**Political Science**

# Applying Hegel's Project of Reconciliation to the Palestinian Society

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## Abstract

No one denies that alienation in the Palestinian society has deepened since the separation of Gaza. Most impoverished Palestinians feel that they are abandoned and that they are foreign to their society and its institutions. Furthermore, they feel that they are cut off from political life since only Palestinians with political affiliation can participate in the political arena. In the last few years, there have been many initiatives to reconcile the two major players in the Palestinian political arena, namely, Fatah and Hamas, but although careful considerations were given to the parties themselves, no consideration was given to the ordinary Palestinian citizen. This was a mistake: before there can be political agreement, the ordinary Palestinian needs to be reconciled to his society and its institutions in order to overcome alienation. The Palestinian society is in greater need first for an initiative that applies Hegel's project of reconciliation to overcome and heal the contradictions, conflicts, and fragmentations between the individual and his society.

## 1. Introduction

Hamas won the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) Election by an overwhelming majority. Most Palestinians envisaged this historic event as an accomplishment rather than an endowment. Since then, peoples' lives have been at risk as a result of what the so called 'democracy' or 'the right to vote', i.e. the price of freedom. Inasmuch as the Palestinian people were enthusiastic and fervent about participating in the election, they were alienated by what happened afterwards, and the election campaign has become a divisive tool to straddle the gap between the Palestinians. The Palestinian people began a new phase of struggle to grope their way out of this swamp after loathing the outcomes of the election; they are now craving for peace and security and try to collect their smithereens and start a new phase of living. At the same time, the enmity was deepened between Fatah and Hamas. On the one hand, Hamas loftily saw in this victory a hope to put an end to a long period of enormity, inequity, and injust; they came to view themselves as an exemplar of inerrancy, sublimity, and political integrity. On the other hand, Fatah whose leaders are reluctant to relinquish their 'prerogative' power dismiss Hamas as political novices unprepared to govern.

Berating and accusing Hamas of terrorism, Western and Eastern countries hastened to impose all kinds of sanctions on the newly formed government while still in an embryonic state; they swamped it with all kinds of accusations in order to bluntly and wantonly curtail, embroiled, and sabotage the peoples' choice. Hamas leaders tried vainly to convince the world to honor the election result and to give the new government a chance to demonstrate its policies, particularly in reducing poverty and putting an end to the corruption prevalent in the Palestinian Authority. Hamas also tried to form a government of a national unity, a mosaic that will save the 'democratic election campaign', but that was boycotted and rejected by other Palestinian factions led by Fatah. Faced by all kinds of rejections and non-resilience, Hamas decided to take the matter into their own hands and to take over Gaza Strip, and since then, Hamas was slammed by different kinds of criticisms and condemnations. An endless war of words and ambivalent reports merged between the two major political factions in the Palestinian arena. Many Palestinians became victims to this state of anarchy; ultimately, many Palestinians lost their jobs, and in some cases their lives, and were banned from traveling especially the Gazans.

Where does the ordinary Palestinian individual (citizen) stand in this anarchic situation? Most Palestinians have affiliations with Palestinian political factions. There are no reliable numbers regarding the breakdown of these links. Percentages that are publicly announced are anything but neutral; they take sides according to who is compiling these statistics, which side is financing the survey and who the results serve or benefit. Roughly speaking, 40% of the Palestinian population affiliates with Fatah, 25% affiliates with Hamas, 10% affiliates with other Palestinian factions such as the Peoples Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), etc. and 25% has no affiliation whatsoever.

