direct Democracy Movement. **EGYPT** : Si **Neumann** ; Lufti **Arab**, in behalf of the Arab resistance Popular Alliance. **FRANCE** : Arnaud **Albarede** ; Rachid **Akel** ; Françoise **Bidard** ; Adjéra **Boubou** ; Martine Bousel ; Roger **Calvez** ; Emmanuelle **Castaing** ; Jean Louis **Chabernaud**, practitioner ; Maria **Chambonnet** ; Pascal **Chambonnet** ; Claudine **Chevreau** ; Pierre **Compain** ; Pierrette **Cuzange** ; Maïté **Dayan** ; Alban **Desoutter** ; Nadia **Djail** ; Jean **Dubessy**, trade unionist, free thinker ; Jean Pierre **Dubois** ; Janine **Emans** ; Francis **Feeley**, Director of Center for the Advanced Study of American Institutions and Social Movements, Grenoble University ; Jean Pierre **Fitoussi** ; Jean Paul **Gady** ; Daniel **Gautier** ; Lucien **Gauthier**, Dialogue Review ; Michèle **Gluckstein** ; Malika **Grim** ; Marc-Eric **Haglund** ; Carola **Hannecart-Gromov** ; Samy **Hayon**, Dialogue Review ; Francis **Heusbourg** ; Luisa **Hirschbein** ; Hayssam **Hoballah** ; Guy **Hugé** ; Sabine **Jeanjean** ; Christel **Keiser** ; Donna **Kesselman**, Academic, trade unionist ; Jean Noël **Langlois** ; François **Lazar**, Dialogue review ; Alain **Lecaille** ; Catherine **Lefebvre** ; Christian **Lefebvre** ; Jacques **Lewkowicz** ; André **Marty** ; Armelle **Marchand** ; Jean **Mennecier** ; Roland **Mignot** ; Pierre **Mohn** ; Marie José **Montout** ; Michel **Moro** ; Ginette **Nepveu** ; Jacques **Nepveu**, secularist activist ; Josiane **Olf-Nathan** ; Perrine **Olf-Rastegar**, Judeo-Arabic and Citizen group for peace ; Patrick **Patat** ; Michel Pérou ; Nahed **Pust**, member of Women in Black Strasbourg ; Madjid **Rami** ; Alain **Roques**, Researcher INRA, trade unionist ; Hélène **Rubinstein-Carrera**, honorary lawyer ; Paquita **Scalbert** ; Annie **Scaniglia** ; Günter **Schenk**, member Judeo-Arabic and Citizen group for peace ; Chérifa **Séfouni** ; Elisabeth **Trémaud** ; Chantal **Urbaniak** ; Mireille **Vendrin** ; Jean Manuel **Warnet**, Brest University. **600 signatories** in the town of Montpellier. **ICELAND** : Elias **Davidsson**, composer. **IRELAND** : Raymond **Deane**, Founding member, Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign. **JORDAN** : Basem **Kamel** ; Anis F. **Kassim**. **LEBANON** : Khadije **El Husseini**. **NETHERLANDS** : Benji **de Levie**, Palestine Committee of Rotterdam and Stichting. **PALESTINE** : Ahmad **Barghouti**, Ramallah ; Leïla **Batran**, Ramallah. **POLAND** : Omar **Faris**, General secretary of the Palestine-Polish friendship association. **SCOTLAND** : Patricia **Bryden**. **SOUTH AFRICA** : Virginia **Tilley**, Human Sciences Research Council. **SWEDEN** : Einar **Schlereth**, journalist. **SYRIA** : Omar **Kitmitto**, retired Palestinian ambassador. **TUNISIA** : Chokri **Latif**, writer, in behalf of the Popular support committee of Palestinian People and against the normalization. **USA** : Anthony **Arnove** ; Roger **Dittmann**, President, Scientists without Borders ; Greg **Durka** ; Guerry **Hodderson**, Freedom Socialist Party ; Millie **Phillips**, member Socialist Organizer ; John **Spritzler** ; Jing **Zhao**, US-Japan-China Comparative Policy Research.

The Next Intifada

by Miko PELED

With his latest statements and unrestrained violence, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, has once again confirmed that the occupation, the oppression and the slow genocide of Palestinians by the Israeli war machine he heads will not stop. Any talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders are meaningless he says, and as far as he is concerned there will be no relief for the Palestinians, not even symbolic relief for people trying to cross the checkpoints. After all, even a short delay at the checkpoint can put an end to the life on an innocent Palestinian. Barak who has earned the dubious distinction of Israel's most decorated soldier, by killing mostly unarmed Palestinian civilians, will do nothing that might hinder the liquidation of Palestinians, young or old. With Barak in control of Israel's security apparatus Israelis and Palestinians can expect more violence and more losses of innocent lives.

Barak and his generals all have innocent blood on their hands and should be tried at Haag for violations of international law and crimes against humanity. But instead they direct Israeli soldiers, government trained assassins, secret police, and so-called border patrolmen to shoot and kill innocent Palestinians. Because in Israel all "security" personnel are all above the law neither the perpetrators of these crimes, their commanding officers or the government ministers in charge are brought to justice.

At the same time thousands of Palestinian political prisoners are continually thrown into Israeli prisons for daring to resist the unlawful crimes of the Israeli occupation and since they are categorized as "security" prisoners they have no real protection under the law. Many of these prisoners are political activists and leaders who would otherwise be hailed for daring resist the Israeli apartheid. One can say with certainty that "defense" Minister Barak will block any attempt to change this situation, thus guaranteeing that the conflict will go on with no end in sight.

Rather than brace for the next Palestinian uprising of which there is already talk, it is time to consider a joint, non-violent struggle to end the occupation for good. As an example, we should note the courage, persistence and the determination of the unarmed, joint resistance that has been taking place in the small town of Bil'in. For several years now Bil'in residents, together with Israeli peace activists and others have conducted a non-violent, joint struggle against the confiscation of Bil'in lands and the erection of the separation barrier.

Besides the regular weekly resistance, Bil'in has already hosted two international conferences on the non-violent struggle against the occupation and both were well attended. One would hope that the next conference would seriously discuss the means of expanding the struggle against the occupation to all parts of Palestine/Israel.

The name occupation gives the false impression that the situation in the West Bank and Gaza, and indeed in all of Palestine/Israel is somehow temporary. It is common to speak of 40 years of occupation but in reality the occupation of Palestine has been going on for 60 years and there will be no end to it without well-planned, joint, non-violent resistance. From its very creation Israel has been an apartheid state in which the Palestinian population that survived the ethnic cleansing of 1948 have been living under occupation, as prisoners on their own land.

At its very inception Israel had developed a brutal system to enforce the occupation and the state of apartheid. This system, conveniently but disingenuously referred to as the “defense” or “security” apparatus has for 60 years been in charge of policing the Palestinians as they fight for their rights as a nation. Using collaborators, the internal secret police or Shabak, the so-called Border Patrol (which is made up of mostly disenfranchised segments of Israeli society) and the Israeli Army, this massive Godzilla has been sucking the marrow out of Israeli society and destroying Palestinian life.

It is interesting to see how this Behemoth of a “defense” force reacts to the rather small non-violent protest in Bil’in; disproportionate number forces being used; rubber coated bullets and tear gas canisters are shot into the crowd even though children are present; all this disproportionate violence is an indication that even though they are large and armed to the teeth the Israeli “defense” forces view the non-violent struggle as a threat. Violence is the life-blood of the Israeli “defense” forces and the notion of a non-violent, joint struggle is threatening its very existence.

There are two characteristics of Israeli life that the Israeli “defense” system, or security system, whichever cynical name it chooses to go by, needs to preserve at all cost. The first is the racist character of the state of Israel, and the second is the occupation that allows it to suck the life out of both nations. By keeping these two alive, the “defense” department receives its pound of flesh in the shape of an estimated \$30 billion per year.

It is therefore of the highest national priority for both Israelis and Palestinians to defy this massive monster and to defy the occupation that it is protecting. Any future organized resistance must follow the lead of Bil’in and be joint and non violent and it must have clearly defined objectives. Among these objectives should be the complete elimination of the racist segregation and discrimination against Palestinians within Israel/Palestine.

It would be a serious mistake to think that cosmetic changes like the Oslo Accords could bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The era of cosmetic changes together with the Two State Solution is gone forever. Only full equal rights for both people in their historic homeland will bring an end to this conflict. And while there are those who will claim that this it is a naïve dream and will never become a reality, we would do well to remember that the success of any struggle depends on the determination of its leaders and the clarity of its purpose, not the doubts of nay sayers.

