

From the Editor



THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY has been marked by the rapidly declining cohesion and effectiveness of the Palestinian national movement, the strengthening hegemony of the nationalist-religious right in Israel, and the constant support of different U.S. administrations for the reinforcement of Israel's occupation and colonization of Palestine. In the past, these developments were combined with U.S. and Israeli lip service to the idea of a two-state solution, but that is now changing, and Palestine today appears to be facing a watershed.

While Palestinian disunity and feebleness persist, as does the expansion of Israel's settler-colonial enterprise, the standard U.S. and Israeli pieties that accompanied and masked these processes are falling by the wayside. It is clear that the new administration in Washington is far more in tune with the concerns and views of the Israeli government than any of its predecessors. It also seems quite clear that for all of the president's talk of making a deal, the Trump administration has no clear plan to achieve this end.

In recent months, there has been a more pronounced U.S. and Israeli disregard for the two-state formula. There have also been renewed efforts to put pressure on the Palestinians by using Arab regimes allied to the United States that have extensive overt and covert relations with Israel and by exploiting the current state of fragmentation in the Arab world.

What is likely to fill this vacuum is the purposeful drive of the Netanyahu government to establish complete and permanent control over all of what it regards as Eretz Israel. Irrespective of whatever window dressing—"autonomy," "self-rule," a "Palestinian entity"—is devised to mask what would in effect be a perverse form of one-state solution, it will be a place where only the Jewish people have full national rights, with a fixed subaltern status for what will soon be (if it is not already) a Palestinian majority between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

This issue of the *Journal* treats these potentially alarming developments with three offerings: a topical essay by Seth Anziska, an interview with Palestinian legislator and human rights lawyer Khalida Jarrar, who was recently released from an Israeli prison, and an introduction by Ahmad Samih Khalidi to the *Strategic Survey for Israel, 2016–2017*, published by a leading Israeli think tank.

In addition, this issue offers two articles, one pertaining to the current state of Palestinian political economy and the other historical. In his introduction to a recent special issue of *JPS* on Palestinian economic development (see 45 [4]), Raja Khalidi argued that the new generation of Palestinian political economists had to go further than produce searing critiques of neoliberalism and settler colonialism and explore novel, practical ways of putting their knowledge and analysis at the service of development policy. In this issue's article by Rayya El Zein, we see precisely this sort of material analysis. Using the Amoro mushroom agritech venture as a case study, El Zein shows how capitalist agriculture, female labor, and investment can be brought together to create a social and economic force capable of engaging sluggish Palestinian Authority bureaucracies in economic resistance that bolsters autonomy from the Israeli economy.

In the second article, Elizabeth Brownson offers a study of the health policies of the British Mandate in Palestine as they affected midwives. The policies, Brownson argues, curtailed the

autonomy and economic opportunities of traditional Palestinian midwives, placing greater control in the hands of the official (mainly male) medical establishment. These policies, she shows, also had the effect of limiting the access to health care of Palestinian rural populations, in particular, at a time when medical services among the Jewish population of the country were rapidly expanding.

In his essay, Seth Anziska examines the expected impact of the incoming U.S. administration on the Palestine question. He argues that we are in fact in a new era, one where the idea of partitioning Palestine into two states—which goes back to 1947, if not earlier—has now been discarded, at least by the United States. In its place, he suggests, the U.S.-Israeli duo, operating in ever closer coordination, will put forth a range of much blunter and explicit scenarios for excluding any real form of Palestinian self-determination.

The interview with Khalida Jarrar provides both a fascinating glimpse into the carceral realities of Palestinians held in Israeli detention, and an unsparing analysis by one of its leading figures of the Palestinian national movement's weaknesses and failings. Jarrar is both critical and self-critical, exposing some of the major obstacles that Palestinians must overcome if they are to rebuild their fragmented polity.

In his introduction to the *Strategic Survey for Israel, 2016–2017*, Ahmad Samih Khalidi critiques the assessments of this annual report by the Institute for National Security Studies, and underlines some notable features of Israel's current strategic situation. These include the growing closeness between Israel and several Arab Gulf regimes, and the enduring hostility of these regimes and Israel to Iran. The author notes that Israel's attitudes toward both the Gulf Arabs and Iran are often based on false premises. He also points out that Israeli decision makers are increasingly prone to taking unilateral steps on the Palestinian question, and notes a number of potential pitfalls to such an approach. Finally, he stresses the survey's ominous conclusion by the head of the institute, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Amos Yadlin, who calls for a devastating "preemptive strike" against Hezbollah and "Lebanon's national infrastructure."

Rashid I. Khalidi