For the majority of the Palestinian people in general and Hamas members in particular, the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and 1994 marked the end of decades of nationalist struggle and resistance; for them, the Oslo Accords were a mistake because of the concessions made by the leaders at the time of signing these accords. Following the signing of Oslo Accords and the concessions made, leaders were allowed to return to Palestine in exchange for more concessions such as giving up the right to return for millions of Palestinian refugees who are scattered in the Diaspora, accepting dividing what remains from the West Bank into scattered cantons, and blessing the building of the apartheid wall which swallowed hundreds of thousands of acres of farming lands owned by innocent Palestinian peasants. According to a large portion of the Palestinian society, what made matters worse was corruption. The returnees were first welcomed as heroes; the Palestinian Authority began building its institutions and organizations, and most of the returnees were appointed heads of these institutions. The PA received billion of dollars from Western donors such as the United States, Europe, and Japan. These donations were meant to improve the living standards of the impoverished Palestinian citizens in refugee camps and other areas and to build the infrastructure for the nascent authority. According to many, a great portion of these donations was spent to cater for the personal needs of corrupt officials in different institutions. No tangible changes in the life of the ordinary Palestinian people took place, and as a result the ordinary Palestinian was living a life of alienation within his social world; an alienation caused by unfair distribution of jobs, a sky-rocketing unemployment rate, lack of freedom, and injustice. A race for power and a danger of domestic disputes loomed in the minds of Fatah's leaders and their rivals from Hamas faction. With the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000 and its revelation of the anger of many Palestinians, a race for power was inevitable between Hamas and Fatah. At that time, Hamas had gained a tremendous momentum and public support after carrying out several martyrdom attacks on Israeli settlers while Fatah was deteriorating and losing momentum and support because of the corruption and the destructive consequences of the Oslo Accords. According to Hamas leaders, the mainstream Fatah cadres were busy holding meetings with the Israeli officials while innocent lives were at stake; innocent unarmed Palestinian children, women and old people were slaughtered like sheep in cold blood while some Palestinian leaders were chasing a mirage (the peace process). The so called 'peace process' between the Palestinian Authority and the Israelis brought nothing but disastrous consequences, thwarted and prevented ordinary Palestinians, who paid the hefty price, from living in peace.

As for the corruption and as perceived by many Palestinians,  posts in the public sector have become monopolized by a handful of corrupt individuals whose main task is to deprive ordinary citizens from obtaining public sector jobs. They cater for particular people and discriminate against affiliated with other factions and those who have no affiliation at all. As a result, inequalities, asymmetries in the distribution of power and injustices prevail in society, and ultimately, suppression and oppression of innocent people become inevitable.

Let us go back to the question: where does the ordinary Palestinian individual (citizen) stand under these conditions? It appears that the ordinary Palestinian individual is alienated but even more tragically. S/he is living in a social world where there is no hope to actualize himself or herself as an individual and a social member.

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Following the 2006 election, confusion and broader alienation became characteristics of the Palestinian individuality whether in the West Bank or in Gaza Strip as a result of the sanctions imposed on the Palestinian people from the international community led by the USA and Europe. The gap between the Palestinian as an individual and his social world became wider and deeper. his/her interests become separate from those of the surrounding civil society. The individual becomes secluded and in a state of incompatibility with his social world and its institutions, and the feeling of non-belonging to the state and its institutions begins to creep to the Palestinian society and becomes stronger and stronger in day-to-day life. Alien phenomena such as crimes, drug use, and a wish to emigrate come to be inevitable realities. A state of divorce between the individual and his individuality on the one hand and social membership on the other hand is dragging the whole society to the pit. More than 60% of the population live below the globally recognized poverty line where the monthly income barely enough to put bread on the table. One can tell, by looking at the tremendous number of applications filed by Palestinian youths to foreign consulates for immigration, that there is no congruence between the Palestinian individual and his social world and that switching allegiance is the most valid choice for the individual to feel at home. Many youths are ready to risk their lives to find a way out. All in all, the whole society is heading to the unknown, and the situation is very alarming.

## 2. Individualism

Changes in the economic and political foundations of society necessitate a thorough investigation of the individual's relation with his/her society. The term 'Individualism' is the product of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution (Morrison, 1995). Thinkers such as Joseph de Maistre and Henri Saint-Simon were the first to use the term to criticise the supremacy of the individual over the society. Individualism grew out of the framework of European thought within which the maintenance of society depended on the preservation of the large-scale social powers of the church, monarchy and state. Similarly, the authority, prerogative and proprietary powers over individuals of larger collective bodies such as the guilds, churches and the feudal estates were spelled out by state government (Hardimon, 1994; Morrison, 1995). Within this context, individuals were viewed as members of larger social groups. Group affiliation in large social institutions determines the legal rights and social obligations of the individuals who only participate in society as members of these larger groups. These larger groups asserted collective rights over individuals and acted as corporate bodies which exercised proprietary powers over them and determined their place in society. Authorities and power of these groups emerge through the state and the latter controls, dominates and regulates the occupations and trades. Individualism is a coinage given to those who separated themselves socially, politically and economically from larger social groups. Following the French Revolution, power and influence of the large social groups were abolished and the individual came to be the center of political thinking and social life. Individuals were given political and economic weight and were viewed separately from the larger society based on their own personal commercial merits. Individualism is the name given to the process leading to the political, social and economic separation of individuals from their societies.