According to the Zionist narrative a Palestinian State may exist only if it neighbors a state that has a Jewish majority and which occupies most of the land of Israel/Palestine. When Israeli governments speak of Palestinian state they mean a walled off Bantustan like Gaza. But as we see in Gaza, enclosing and starving people and depriving them of hope solves nothing. In Gaza, besides the violent power struggles, which one might expect under the circumstances, there are close to 1.4 million people, more than half of who are under 18 years of age. In other words over 700,000 children live in Gaza completely exposed to the unrestrained violence of the Israeli military.

If the violence would cease there could be a chance to protect these children and give them a better life and perhaps even a future. But as it stands, with Barak at the helm only resistance similar to the Bil’in example, which is non-violent and includes Israeli Palestinian cooperation can provide hope for children in Gaza.

In a recent article that was published in the US, Dr. Mona El Farra from Gaza wrote that: “This may seem an unlikely time to discuss the prospect of one state with equal rights for all, but the fighting in Gaza makes clear that a cordoned-off Gaza Bantustan is no solution.” The question that Dr. El Farra raises it monumental: Why is it right to speak of equal rights everywhere except for Israel and Palestine? Indeed, it

may be an unlikely time but it is never the less the right time to discuss the establishment of a secular, democratic state in Israel/Palestine in which human and civil rights are guaranteed to all its citizens.

Clearly it is time for Israelis and Palestinians to rise and defy the highly decorated General Barak and the violent system he heads. It is a system that through the use and manipulation of violence has kept the two nations captive within the conflict for 60 years. It is time for a joint, non-violent struggle like the one in Bil'in, a struggle that will finally free the two nations from the violence imposed on them, and bring an end to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

Miko Peled is an Israeli peace activist, writer living in the US. He is co founder of the Elbanna Peled Foundation in memory of Smadar Elhanan and Abir Aramin. Peled is the son of the late Israeli General Matti Peled.

Palestinians in Israel: from the margins to nation re-building players

by **Ameer MAKHOUL**

Since 1948, the war on Lebanon was the most touchable war among Palestinian citizens of Israel. The question was not to define a collective position or several different positions, but it was to be on the fire line.

Among civilians, out of 39 citizens of Israel who were killed during the war, 18 were Palestinian citizens in Galilee and Haifa. Taking into consideration that Palestinians in Israel number 1.1 million (18% of the population) while in Galilee and the North they represent 50% of the population.

There is almost a consensus within the Palestinian community that they were not targeted at all by Hezbollah. In his speech of August 8, Hassan Nasrallah called the Palestinian citizens of Haifa to keep away from the city for their security. Nasrallah knew very well that both Palestinians and Israelis were listening to his speeches, and both communities would leave the city of Haifa. For me this was one of the clearest signs that Hezbollah didn't target civil populations, while Israel targeted the whole civil infrastructure of Lebanon as well as the population through acts of war crimes and ethnic cleansing. The same thing is currently happening in Gaza and the West Bank.

While the Israeli authorities and media attempted to prove, for their own political needs, that Palestinians in Israel were targeted by Hezbollah, which was rejected by this community, it was also an opportunity to compare not with the year 1948 or the fifties and sixties but with the year 2000 to be convinced that Palestinian community was only targeted by Israeli policy and paid mostly a high price during the wars and also during the so-called peace agreements like the massive confiscation of Palestinian lands in Naqab after the Camp David agreement with Egypt, or the "Plan for Development in Galilee and Negev (Naqab)" which aims to change the demographic balance of both areas where there are large Palestinian populations. This plan was part of Sharon's "Plan of Disengagement from Gaza". The government spoke about ideological and moral compensation for the Israelis in general and for the settlers in particular.

In the beginning of October 2000, the Israeli police and security forces targeted the Palestinian citizens and people were killed. It was during the first week of the Al-Aqsa Intifada which started simultaneously on both sides of the Green Line. The State of Israel targeted the Palestinian community politically while the police snipers targeted the demonstrators.

In 2000 the Palestinians demonstrated against the State of Israel policy and the government's aggressive policy. Many illusions, based on the belief that Israel was a normal and democratic state, vanished.

In 2006 during the war, the Palestinians in Israel also demonstrated against the State of Israel and its structural aggression, colonialism and racism. But mostly they demonstrated in order to support the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples and to protest against the Israeli aggression.

According to Mada Al-Carmel Center for Applied Social Research, "75% of the Palestinian citizens of Israel considered Israeli military actions in Lebanon as war crimes", while "52% believed that the objective of the war was to serve US interests"(www.mada-research.org).

The feeling of human shields

The Hezbollah rockets were sent to target Israeli strategic sites which are located closely to Palestinian villages and towns in the North of Israel. But eventually, the rocket by itself is blind and doesn't distinguish who is who, but Israeli policy, decision making authorities, media and the public opinion distinguish between Palestinians and Jews, they all discriminate against the latter and justify racial discrimination. Palestinians recognized how influential the accumulated racial discrimination was in terms of lack of security infrastructure and how risky the existence of Palestinians is in Israel.

One of the major questions raised within the Palestinian community was, why are we on the fire line? Why were there casualties within the Palestinian community? Every Palestinian citizen of Israel was convinced that Hezbollah would never target this population, or at least Hezbollah is not the side who has declared aggressive position toward Palestinians at all and toward Palestinians in Israel in particular. So this couldn't be an answer. The other side of the same picture is: why did Palestinians suddenly discover that their villages, towns and neighborhoods in big cities were located closely to Israeli strategic sites – military and industrial? And they felt that Israeli media used not to mention and even to des-inform the places where rockets of Hezbollah fell in Palestinian Arab villages. During the war, a series of rockets (91 rockets) fell in a village called Bo-qaya'a (the Hebrew name is Beqi'en), 62 rockets fell in the neighboring villages of Kisra and Kufr Sami'e. Yet, the Israeli Hebrew media continued reporting that rockets were falling in Ma'alut Israeli town area, and the Israeli Arabic language radio and TV mentioned the Hebrew name given to this historical village (Peqi'en) instead of the Arabic formal name. This was perceived by the village residents that it was a media des- information aimed to protect the Ma'alut Israeli town on the account of Al-boqaya'a village (Al-senara Weekly, August 4, 2006). The same happened in Tarshiha, a village which was annexed to Ma'alut, since the establishment of Ma'alut was mostly founded on demolished villages of Tarshiha and Suhmata and lands confiscated in 1948. Three teenagers were killed but the media report spoke about Ma'alut, not Tarshiha.

The same was seen in the village of Majd Alkurum, where dozens of rockets fell, and three people were killed. It's a village near the city of Carmi'el. Carmi'el was established in the 50s. The major goal for the Planning authorities was the "Judaization" of Galilee and the confiscation of Palestinian lands. The industrial zone of Carmi'l which includes Hi-technology and military industries in addition to strategic factories and compounds are outside the neighborhoods of Carmi'el but closer to the Palestinian village of Majd AlKurum.

Maghar near the Sea of Galilee where 2 people were killed is near one of the major military bases in the north, which is supposed to serve as the second northern front of IDF.

In the Northern Palestinian village of Fasouta, the Israeli field artillery was encamped 50 meters from the village houses. Any reaction of Hezbollah to the Israeli bombing aiming to target the artillery would reach the village.

In Wadi Nisnas which is the biggest Palestinian neighborhood of Haifa (approximately 10,000 citizens) there is one shelter, the population doesn't know where it is. But also most of the buildings are "absentees' properties" by Israeli Law which means properties of the 70,000 Palestinians, out of 72,000, who were expelled from Haifa in 1948. These buildings are mostly old and neglected as the state and the municipality of Haifa own them through a semi – governmental company called Amidar. The buildings

lack an internal shelter as the Israel Law conditions new buildings. But this not the whole issue. Wadi Nisnas is the main neighborhood downtown, it's very close to the Israeli Navy base, it's close to the police and security main compounds in the city. It's very close to the harbor of Haifa which is also used by the US Navy together with the Israeli Navy.

Two relevant people in their sixties were killed after a rocket fell in Wadi Nisnas neighborhood. Although the alarm system to warn that rockets are fired and should fall in one minute, but for these two persons they needed about 5 minutes to reach the only shelter in the area.

Things became clear. A strong feeling of being historically sustained human shields for the Israeli policy and for Israel was expressed by the Palestinian citizens of Israel. This had been expressed by civil society organizations, politicians and by civilians in general.

The lack of security infrastructure was also re-discovered. Nazareth, the biggest Palestinian Arab city in Israel fought for having an alarm system, in order to give the population a signal that a rocket could fall. The internal front army supplies such a system to every Israeli city, town, village, Kibbutz and to every neighborhood in the big cities. Two children of Talouzi, an internally displaced family, were killed when one rocket fell without any warning of the IDF. The Nazareth elite Jewish town which was established in the 50s in order to block any future possibility to have a larger Palestinian community around Nazareth, on each square meter that was confiscated from Palestinian lands, this town has all the needed security infrastructure.

Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah in his TV speech on the following day, expressed his apologies and deep sorrow for the victims of the Talouzi Family. Muhammad Talouzi, the father, clearly said in a very sad tone: "Hassan Nassrallah shouldn't apology, I never blamed him, I blame Ehud Olmert and Amir Peretz" This was the broadly shared opinion of Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Internal Palestinian solidarity and nation building within the conflict

"Keep looking to Beirut and Gaza not to Haifa": this was a major campaign led by the civil society which became popular among Palestinians. Even when the Palestinian community was on the fire line and casualties fell, the opinion was the same. Finally, it was clear that there was no mass destruction or serious destruction on the ground of Haifa and the North. Yet, the Israeli media and public opinion, who are not used to see Arab resistance, led a campaign to balance the suffering of Haifa and to that of Beirut. This was part of the justification of the Israeli mass destruction policy in Lebanon and the continuation of the war.

Since the Oslo Accords, we believe that Palestinians in Israel adopted more consciousness and that they should depend on themselves in confronting challenges regarding their status in Israel and their position within the Palestinian People. This kind of consciousness and political behavior to insure protection and communal solidarity was demonstrated during the war.

The Palestinians demonstrated strong feeling of responsibility reflected on the one hand by opposing the war, but mostly to take care and to insure being protected. In continuation to this, the feeling of responsibility was demonstrated by the internal solidarity within the Palestinian community in Israel, and from the West Bank and Gaza toward the Palestinians in Haifa and Galilee. Many efforts from the Naqab (South) and the Triangle Area (middle of the country) were made by families and institutions to host Palestinians from the North who are on the fire line. It was also the first time that families, individuals and institutions – both public and private - from the West Bank demonstrated solidarity with Palestinians inside the Green Line, offering them a shelter. Thousands of families from the North spent the war time, or part of it, in Ramallah, Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

It was the first time since the 1967 War and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, that Ramallah as well as Bethlehem were more secure than Haifa. It's the first time that solidarity was needed and expressed from outside the Green Line to those inside of it. In 2002 during the Israeli invasion of the West Bank cities, the institutions of Palestinian civil society gave alternative offices to civil society organizations in the West Bank, in addition to humanitarian support. During the war in 2006, organizations such as the Palestinian network for environment and Palestinian agricultural relief committees, Palestinian Health work committees offered their services and hosted Palestinian civil society organizations from Northern Israel.

In Gaza where it's impossible to meet with each other because of the occupation, it was a day by day discussion and phone calls to express concern.

In the Naqab desert where the larger part of the population are living in unrecognized villages where they lack any human being infrastructure, they offered their tents to be shared with people from the North.

The motivation was a real feeling of solidarity on the one side, but also to challenge the Israeli system of the State which handed over the major part of its state responsibility and duties to the Jewish Agency to find collective solutions for the Jewish community in the North. By its constitution, the Jewish Agency is for Jews only. The state should claim neutrality.

Learning from the past experience, the civil society and communal organizations played a crucial role within the community. An emergency system was initiated in order to meet the needs of the Palestinian population especially in villages and towns where rockets had fallen. It was a system offering hotlines and guidance for the citizens in terms of emergency services, claiming compensation from State authorities, estimating the damage, and psychological help. The Galilee Society for Health Research and Services coordinated Atta'a (Giving) emergency center, while Haifa Social Development Committee initiated hotline services for the Palestinians in Haifa.

The feeling of responsibility was also expressed through the voices raised in order to resist the use made by Israeli media and authorities of casualties within the Palestinians as a part of the psychological aspects of the war machine. On the one hand, Palestinians felt neglected. They also felt the accumulating consequences of the state discriminatory policy. If in "normal" times Palestinian citizens of Israel consider the day by day discrimination as their agenda, during the war and being on the fire line made the accumulation of historical sustained structural discrimination visible and touchable.

On the other hand and simultaneously the feeling was that the state – at formal and informal levels – suddenly wanted to hug its sustainable victims. But this hug was not for the victims but for the benefit of the state and the Israeli aggression. It's part of the other front of the war which is the public opinion – locally and internationally. Palestinian civil society organizations were aware of this aspect of the war. Ittijah, the umbrella organization of 84 NGOs, led a campaign focused on the message that "we aren't in the same boat where the Israeli state and public opinion are supporting the war, we are in the boat of Lebanese and Palestinian peoples who are the victims of the Israeli aggression". The same thing happened with the attempts of the Israeli media to strike a balance between the attacks on Haifa and the mass destruction of Beirut, South Lebanon and Gaza. That was a clear and leading position in this direction made by Palestinian civil society organizations, mainly by the Union of Arab Community Based Associations (ittijah). One was an open letter under the title of "Keep looking to Beirut and Gaza not to Haifa" made by the writer of this report. In addition to a press release campaign such as that of August 6, after a rocket fell in Haifa and killed 2 Palestinians from Wadi Nisnas neighborhood. Ittijah's call was clear: "The crime of killing 2 Palestinian citizens of Haifa is to be registered under the name of Ulmert, Peretz and Haloutz, who are the

sole responsible for each drop of blood". It added: "We the Palestinians of Haifa are not a part of the "Israeli boat" but on the same boat of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples. All are victims of Israel".

Palestinian citizens of Israel actually challenged the Israeli hegemony and some of the academic definitions which have attempted for many years to define for this community what the community should think about itself, and what dilemmas the Palestinians were living. Eli Rechis from Tel Aviv University, Head of the center for the research of Arab society, wrote about the dilemmas which the Palestinian Arab community are suffering. The main dilemma is the loyalty issue: either to the State of Israel or to the Palestinian People. But this wasn't the issue that Palestinians were busy with at all.

The media were a major tool during the war. As the Israeli media were mostly blocking out Palestinian voices, the Arab satellites and international media who were located in Haifa and the North were addressed by the Palestinians as well as by the Israelis. The Palestinian Arab Lawyers demonstrated on August 2 at the Carmel center in Haifa where the international media were concentrated during the war. Women against the war and coalitions against the war in Haifa also demonstrated several times at the same place. Aljazeera, the most popular Arab media network, linked simultaneously between Lebanon, Gaza and Palestinians in Israel.

Ilam, the Arab Media center based in Nazareth, monitored the Israeli media during the war. The Israeli media were blocked out toward Palestinian citizens and leadership, it also played as a part of the war machine instead of its watchdog role, as reported by Ilam.

The war of the Peace Camp!

During the war, Palestinians realized that there was no Israeli Partner to stop the Israeli aggression. This was the war of the traditional "Peace Camp" in Israel. "There is no just war but this one" declared Youli Tamir Minister of education (July 17). Youli Tamir is a co-founder and leader of "Peace Now" movement which strongly opposed the 1982 Israeli war in Lebanon. Meretz – Yahd party lead by Yousi Bilin, supported the minister of defense, Amir Peretz and his decision to begin the war in Lebanon.

The feeling among the Palestinian community was that there is no alliance within the Israeli public opinion which massively supported the war and called for escalating it. It was a feeling of clear situation based on two opposing sides. In some places there were joint Palestinian – Israeli activities and a core group of Israelis who were opposing the war in principle, and demonstrated in hard situations and protested against the war. But the masses supported the war, with declarations of revenge and the 'need' to defeat Hezbollah in a short time whatever Israeli price and casualties. Among the Israeli masses the formula of opposing the war was not based on how bad and negative it was, or how many crimes and massacres were committed by IDF but rather on how big and high the price Israelis should pay.

On the other hand, there was strong escalation of aggression toward Palestinians in Israel, calls for "transfer", "killing", "fifth column" became 'normal' and no critic was heard. Threats on lives of political activists became also common, as well as total de-legitimization also became the main Israeli opinion toward the Palestinian community. Personally I received a series of threatening phone calls following an interview with Al-jazeera on August 6th, while at the same time the number of support calls from Palestinians and Arabs doubled, locally and regionally.

But more influential was the political motivation of paternalist control and escalation: "The Arabs of Haifa should decide which side they are supporting" repeated Youna Yahav the Mayor of Haifa "the city of Co-existence". On September 5th, he declared that "every one who opposed the war is a traitor" and the elected Palestinian Deputy Mayor, Walid Khamis, was fired from his position.