Hegel conceived individuality from two different perspectives: 'the minimal sense' and 'the strong sense' (Hardimon, 1994). The first is the way in which an individual sees himself or herself as distinct from other people in society in virtue of having specific traits and qualities such as height, weight and physical strength. Hegel's thinks of this state as minimal for three reasons. First, the conception states a necessary condition of being a human being that is different from other individuals within the human species. Second, people are individuals because they are distinguished from other entities but without distinguishing themselves from other human beings. The third respect in which the minimal conception of individuality is considered as such because the individual does not view himself or herself as having separate interests (Hardimon, 1994).

This form of individuality (the minimal sense) does not draw lines or place barriers between the individual and the society to which s/he belongs; it only curtails the disparities to their minimal form; a form that is not viewed as secluding oneself from the society.

Hegel contends that people become individuals in the strong sense if two conditions are met; the first is that they have to conceive of themselves as individuals in the minimal sense (the feeling of distinctiveness is a prerequisite for the proceeding to the second and more dangerous stage, namely the strong sense of individualism), and the second is that they have to conceive of themselves in four ways: (a) selves (abstracting from the social role thinking whether this role is suitable to their temperaments and characters and whether they want to play the role anymore or not. This causes a reflective relationship with the social role played in society); (b) bearers of separate and particular interests (this implies having different and separate interests other than the interests of the other members in society, community or social world); (c) possessors of individual rights (all individuals within a particular society have equal rights regardless of their status or position or the social role they play in society. One views oneself in this way when one insists upon one's rights or complaints that one's rights have been violated without appealing to the prerogatives of one's social role or position. Hegel uses the technical term *"person"* for someone who views himself or herself in this way (Hardimon, 1994). Viewing oneself in this sense is simply regarding him/her in contrast to other individuals and society, separated from them by the rights one has (this point simply means that an individual is revolting against the regulations and rules imposed by his/her superiors especially the state)); (d) subject to conscience (regarding oneself as an independent source of moral assessment and evaluation. It involves also regarding oneself as having the capacity and right to access courses of actions, social roles and institutions on the basis of one's own private, subjective judgement, even id defiance of accepted practice and custom; for example, the way tyrants take over rules in many countries, coupes, avengers who take actions on their owns, etc. Conscience embodies subjectiveness and knowledge of what is right and good. It also brings one into conflict and reciprocal disparagement with one's society since one's conscience is in most cases at variance with that of the collectivity to which one belongs; the individual becomes to view his/her society in a pejorative way.

Nietzsche and Mill adopt stronger conceptions of individuality than that of Hegel. Nietzsche argues that a person is a genuine individual only if he undertakes to create his own values and live a life that is radically original and hence radically nonconformist. Mill adopts a stronger conception of individuality when he contends that being a genuine individual requires determining for oneself which of the customs and traditions of one's social world are suitable for oneself and choosing one's own life plan rather than simply doing what others do or try to impose on him or her (Hardimon, 1994).

Individuality in its strong sense is a modern phenomenon; modern people are individuals in the strong sense (Hardimon, 1994). On the one hand, following the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, individuals became the center of interests; Individuals were given economic and political weight depending on their own merits and efforts. On the other hand and according to Hegel, individuality is attributed to Christianity and Roman Law; Christianity engrossed and delved into the principle of the self-sufficient and inherently infinite personality of the individual which arose in an inward form in Christian religion and in an external form in the Roman world (Hardimon, 1994; Morrison, 1995).

The ancient Greeks, during the heydays of their culture, were not individuals in the strong sense of the term; they were more attached to their social roles (e.g. family members and citizens). There were no psychological distances that separated them from their roles.

They lacked the reflective detachment from their society; abstracting themselves from the social role and stepping back from it in thought and entering into a reflective relationship was not anticipated or accounted for. Hegel furthermore claims that the ancient Greeks did not conceive of themselves as having separate and particular interests that clash with their society's interests; there is a kind of congruence and compatibility between the individual and the public interests. Hegel contends that the individual rights of the ancient Greeks were not distinguished from those prerogatives attached to their social roles, and ultimately they felt no need for protection of individual rights (Hardimon, 1994).