The escalation is usually done by different means, the above-mentioned one is the widest, but following it there is also a policy which aims to weakening Palestinians from inside. The reflection of this policy is to make a difference between positive and negative Palestinians, radicals and moderates...etc. The moderate and positive Palestinians are those who demand equality in budgets allocations, while the negative and radical ones want to change the racist and discriminatory structure of the state of Israel. This policy is related to the Palestinian community as an internal Israeli issue and tries to disconnect it from the wider Palestinian cause and the Palestinian People as a whole. This policy is a mainstream control policy. Any cooperation with other Palestinian groups in the West Bank and Gaza or the Diaspora or with Arab peoples is considered "radical" and should be treated by the state violence: Uzi Bezbinin titled his article "Israeli Arabs are crossing a line" (Haaretz 20/9/2006), and the Palestinian political leadership is expected by the Israeli mainstream to play just a local role based on services for the welfare of the Palestinian community. But this is not what is expected from Israeli Zionist parties by the same mainstream. *"Let Bishara go and encourage them ...It must be noted that not all Arab MKs are involved in such incidents. Hadash party MKs, such as Mohammed Barakeh, do not participate in the much-publicized trips to Damascus and Beirut, and devote most of their efforts to furthering the status of the Arab citizen."* (Haaretz editorial 18/9/2006) [Note : Azmi Bishara was an Arab Member of the Knesseth (MK)]

As a "Jewish state" and a "State of the Jews" it's for granted for Israeli mainstream to share tasks and roles between the State and the Jewish international institutions (Jewish Agency, National Jewish Fund , AIPAC and the Zionist organizations in the USA). In recent years, these organizations have offered their funding support to Palestinian groups, municipalities and civil society organizations. They are playing a crucial role in the reimbursement and compensation act of 6 -10 billion NIS to the citizens of Northern Israel. One of the dilemmas of the Palestinians is whether to accept the funding of these resources. On the one side, it is complementary money to the state budget and it's the main resource. But this is the money of the Jewish organizations not of the state of Israel which should be claimed for equality. The Jewish Agency money means that recipients accept the structural discriminatory definition of the state of Israel as a Jewish state. As a conclusion they would lose the justification to challenge this ethnic discriminatory structure. This money structurally contains some political and ethical conditionality. This is the dilemma of the frame of legitimacy. While the state and the Jewish Agency are able to create interest for Palestinian groups, which deepens the fragmentation of the Palestinian people.

Two major dimensions and political strategies were demonstrated among the Palestinians in Israel : One was based on the concept that Palestinians in Israel should take part in sharing the challenges of Palestinians and Lebanese, as most of the Palestinian protest activities occurred in Palestinian towns and villages. The message was mostly to target the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples, for internal support and empowerment. Terms such as "to share the challenges", "to share the tasks", "we are part of the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples", "we are not a part of the Israeli public opinion". New coalitions were initiated in order to give space to this approach such as "The Public Committee for the support of our Palestinian and Lebanese peoples", coalition of political movements with the participation of Islamic Movement, Abnaa Albalad, and civil society groups.

The other dimension was to identify which groups within the Israeli society opposed the war and to make coalition with them. While the message should address the Israeli public opinion and the strategy was that breaking the Israel consensus would stop the war. This approach was led by the communist party and Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, as well as by the National Democratic Assembly. In fact these two dominant political parties adopted both dimensions.

Palestinians in Israel considered the role of the USA as part of the war machine and the Bush administration as the main stakeholder in the war, and that became more visible when the Secretary of State

repeated that the ceasefire was premature in order to give IDF the backup to continue with the mass destruction and killings and to defeat Hezbollah.

One demonstration was held in front of the US Embassy in Tel Aviv, but it was to protest and to blame the US policy without any expectation and with no attempt to dialogue with them.

A delegation of civil society organizations met with the EU delegation to Israel (July 28) and protested the EU double standard and their "follow my leader" policy with the USA. Several letters and reports were submitted to the EU delegation, and European Embassies. The Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA) through the Euro Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) submitted a report in this regard. The Public Committee for the Support of Lebanese and Palestinian Peoples also addressed the EU delegation.

The use of international tools and pushing the issues of Palestinian citizens of Israel on the international agenda as a part of the Palestinian cause became more visible during the last summer.

Weak points and future challenges:

The Israeli public opinion is more aggressive than before the war. There was a growing opinion that the Israeli superiority was well established, and that Israel couldn't be defeated, and they didn't show any reflections of revising the hegemonic concept that war can solve all the crises of Israel. It didn't make the approach more realistic and that war was very risky and that Israelis should seek peaceful solutions. The major voices were still in the direction of revenge and that only mistakes of IDF didn't allow it to win the war in a short time. This public opinion is ready for another round of the war. It's more aggressive toward Palestinians in general and particularly toward Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Ideas of transfer and ethnic cleansing became very popular. Efi Eitam, former minister and leader of The National Front ultra right party, called last week for a transfer of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, and to remove the Palestinian leadership in Israel from the political arena. Eitam's views gained a lot of support within the Israeli public opinion.

Three MKs [Members of the Knesseth] of Balad Party are under police investigation because they had visited Beirut and watched what the Israeli war machine did in Lebanon, while the media are campaigning to deprive these leaders of their parliamentary privileges (See Haaretz editorial 18/9)

The Minister of Defence, Amir Peretz, declared illegal the "Ansar Alsajeen Association" ("Friends of Prisoners" association) on the basis of administrative order and confiscated all its properties to the benefit of the State. (7/9/2006). This was during the campaign led by this registered NGO to include Palestinian citizens of Israel who are political prisoners in any agreement on an exchange of prisoners.

At the cabinet weekly meeting of September 10, the Minister of Tourism, Gedon Ezra, called to compensate Palestinian villages in the North less than Jewish villages and towns, as a punishment for those who "supported the enemies of Israel".

This lack of active leading collective structures was felt by several means: one is that leading political parties mostly protested separately, while the people's voice was clear but not organized and it was accepted among the Palestinian community. In addition several steps were taken to express the nature of the political parties. The Communist Party, in order to express their anti imperialist position organized a mass demonstration in front of the US Embassy in Tel Aviv, the Balad Party sent a delegation of their leadership to Syria and Lebanon knowing in advance that they could pay high price in terms of investigations and

harassments. The Islamic Movement and Abnaa Al-balad, both extra parliamentary parties, demonstrated through the mass rally in support of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples. The civil society organizations took part in all, after a collective decision of emergency meeting of July 22.

The level of community organization and the capacity of leading structures are not meeting the risks and challenges. The only organizational sector which was coordinated is the NGOs and civil society organizations but this is not authorized to lead the community by itself. On the other hand the "Follow Up Committee for Arab Community" in Israel which is the leading umbrella of political parties and mayors didn't meet at all during the 35 days of the war, neither did it take any action as a leading committee.

The issue is not the technical and performance side, but the essence of these leading structures. Is the approach of reorganizing this part of the Palestinian people, based on the commitment of the Palestinian citizens of Israel within the Palestinian cause, not only to be considered as integral part of the Palestinian people? Or to be considered as an internal Israeli issue and to be separated from other parts of the Palestinian people and away from the process of nation re-building?

How should Palestinians in Israel be protected in front of the state and how to meet the challenges of internal and external fragmentation?

How to gain more recognition among Arab peoples and what kind of leading structure to be formulated?

What kind of interaction and mutual influence between the wider Palestinian situation and the situations of Palestinians in Israel? Within the lack of Palestinian leading collective vision and strategy how Palestinians in Israel could and should define their vision within potential Palestinian vision?

These dilemmas have been dealt with collectively for a long time of three years. A document called "Haifa covenant" is almost drafted to finalize this year. This document sponsored by Mada Research Center and Adalla Legal Center should give directions and show horizons for answering the mentioned dilemmas.

Finally, the war didn't change the nature of the conflict in the Middle East or the nature of Israel, which continues to be the same Israel whether in Haifa or Gaza or Beirut. It gave some hopes that Arab peoples' potential for resisting the American Israeli global hegemony of the region is still an option and a track of hope.

Palestinian citizens of Israel made a clear message that they don't want to continue being in margins, and just to be considered as electoral reserve in Israel. This part of the Palestinians wants to be equal player on the re-nation building at the level of the Palestinian people as well as the Arab world.

The writer is a political Palestinian activist and analyst, and the general director of Ittijah – Union of Arab Community Based Associations.

"The spirit of Gaza in Geneva": the challenge of Archaeology to Occupation and War in the City of Peace

On the exhibition "Gaza at the Crossroads of Civilisations", Musée d'art et d'histoire, 2 rue Charles Galland, Geneve, 27th April-7th October 2007, 10 am – 5 pm except Mondays

by **Claudine DAUPHIN**

(CNRS and Honorary Professor in Archaeology and Theology of the Universities of Wales, Lampeter)

Faced with the rising toll of Palestinian civilian victims of the Israeli shelling of the Gaza Strip, of targeted assassinations, and the arrest of "dangerous terrorists", besieged by images of sordid refugee camps sapped by poverty and violence, which the international media daily broadcast, how many of us, plain citizens, activists and even Orientalists, remember that Gaza, the ultimate imprisoned city suffering a blockade, a martyred city, was once glorious and prosperous ?

As the Second Intifada erupted in the Autumn of 2000, begotten by the cooperation since 1995 of the Department of Antiquities of Gaza and the Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem under the aegis of the French Consulate General in Jerusalem, the exhibition "Mediterranean Gaza. History and Archaeology in Palestine" at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, and subsequently at the Musée de l'Arles Antique, unveiled for the first time the archaeological proofs of the fabulous past of Gaza covering six millenia. Subsequently, repeated incursions of the Israeli army into the Gaza Strip (even after the dismantling of the illegal Jewish settlements) and the imperviousness of the Israeli closure of Gaza, against the background of clashes between Fatah and Hamas, relegated archaeology to oblivion : packed and stored in the vaults of the Institut du Monde Arabe, the exhibits awaited their return to Gaza, absurd tripartite agreements between the Palestinian National Authority, Israel and France having stipulated their return to Gaza prior to their possible reexport for other exhibitions in Europe or the USA. Meanwhile, tenaciously, Father Jean-Baptiste Humbert, O.P., in Charge of Archaeology at the Dominican Ecole Biblique continued to work on behalf of Gaza in close association with Dr Moain Sadeq, General Director of the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of Gaza for the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of the Palestinian National Authority.

The Archaeological Museum of Gaza in the Making

From the meeting of Father Humbert and Dr Marc-André Haldimann, Curator in charge of the Department of Archaeology of the Musée d'art et d'histoire of Geneva, and from a shared dedication to Palestine, sprung the idea of an unusual partnership between the Palestine National Authority, the civil engineer Jawdat Khoudary (who for the last 21 years has saved from destruction on the building sites of Gaza or from dispersal in private collections in Israel or abroad more than 3000 archaeological objects now officially listed in the Inventory of the cultural heritage of Palestine), and the City of Geneva. The aim is the creation with the help of the Ecole Biblique, of a privately-funded archaeological museum in Gaza under the aegis of UNESCO, the driving force being the City of Geneva. Beyond the exhibition "Gaza at the Crossroads of Civilisations" towards which all energies and enthusiasms were mustered together so that may be heard "the breathing of the soul of Gaza" (as beautifully described by Patrice Mugny, Vice-president of the administrative Council of the City of Geneva and administrative Councillor in charge of the Department of Cultural Affairs), with the full support of the Helvetic Confederation (true to its tradition of

benevolent Justice), Geneva has committed itself to lending its technical and scientific support in order to establish the future archaeological Museum in Blakhiyah on the ruins of the ancient port of Anthedon at the gates of the Shatti refugee camp. This museum will bring together all the artefacts unearthed in the Gaza Strip, including Jawdat Khoudary's entire collection, of which several objects "replace" their like uncovered in stratigraphic excavations, patiently and lovingly restored, and.... destroyed by the shelling of Israeli tanks and aeroplanes. Moreover, the Palestinian staff of the Museum will be trained in the Geneva museums.

Gaza and Geneva

The first knot between Geneva and Gaza was tied by the Geneva-born pioneer of Arabic epigraphy, Max van Berchem, who scoured the streets and alleyways of Gaza in May 1893, mapping 29 mosques, eight *welis* (graves of the Prophet Muhammad's friends) and three *maqâms* (mausolea of Moslem "saints"), recording the Arabic inscriptions of the Great Mosque of 'Umar and of the former residence (Pasha Palace) of the Mamluk emirs, as well as examining the epitaphs of the northern cemetery. Several beautiful pieces of Poros and Marmara marble which had graced Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Gaza and which had been reused in its Arab buildings, as well as carved doors which had attracted van Berchem's attention, were saved by Jawdat Khoudary from the modernist building fever which gripped Gaza following the Oslo Agreements. Studied by the Geneva-born scholars Danielle Decrouez and Caroline Nebel, by a twist of History they are presently admired by international visitors in van Berchem's native city.

The discovery in 1980 in the excavations of the Geneva Cathedral of fragments of a wine amphora typical of mid-Vth century AD Gaza ware had fired the imagination of the citizens of Geneva. Restored, this amphora holds a key-position by welcoming visitors to the exhibition "Gaza at the Crossroads of Civilisations". It stands at the head of a series of Phoenician, Cypriot, Punic, Roman, Late Roman and Byzantine *amphorae* along a central axis which stretches figuratively beyond the large stained-glass window in the east wall of the first exhibition room, and symbolically leads the eye towards the nave of the Geneva Cathedral which also points towards the Orient.



Byzantine Amphora, Vth-VIth century (H. 72 cm, l. 27.5 cm) found in Gaza, Blakhiyah (Department of Antiquities, Gaza). Photo: Chaman atelier multimédia, S. Crettenand.



3D computerized image of the Geneva amphora by Fareed Armaly. Photo: Chaman atelier multimédia, S. Crettenand.

"Gaza at the Crossroads of Civilisations": a Memorable Exhibition

Adroitly and imaginatively conceived by the two Curators of the exhibition, Marc-André Haldimann (mentioned previously) and Marielle Martiniani-Reber, Curator in charge of the applied arts at the Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève, the route across the Gaza Strip from the Bronze Age to 1948 runs lengthwise over two vast halls. This course through Time and Space physically materializes the arc of dunes of the Palestinian coast which bends from Raphia (immemorial border with Egypt) to Ascalon on the impressive satellite photograph facing visitors as they enter the Exhibition and which appears on the cover of the excellent book *Gaza à la croisée des civilisations. I. Contexte archéologique et historique* (Chaman Editions, Neuchâtel, 2007) with contributions by renowned scholars who have replaced the artefacts within their historical contexts. The central theme, "Gaza, an international crossroads", is embodied by objects that witness as much to the prosperity of daily life resulting from the lucrative redistribution of incense from the Yemen, of medicinal myrrh from Socotra, and from the slave trade, as to the destructive cycle "siege-conquest-occupation" and to internal clashes.

In the Beginning

Straddling Palestine and Egypt, endowed with important resources in water and with fertile soils for the growing of wheat, vine and fruit trees, the Gaza region was, from the beginning of its history, prey to Colonialist lust. In the Early Bronze Age I (3500-2250 BC), Egyptian colonists settled in Canaanite territory and founded Tell as-Sakan (5 ha), 5 km southwest of Gaza city. The abundance in wine jars* collected in the course of excavations directed by Pierre de Miroschedji (Director of the Centre de Recherche Français de Jérusalem-CNRS) suggests that they exported to Egypt Palestinian products, in particular wine, a luxury commodity and the main produce of Southwestern Palestine, whose importation in Egypt was a royal monopoly (asterisks* denote artefacts exhibited in Geneva). The urbanisation of Palestine ca 3000 BC and the emergence of entities capable of exploiting economically their own lands and of providing Egypt with necessary foodstuffs, rendered these Egyptian colonies obsolete; they were consequently abandoned. Henceforth, royal emissaries conducted commercial expeditions by sea with the aim of establishing links with the Canaanite princes of Northern Palestine. Ca 2500 BC, in Bronze Age III, Tell as-Sakan was reoccupied: the houses of this city with mudbrick fortifications contained typically Canaanite material similar to that found on contemporaneous sites further inland: large, high-necked storage jars*, red glazed dishes*, jugs*, a bone handle with incised geometric décor*, beads*. Ca 2250 BC, Tell as-Sakan was finally abandoned as the urban civilisation of Egypt and Palestine collapsed, opening the way to a return to semi-nomadism and autarchy. In the Middle Bronze Age I, in 2000 BC, nomadic pastoralists sedentarised and founded Tell al-'Ajjul covering 12 ha and situated 1 km to the south of Tell as-Sakan. Vast fortified warehouse-city in the Middle Bronze II (1850 BC), Tell al-'Ajjul had a large, rectangular palace. In the XVth century BC, Egypt governed by the female Pharaoh Hatchepsut, laid hands again on Palestine. Gaza was founded in the XIVth century, in the Late Bronze Age, and soon became the political and administrative heart of "Egyptian territory" in Canaan. Pottery imports indicate close commercial ties not solely with Egypt (calcite craters and jars*), but also with Cyprus (milk bowls* and opium juglets in the shape of poppy heads*), the Lebanon, Syria, Cappadocia and Central Anatolia.