Individualism views the individual human being as the absolute center of the society became under attack by Durkheim. He waged a war on utilitarianism which viewed the individual as completely autonomous, self-determined and exempt from any responsibility toward the society. Reducing society to individuals led the utilitarians to ignore the larger system of norms and rules at work in the society that impose constraints of the individual's actions (Morrison, 1995). Durkhein criticised the utilitarian theory and accused it of being incapable of explaining how social rules constrain the individual's actions. He also argued that because the society is at priority when compared with the individual, society must shape the individual's beliefs and attitudes and that society and the individual are inseparable. Historically, society precedes the individual; it is axiomatic to give prominence to society rather than to the individual's beliefs and ideologies.

### 3. Social membership

Hegel, as well as others, maintains that human beings are essentially social (Hardimon, 1994; Bally, Sechehaye & Reidlinger, 1974; Fishman, 1972); they are inherently and instinctively yearn to be- as spiritual and hence social and cultural beings- members of a society. Accordingly, they have no choice but to participate in their social world and its institutions. The roles played by members in the social world's institutions shape their personalities, and their fundamental needs and values are formed through a process of socialization, acculturation and education (Hardimon, 1994). Hegel does not claim that persons' characters and personalities are wholly determined by the roles they play in their social world's institutions; he contends that these social roles constitute core features of the psychological makeup of modern people, not that they exhaust personality and character. Human beings are not mere particularizations of their roles; on the contrary, Hegel recognizes that the particularities, eccentricities and idiosyncrasies of individual people are myriad (Ibid). Freedom of choice is also actualized through choosing the role an individual is playing in his social world. Accepting these roles by the individuals in a social world is simply an indication that this particular social world's arrangements are accepted and affirmed.

### 4. Hegelian perspective

Stewart (2010) argues that there are two different perceptions of the locus of "truth". It can be regarded as something inward (i.e. it lies in the heart and mind of the individual) or outward (i.e. it lies 'out there' in the world). The former binds truth to specific human beings, and the latter binds it to traditional societies and cultures. Subjectivism, modernism, relativism, and romanticism no longer believe that the locus of truth lies in the external world, namely, customs, traditions, laws, or similar institutions, but rather it lies in the spirit of the individual human being. The problem with the modern world is the potential for a dangerous relativism where every individual has his own private truth and there is no consensus about right and wrong. This leads to a sense of alienation from the other and from the social sphere as a whole. Hegel's perspective of truth is that it exists both in the outside world and in the inwardness of the individual. This formula overcomes the repression of the ancient world and the alienation of the modern (Stewart, 2010: P. 123).

Luther (2009: P. 10) argues that Hegel succeeded in integrating liberalism's concern for political rights and interests of individuals within the framework of a moral community. All in all, Hegel's philosophical approach tries to overcome the contradictions, conflicts and fragmentations between the individual self and his/her society.

**5. Initiatives for reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas:**

Several initiatives for reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas were submitted through the Arab League by different countries (e.g. Yemen, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, etc.) to bring closer together the disputing parties. Unfortunately, the main concern of these initiatives has been to bring together the political factions without paying attention to the needs of individual Palestinians. The individual Palestinian receives little or no consideration in order to be reconciled with his social world. Fatah and Hamas follow different ideological trajectories, and reconciliation of the two factions seems unachievable, unattainable, and highly demanding. What the Palestinian people really need is an initiative that transcends the factional concerns and partakes actively in the process of reconciling the Palestinian individual with his social world.

A pilot survey of some of these initiatives, namely, the Yemeni, the Saudi (known as Mecca Agreement), and two Egyptians gives us a clear picture of the context under investigation.

**5.1. The Yemeni Initiative[19]**

The Yemeni Initiative calls for:

1. The return of the situation in Gaza to what it was before the coup.
2. Early parliamentary elections.
3. Resumption of the dialogue between Hamas and Fateh based on the Cairo Agreement of 2005.
4. Implementation of Mecca Agreement.
5. The indivisibility of the Palestinian people.
6. The Palestinian Authority consists of the elected presidency, the elected parliament and the executive authority; these are represented through a government of national unity.
7. A commitment to the Palestinian legitimacy.

**5.2. Mecca Accord[20]:**

Mecca Accord calls for:

1. The emphasis on the sanctity of the Palestinian blood and to take all measures to prevent blood shed.
2. Forming a Palestinian government of national unity.
3. Initiating procedures to improve and reform the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).
4. Assuring the political partnership and pluralism in accordance with the laws in effect in the Palestinian National Authority.