Philistine Gaza

In Year 8 of the reign of Pharaoh Ramses III (1198-1166 BC), the Syro-Palestinian coast was invaded on several occasions by the "Sea Peoples", foremost amongst whom were the Philistines (*Peleset*) who settled predominantly in the southwestern plain of Palestine. The discovery of "Philistine" pottery* in Gaza confirms the Biblical tradition that Gaza was in the XIIth-XIth centuries (Joshua 13, 2-3) one of the cities of the Philistine Pentapole. Subsequently, the history of the region is shrouded in a Dark Age, until the Neo-

Assyrian conquest of Palestine. Tiglath-pileser III (744-727) seized Gaza (*ha-za-ti* ou *ha-zi-ti* in Assyrian) in 734. At the death of Sargon II (721-705), a rebellion broke out which necessitated a punitive expedition led in 701 by his son Sennacherib (704-681). The loyalty of the King of Gaza to the Assyrians was rewarded: he was granted part of the lands in Southern Palestine which Sennacherib had conquered. A century later, in order to escape destruction by the Neo-Babylonian armies of Nabuchednezzar II (604-562), the King of Gaza sought his protection, but Gaza was taken back by Pharaoh Neko II. Finally, when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 BC, the Egyptian army having left Philistia, the King of Gaza definitively bended to Nabuchednezzar II.

Gaza, a Caravan City under Persian Domination

In 539 BC, Cyrus seized Babylon. The Persian Achaemenid empire which he founded was divided into large satrapies grouping together various cities and provinces. Gaza, like the other cities which had been under Neo-Babylonian control, was incorporated in the Vth Transeuphratene Satrapy which stretched from the Euphrates to the border with Egypt. Persian Gaza (539-332 BC), which the Greek historian Herodotus called Cadytis, covered three sites: the city of Gaza 3 km inland from the sea; in a cove, the small, fortified harbour of Anthedon of which a quarter was uncovered in the salvage excavations directed by J.-B. Humbert and M. Sadeq (1995-1999) in Blakhiyah; lastly, the maritime quarter of Maiumas west of Gaza and south of Anthedon; with in-between gardens, palm groves and orchards. Cadytis was controlled by the "Arabs" of the Kingdom of Qedar which held sway over several tribes of the Negev, Edom and beyond to the southeast, prominent among these the Nabateans. Against an annual gift to the Great Persian King of a thousand talents (or 20 to 30 tons) of incense, the Arabs, considered to be allies, did not have to pay tribute. Situated at the outlet of tracks which criss-crossed the Negev desert and linked the Arabian peninsula to the Mediterranean, Gaza was an intermediary, a turn-table for the conveying of incense and myrrh to Greece (where they were much in demand for temple sacrifices) and for spreading the use among the Arabs of Athenian silver tetradrachms* and of fine Attic ware, of which numerous cups and craters with black and red figures of Dionysus (VIth century-480 BC), associated with the consumption of wine, were unearthed in Anthedon. From Gaza, caravans also brought slaves to Arabia.

In the Vth century BC, the mint of Gaza – wealthy caravan-city – provided the Arabs of the region with tetradrachms bearing the figure of an owl in imitation of Athenian coins* for important transactions. In the IVth century, as imports of fine Attic ware became rarer, imported Tyrian shekels replaced Athenian tetradrachms in major transactions, whilst the Gaza mint produced a great number of drachmas*, tiny coins for daily transactions.



Terracotta flask (14 x 6 x 10 cm) in the shape of a dromedary from Gaza, Blakhiyah. Hellenistic or Roman. Jawdat Khoudary



Drachma of Classical Athenian type, between 410 et 332 BC. Silver, 4.18 g. Gaza. Jawdat Khoudary Collection, Gaza. Photo: Chaman atelier multimédia, S. Crettenand.

In a Permanent State of Siege: Hellenistic Gaza

In the Autumn of 332 BC, on his way to Egypt, Alexander the Great besieged Gaza, which controlled access to the Nile Delta. The engines of war which had crushed Tyre, quashed the resistance of the citizens of Gaza who were all killed or enslaved. Gaza also paid a heavy price in the wars between the Diadochs, the first successors of Alexander. Razed to the ground in 311 by Ptolemy Ist, it was fortified anew by Antigonos, only to fall again under the yoke of the Ptolemies following Antigonos' defeat at the battle of Ipsos in 301. Between 218 and 200 BC, it constantly changed hands between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids.

Hellenized by the Seleucids, Gaza is described on late IInd century BC coins as "holy" and "inviolable", thus indicating that it had been granted the privilege of *asylia**. Yet, how often was she raped! True to the Seleucids, it became a scapegoat in the confrontation of the Maccabees (who aimed at creating a Jewish State) and the Seleucids of Syria (who attempted to limit local aspirations to autonomy). In 143 BC, Jonathan Maccabee besieged Gaza and devastated its territory. In 103-102, Alexandre Janneus destroyed Raphia and Anthedon, and later Gaza after a year-long siege.

Roman Resurrection and Sandy Disasters

Gaza's resurrection was due to Rome. After taking Jerusalem, the Roman general Pompey "freed" the cities which had been annexed by the Hasmonean Jewish Kings. Gaza was "restored" in 61 BC, Anthedon in 58, but both within the Roman province of Syria. They continued nevertheless to change hands according to the whims of regional politics: when Mark Anthony took charge of the Roman East, he gave Gaza to his ally, Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. When Egypt was annexed by Rome after the battle of Actium, Gaza was severed from it by Octavius, and together with Anthedon, in 30 BC, was given to King Herod who put Gaza (turned towards the Negev desert and its caravan routes) under the jurisdiction of an Idumean governor. Anthedon (which looked across the Mediterranean Sea) was founded anew and renamed Agrippina. Upon Herod's death in 4 BC, Emperor Augustus returned the three "Greek" cities of Gaza, Gadara and Hippos to Provincia Syria. The Gaza mint took up again the production of bronze coins*. Peace and prosperity had not necessarily returned to Gaza: in 66 BC, to avenge the massacre of Jews in Caesarea, their co-religionists sacked and entirely destroyed Gaza and Anthedon. In AD 129, Gaza, however, was prosperous enough to bear the expense of Emperor Hadrian's official visit: the ramparts, the colonnaded streets, the theatre, the temples, fountains (*nymphae*), gymnasium and Baths, the essential components of a Roman city described *ca* AD 400 by Mark the Deacon in his *Life of Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza*, and illustrated by the vignettes "Gaza" on the Madaba Mosaic Map of AD 560-565 and on the pavement of the church of St Stephen at Umm ar-Rasas in Jordan, were probably already extant. Starting point of a new dating Era (129) after the Pompeian Era (61 BC), the imperial visit brought Gaza the significant privilege of minting a series of five bronze coins instead of the usual one, two or three, and the institution of an annual religious festival associated with a fair, the Hadrianic Panegyric which soon became as famous as the Agon, the "isolympic" (equal to the Olympic Games) sport competition for which Gaza was renowned since the second half of the IInd century BC. The caravan trade of Gaza prospered, humorously illustrated in Geneva by a pottery flask in the shape of a dromedary carrying four *amphorae** in which was exported wine. Imported *amphorae*, notably from North Africa in the IIIrd century*, were reused inserted into the mudbrick dividing walls of houses, and even as barricades. Thus *amphorae* and storage jars were piled up in a vain attempt to stop the staggeringly fast onslaught of moving dunes of sand carried by the Nile from Abyssinia or by the Wadi al-'Arish from the southern Sinai mountains: a domestic quarter of Anthedon was entirely engulfed by the advancing sand which poured into the streets and the houses already emptied of their inhabitants.

Pagan and Christian Gaza

Gaza can take pride in three foundation myths: its name 'Aza supposedly derives from Azôn, the god Heracles' son; its other name *Iône* from the cow-goddess Iô; and, its appellation *Minoa* was linked to Minos who may have introduced the cult of the Cretan Zeus assimilated to the oracular Semitic god Marnas, master of rain, whose name means "our Lord". Its citizens, however, also worshipped Aphrodite, Apollo and Artemis, Core, Hecate, and the Tyche (the goddess of plenty, protectress of the city). Pagan to the core, although it had provided the Diocletianic persecution (302-308) with an important contingent of Christian martyrs, Gaza opposed a fierce resistance to the Christian mission and to imperial decrees. As early as 323, Emperor Constantine forbade erecting new statues to the gods; Constance II (327-361) prohibited sacrifices; and, by an edict promulgated in November 392, Theodosius II (379-395) forbade across the empire any manifestation of pagan cults and ordained the closure of all temples. In February 398, these (in particular the Marneion) were still operating in Gaza. It required Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza (whose parishioners numbered barely 200), to travel twice to Constantinople in 398 and 400, and the most Christian Augusta Eudoxia to manoeuvre skilfully, for Emperor Arcadius to order the destruction and burning of all temples and idols, and to send a high imperial official to Gaza to supervise the implementation of that decision with the support of the governor of Palestine I, of the military commander of Palestine I, II and III, and of a police, civilian and military force. During ten days (13th-24th May 402), soldiers assisted by the Christians of Gaza and those of its harbour, Maiumas Gazae, destroyed eight temples, demolishing some, torching others. The population of Maiumas had converted collectively to Christianity very early and had been granted by Emperor Constantine the right to set up Maiumas as an independent city renamed Constantia in honour of the emperor's daughter. This decision was revoked by Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363). Maiumas returned to being simply a maritime quarter of Gaza with the name of Gaza Maritima, but retained its episcopal autonomy. A cosmopolitan city, it gathered within its walls foreign nationals, such as Egyptian wine merchants, or minorities, notably a small Jewish community whose synagogue was paved in 508-509 with a splendid "inhabited scroll" mosaic thanks to the generosity of two brothers, the wood merchants Menahem and Peshu'a.

The light of paganism continued to shine in the Gaza region until the VIth century. On the border with Egypt, did Raphia (which was not represented at an oecumenical council until that of Ephesus in 431) not claim to have been founded by Dionysus-Bacchus? The god parades with ostentation and exuberance at his own Triumph on a pavement uncovered by J. Clédat in 1914 at esh Sheikh Zuweid. Dated between the middle of the IVth century and the middle of the Vth century, it floored a small fort which controlled the sea road linking Rhinocolura, modern al-'Arish in Egypt, to Raphia. The theme of Phaedra's forbidden love for her stepson Hippolytus is enriched by the depiction of Bacchanalia, satyrs, silenes and maenads, Heracles and Pan preceding Eros dragging a chariot onto which Dionysus has climbed. On the pavement of a VIth villa excavated in 1967 in a field of Kibbutz Erez (near the modern border checkpoint between the Gaza Strip and Israel), a Phrygian pulls behind him on a double leash a tigress suckling its cub, followed by a tiger. A blue-and-black elephant, the cleft hooves of a he-goat and of another animal, a draped figure and two fruit-trees combine to create a variant of the Indian Triumph of Dionysos perhaps inspired by the *Dionysiaca* of the Egyptian Nonnos of Panopolis, a long epic poem which describes Dionysus' travels in Asia Minor and in the Near-East, as well as his expedition to India.

Gaza remained a centre of Greek culture in the Byzantine period. The reputation of its sophists who had frequently studied in Alexandria, such as Procopius (495-526) who had been trained in rhetoric there, attracted to it students from all parts of the Greek-speaking world. The masters of the "School of Gaza" were however as much Christians and theologians as Hellenists and rhetors. In *Theophrastus* – a Platonic dialogue -, Aeneus of Gaza attempted to prove the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of bodies,

and Procopius penned several Biblical commentaries. The grammarian Timotheus addressed a poetic request to Emperor Anastasius for the suppression of the chrysargyros, a heavy tax which crushed tradesmen and artisans. He also wrote a hexametric treatise *On Animals*, which describes rare species of beasts and birds from India, Arabia and Africa, giraffes, tigers, zebras, elephants, ostriches - an exotic bestiary typical of the mosaic pavements of Gaza and of its region, such as the mosaic carpet in the nave of a Chapel at Dayr al-Balah*.



VIth century AD Mosaic carpet (7 x 4 m) in the nave of a Byzantine chapel in Dayr al-Balah, now lost (Department of Antiquities, Gaza). Photo: Chaman atelier multimédia, S. Crettenand.

Choricus succeeded his master Procopius as professor of rhetoric and public orator employed by the City of Gaza. He composed speeches to mark the weddings and funerals of notables, praised the Consularius Stephanus, the Dux Aratius, the Master of Militias Summus, pronounced a first panegyric on the enthusiastic founder of churches, Bishop Marcianus of Gaza, on the occasion of the dedication of the Church of St Sergius, the construction of which was completed before 536; and a second panegyric for the dedication of the Church of St Stephen, erected between 536 and 548. Like the poet and grammarian John of Gaza in his *Anacreontica*, Choricus in his *Orationes*, celebrates the "Day of the Roses", a Spring festival coinciding with the pagan *Rosalia*, funerary ceremonies in honour of the god Adonis, in which the rose associated to the god's blood symbolized his resurrection.

Paradoxically, Gaza was also one of the two cradles of burgeoning Palestinian monasticism. Its founder, Hilarion, born a pagan in 293 at Thauatha in the hinterland of Gaza, was schooled in Alexandria. Attracted by the fame of St Anthony, founder of Egyptian monastic eremitism, he spent a few months with him, and then returned to Thauta aged fifteen. According to the *Life of St Hilarion* written in 391 by St Jerome, after the death of Hilarion's parents, he launched upon a solitary life on the Egyptian model, in a desolate area between sea and swamps, 10 km to the southeast of Maiumas Gazae, living only on dry bread, salt and water, and weaving wicker baskets. *Ca* 330, a community developed around him, and his disciples founded hermitages and monasteries in the hill country between Jerusalem and Gaza. In 356, St Hilarion fled from the fame which his miracles and exorcism had brought him, and sought solitude in a nomadic life from Alexandria to Sicily, Dalmatia, the Cyclades and Paphos on Cyprus where he died in 373. His body was secretly brought back to Gaza and buried in his hermitage, the nucleus of his monastery which had

been destroyed during the pagan revival under Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363) and rebuilt. The remains of an impressive complex were recently unearthed at Umm al-'Amr south of Gaza near Thauatha by J.-B. Humbert (EBAF) and R. Elter (INRAP) who are inclined to identify this site with the Monastery of Hilarion.

Gazan monasticism developed along two lines: a Monophysite branch (based on the belief that "the divine essence of Jesus had absorbed his human nature"), represented by Peter the Iberian, Bishop of Maiumas in 452-53 and founder of a monastery in its district; and a diophysite, but hesychastic branch, in the communal monastery (*coenobion*) of Seridos. Totally recluse, the Great Elders, Barsanuphius and John the Prophet (+ 540) locked themselves up in their cells and communicated with the outside world solely in the form of questions which monks and lay people put to them in writing and to which they replied in writing, giving them guidelines to improve their lives as Christians. They considered that it was only at this price that they would be able to find the necessary peace (*hesychia*) for reaching God.

As a trading centre, Gaza reached its apogee during the Golden Age of Emperor Justinian (527-565). As the vast Byzantine Empire structured itself increasingly rigidly, imperial power legislated, demanding strict adherence to one and only Christian and Orthodox ideology. It is symptomatic that the object of the *Brumalia*, an annual, public and somewhat licentious panegyric, having shifted from Bacchus to Emperor Justinian and his spouse Theodora, the festival lost its pagan character (with competitions degenerating into scuffles) and that symbolical rites of political allegiance to imperial authority were grafted onto it, as transpires from Choricus' speech of 1st or 2nd December 532 or 533. Likewise, mosaic art, in particular in Gaza, became more structured and more geometric in spirit if not necessarily in form in the course of the VIth century. Whereas hunting scenes had lacked an apparent narrative sequence, and ducks and waders had been juxtaposed in Nilotic scenes, the new organisation of human and animal motifs tended towards the resolution of horizontal and dynamic, but contrary thrusts in a static, central, vertical axis. Thus, the pavements of the synagogue of Maiumas Gazae and Maon-Nirim (post-536), of the Church of Shellal (561-2) and of a Chapel at Dayr al-Balah (579)* show a central axis consisting of circular medallions of vine scrolls enclosing baskets and vases, and flanked on either side by pairs of antithetic beasts and fowl arranged symmetrically. The tendency of mosaists of the "Justinianic Renaissance" to articulate, limit and harmonize connections and proportions fully flowered in the highly organized matrix of geometric motifs on the late pavements of churches in the Gaza Strip which continued in use until Abbassid rule.