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[19]. The Yemeni Initiative. Available from: www.aljazeeratalk.net/forum/showthread.php?t=111477 [Accessed 15 December 2008].
[20]. Mecca Accord. Available from: www.airssforum.com/f535/t16364.html [Accessed 12 December 2008].

### 5.3. The first Egyptian Initiative[21]:

The Egyptian Initiative calls for:

1. Forming a government of national unity, preparing for presidential and legislative elections and rebuilding the Palestinian security bodies.
2. Activating and developing the Palestinian Liberation Organization in which all Palestinian factions are included, and electing a new national assembly.
3. Holding presidential and legislative elections.
4. Developing and activating the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
5. Maintaining the (*Hudna*) truce with Israel within a framework agreed upon by all factions.
6. Forming follow up committees to examine all the details and the mechanisms of operations required to activate the reached agreements.
7. It is agreed upon by all factions that the negotiations are conducted under the umbrella of the PLO and the president of the Palestinian Authority.

### 5.4. The second Egyptian Initiative[22]:

The initiative calls for:

1. Putting an end to all types of provocative media campaigns.
2. Releasing all prisoners from both factions.
3. Facilitating the return of those who fled Gaza Strip.
4. Lifting the ban imposed on associations and institutions in Gaza and the West Bank.
5. Stressing that the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and restructuring and reforming the PLO.
6. The Palestinian Authority regains its sovereignty on the security and political institutions in Gaza, and Hamas should evacuate these institutions.
7. The police force shall regain its duties under the supervision of a neutral Arab committee.
8. An Arab security team led by the Egyptians supervises and resolves issues related to the security bodies.
9. An Arab force led by the Egyptians shall be dispatched to Gaza Strip to participate in reinforcing security.
10. Forming a transitional government to prepare for presidential and legislative elections according to the PLO principles.
11. All factions shall honor the agreements previously signed by the PA.
12. All factions must seek a political solution through negotiations. In case of failure, other political options will be pursued.
13. All factions are invited to involve and participate in the PA's institutions.

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[21]. The Egyptian Initiative. Available from: www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/BD84231E-1C84-414C-8FCC-A532FC2332D7.htm [Accessed 15 December 2008].
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### 6. Hegel's project for reconciliation:

The main goal of Hegel's project is to enable the individual to overcome alienation from the central social institutions, namely: the family, the civil society and the state, and to come to be at home within them. One significant area which is of our concern here (and Hegel's as well) is our own culture, i.e. the political and the personal sides of our life. Our social world is a world of alienation (Hardimon, 1994). A large number of people feel split from their social world's institutions and regard them as foreign, bifurcating, and hostile or indifferent to their needs (Ibid). The social world (the world of social institutions and practices into which human beings are born, within which they live and in which they die) refers to society or a society of certain type; more precisely, it refers to the framework of the central institutions and practices of social and political life of society; it refers to a society as a whole (Ibid).

Hegel does not conceive of reconciliation as a state of perfect harmony but rather a process of overcoming conflicts. Conflicts are unavoidable in the modern social world, and a well-ordered social world is a world that generates conflicts because people are raised to have separate interests where some of which come into conflict with the requirements of their social roles. This kind of tension, Hegel asserts, is a by-product of our individuality, and being reconciled involves accepting such kind of tension.

Human beings are both individuals and social members in nature, and they are in need for institutional spheres in which they can find intimacy, actualize their individuality, and enjoy political community (Habbermas, 1988; Jones, 1993; Ponzio, 1993; Sapir, 1921; Abbinnett, 2003; Hardimon, 1994). But conflict is the price of differentiation. Conflict and antagonism are internal to Hegel's conception of reconciliation. At the same time, Hegel maintains that there must be no fundamental conflicts between the interests people have as individuals and the demands of their social world. This fundamental unity is a hallmark of a well-ordered modern social world. A harmonious and reciprocal relation must be held between the individual and the norms that are internal to the institutions in the social world, i.e. the demands or the interests of the individuals and the demands of the social world's institutions have to be organized in such a way to avoid tragic conflicts. Hegel's conception of reconciliation is thus one that understands itself as preserving conflict at one level and overcoming it at another because there is no such thing 'complete harmony'.

Hegel argues that reconciliation refers to both a 'process' and a 'state'. The process is that of overcoming alienation, and the state, that of being at home in the social world; Hegel says that 'reconciliation is the movement that makes estrangement disappears' (Hardimon, 1994). Being at home in the social world is the linchpin of Hegel's theory. Feeling at home in the social world is a matter of feeling connected to its central arrangements; feeling of belonging, and ultimately, affirming, endorsing and embracing its central institutions. Hegel contends that a social world is a home if and only if it makes it possible for people to actualize themselves as individuals and as social members (Ibid). People in modern societies are both individuals and social members (Habbermas, 1988; Kramsch, 1998). A modern social world in which it is not possible to actualize oneself either as an individual or as a social member would be a world of alienation (Hardimon, 1994). A social world whose arrangements would make it impossible for people to actualize themselves as individuals is a world of alienation. Moreover, a social world where the individuals are banned from regarding themselves as part of its political community, and hence the state is viewed by these individuals as an alien authority, is not considered a home.

According to Hegel, for a social world to be considered as a home, it must contain a framework of institutional sphere where individuals have the capacity to participate in and to pursue their separate and particular interests and to engage in domestic and political life in congruence with their roles as social members.

In addition, their participation must not require unusual talent or aptitude or heroic endeavours, i.e. ordinary people must be capable to participate in the social world's central social institutions in a normal way. Above all, the social world is also obliged to promote and encourage its individuals' participation. For a social world to be a home it must make it possible for people to actualize their individuality through their social membership and to actualize their social membership through their individuality (actualization of the self as a whole). Hegel contends that the social world is a home if it is not other than its members. When the social world is other than its members (i.e. separate from, different from or alien to them), then they are split from it and hence alienated; the essence of the social world consists in its central social institutions and must be compatible with the essence of its social members. Hegel also argues that the social world is a home if it is a world of freedom, i.e. its central institutions promote subjective freedom which involves the freedom of the individuals to pursue their own separate interests and actualize their own freely chosen life plans. Individuals must be given room to create and innovate under the umbrella of the social world's institutions; the social world must not abate the creativity of its individuals and should cater for and promote individuality for the benefit of the individual and the civil society as well. Individuals have to have the ability to assess their social roles and institutions from their own subjective standpoint without the interference of the government.

Hegel maintains that if the social world is a home, if it makes possible for people to actualize themselves as individuals and social members, it will be worthy of acceptance and affirmation because it will not be other than its members. People will not be split from it either as individuals or as social members but will instead be able to find themselves within its central arrangements as individuals and as social members. According to Hegel, part of the process of becoming reconciled involves a transformation of consciousness through which one moves from an initial state in which one regards oneself as an atomic individual to a final state in which one regards oneself as an individual social member. So, there is no tension between the conception of the self as individual and the conception of the self as social member; both conceptions are reciprocally intertwined and inextricable.

**Conclusion**

The reason why most Palestinians, who are alienated, regard their social world as alien and hostile or indifferent to their needs is that it prevents them from achieving their goals. As a result of the political instability and factional and tribal disputes, the Palestinian civil society (the social sphere in which individuals pursue their separate and particular interests) is anarchic, incomprehensible, atomizing and fragmentary; this social world deliberately seems to sever people's connectedness to its institutions through monopolizing accesses to these institutions. The social world also aims at straddling the gap between the Palestinian individuals and the state's institutions and hence isolates the individuals from the government and psychologically deepens the strong form of individuality among them. The bureaucratic state seems to be insensitive to the claims of the individuals, and eventually blocks any constructive meaningful participation.

Fatah and Hamas are considered the major players in the Palestinian political arena. Furthermore, they constitute the state's institutions from which most Palestinians feel alienated and lack conformity with. Hegel's philosophical approach offers a way to overcome the contradictions, conflicts and fragmentations between the individual self and his/her society and to facilitate participation in the community that previous initiatives have ignored. Those described above exemplify this unconcern for the Palestinian individual. They are mainly concerned with, and cater for, the stability and the interests of the two rivals, Hamas and Fatah. They propose strategies to reorganize and redistribute the roles of the two factions within the Palestinian social world.

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None of the articles in these initiatives is dedicated to cater for the needs and the aspirations of the oppressed and impoverished ordinary Palestinians. And yet the two factions need not to be reconciled; where reconciliation is necessary is at the level of the Palestinian individual. S/he needs to feel at home, needs to sense intimacy and belonging. Those who formulate initiatives that will shape the future of Palestine need to remember this and focus on the Palestinian who has been harmed psychologically and socially as well as economically. More often than not, political parties or factions are reconciled when citizens are in conformity with their societies (the Western world for example). When the Palestinian individual is at home in his/her community and its institutions, reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas becomes inevitable.

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