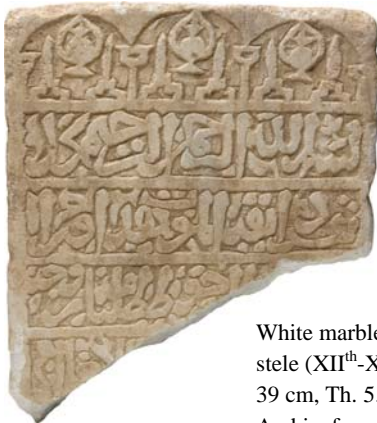
At the "Gaza" exhibition in Geneva, a remarkable maquette* replicates on a reduced scale the entire iconographic mosaic programme of the ecclesiastical complex of Mukhaytim at Jabaliyah, founded in the mid-Vth century, but whose latest pavement was laid in the Umayyad period in 732, according to two Greek inscriptions in the central nave. It conveys the splendour of this complex which comprised a basilica, a chapel, a baptistery, and a *hypogeum* under the atrium of the basilica. This burial vault contained the bones of 40 monks or/and nuns carefully stacked, with 30 rings and 70 Late Byzantine oil lamps*.

From 618-19 to 629, Gaza was occupied by the Sassanian Persians, and then fell to the Arabs in June-July 637. The Christian community was authorised to worship in the Eudoxiana Church built in 406 over the ruins of the pagan Marneion. Greek and Latin continued to be written for several generations.

Muslim Arab Gaza

The Arab roots of Gaza which reach back to at least the Persian period, were not merely "economic", even if, according to the Arab historians al-Istakhri (who died in 957) and al-Muqaddasi (who died in 990), 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the Prophet Muhammad's successor and second Caliph (634-644) lived and made a fortune in Gaza before Islam. For Muslims, Gaza is holy, since it contains the grave of the Prophet's great

grandfather, Hashim ibn Abd Manaf. A Mecca merchant trading with Syria and Egypt, he frequently travelled through Gaza where he accidentally died. Over his grave, the al-Sayyid Hashim mosque was erected in 1850 by al-Hajj Ahmad al-Husayn. Within the military district (*jund*) of *Filastin* (Palestine), Gaza continued to flourish as a trading centre under the Umayyad dynasty (635-750), the Abbassids (750-909) and the Fatimids (909-1171). It is described by the geographer Ibn Hawqal (who died in 977) as an important city near the sea, dominated by the Great Mosque of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, on the edge of the desert, surrounded by extensive orchards (the orange tree was introduced to Gaza from India in 943) and vineyards, with the small fortified city of Mimas (whose name derived from ancient Maiumas) as its harbour. Its law School founded by Muhammad al-Shafi (767-782) was famous. Included in 1099 by the Crusaders in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, Gaza turned into a walled garrison-town with a fort controlled by the Templars who also held the fort of ad-Darum (Dayr al-Balah). In the XIIth century, the Cathedral of St John the Baptist was built. Saladin and his Ayyubid successors (1169-1250), and the Crusaders fought tenaciously over Gaza. Anthedon, renamed Tayda, continued to operate as a port. Besides pottery (XIIIth-XVth century oil lamps*, some slipper-shaped, and flasks*), funerary *stelae** in sandstone inscribed in Kufic script (early IXth century) or or white Marmara marble (XIIth-XIIIth centuries), Mamluk decorative geometric panels in limestone, and Ottoman carved marble *oculi*, what traces remain of the Ayyubids, Mamluks (1250-1516) and Ottomans (1516-1917) in Gaza?



White marble Ayyubid Funerary stele (XIIth-XIIIth century) (H. max. 39 cm, Th. 5.5 cm), inscribed in Arabic, found in Gaza (Department of Antiquities, Gaza). Photo: Chaman atelier multimédia, S. Crettenand.



Ottoman *oculus* (ventilation) (XIXth century) in limestone with marble incrustations (H. 35 cm, l. 43 cm, Th. 7 cm). Gaza (Department of Antiquities, Gaza). Photo: Chaman atelier multimédia, S. Crettenand.

Founded in 1239 next to the graves of ten Muslim warriors killed in a battle against the Crusaders, the Ayyubid an-Nasr mosque ("of Victory") at Bayt Hanûn, north of Gaza, was totally destroyed by the Israeli army in November 2006. The Mamluk period was particularly splendid in the Gaza Strip. In the Old City of Gaza, the sufi convent, the *az-zawiya* al-Ahmadiya, was founded in 1330 by Emir Turintay al-Jukandar, governor of Gaza, in memory of the famous sufi mystic Ahmad al-Badawi (who died in 1276); nearby stands the tomb of Qutlu Khatun (1332); the *qaysariyya*, gold market (*suq ad-dahab*) was built in 1448 by a judge, Shaykh Shams al-Himsi. The Ash-Shuja'yya suburb encloses numerous Mamluk buildings, mosques and a Kuranic school (*madrassa*). The caravanserail (*khan*) erected by the Mamluk Emir Yunus an-Nawruzi in 1379 constitutes the heart of the city of Khan Yunis 30 km south of Gaza; it was turned into a fort (*qal'a*)

under the Ottoman Sultan Selim Ist (1515-1520) in order to control the main road to Egypt. At the end of the XVIIIth century, under Ottoman pashas (whose palace was restored by the Department of Antiquities of Palestine), Gaza considered itself to be the capital of Palestine.

A Byzantine marble column reused as a funerary stele on the grave of Lieutenant Fas Lansdowne, Bengal Lancer, which bears, engraved in high relief, the date of his death on 14 August 1917 during the British siege of Gaza, marks both the chronological limits of archaeological investigation and the end of the exhibition. By extending the narrative of the history of Gaza to the British Mandate (1918-1948), to the *Nakba* (1948), to Gaza entrusted to Egypt (1948-1967), to Israeli raids during the Suez Affair (1956), to Israeli Occupation (1967-1993), to the First Intifada (1987), to the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority on 18th May 1994, and to the Second Intifada (2000), up to the dismantling of the Israeli illegal settlements (2005), a plain, final explanatory panel propels visitors into the modern world, compelling them to realize that Gaza Time will be regained only with the advent of a Palestinian State in which the refugees will have been able to cast off their status of passive recipients of UNWRA aid and will have regained a real and active citizenship.

The Lesson of the Past: the Desperation to Live

The wager of the organisers of this memorable exhibition has not only been won, but largely transcended, for, together with the flutter of the soul of Gaza may be heard the latter's fantastic capacity throughout its history to overcome sieges, pillage and destruction, and to rebuild itself. A tremendous message of hope has thus been conveyed to us. Likewise, by calling "Shar(e)d Domains" (a play on the words "shard" and "shared") the 3D computerized image of the amphora found in Geneva, stripped of its apparent surface and offering a new envelope resulting from vectorial coordinates, Fareed Armaly, the modern Palestinian "artist-in-residence" for the duration of the exhibition, has plumped for a positive approach, choosing to emphasize not fragments, but joins, dialogue rather than separation. Whereas, according to its creator, this image at the very centre of the exhibition "gives shape to narratives unfolding along the fault lines of History" (*Gaza à la croisée des civilisations*. I, p. 10), to us, it recalls the map of Palestine dismembered under Israeli Occupation, gashed by roads, by-pass paths and check-points, punctuated by encircled cities (Gaza, Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus, Jenin), but also devoid of a "Green Line", one, undividable, returned to being one State – a concept marginalized for a long time, but now the only viable, hope-bearing solution.

What greater defiance of Zionist hegemony, what more vibrant expression of the Palestinian national will shouldered by Geneva, City of Peace, and by the oldest centre of Palestinian archaeology, the Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, than this exhibition "Gaza at the Crossroads of Civilisations", embryo of a museum, dream of historical Palestine become archaeological reality disclosing the physical roots of a people's identity in its Land?

Let Jean Baptiste Humbert and Moain Sadeq, the Fathers of Gazan Palestinian archaeology have the last word: "May we wish that the generation now growing in Palestine discovers the passion to learn, conducts its own archaeology, becomes enthusiastic for its own heritage. Locked up more than ever before, Gaza opens today the great book of its History, in which, despite many torn pages, a few ink spots, and the erasures of the past, it will read that it was one of the oldest cities of the world and that it is still there" (*Gaza à la croisée des civilisations*. I, p. 43).

DIALOGUE

**REVIEW FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN
ARAB AND JEWISH ACTIVISTS OF PALESTINE**

END OF TERM REPORT PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH, ARABIC, HEBREW AND FRENCH

dialoguereview@yahoo.com

CONTACT ADDRESS : REVUE DIALOGUE, 87, RUE DU FAUBOURG-SAINT-DENIS, 75010 PARIS, FRANCE