

From the Editor



WITH THIS SPECIAL ISSUE, the *Journal of Palestine Studies* addresses the signal moments discussed in my essay, “Historical Landmarks in the Hundred Years’ War on Palestine,” as well as several other aspects of the struggle over Palestine during the century since 1917.

Rochelle Davis treats the broad issue of “The Politics of Commemoration among Palestinians,” with some surprising results in her discussion of the multiple forms taken by the commemoration of important dates in Palestinian history. She shows for example that while the Nakba was the subject of intense reflection and discussion from 1948 onwards, as is evidenced by Constantin Zurayq’s seminal work *Ma’na al-Nakba* [*The Meaning of the Disaster**], published in that year, in fact it was not widely commemorated by most Palestinians until decades afterwards.

In his paper about a 1922 U.S. congressional hearing on the topic of the Balfour Declaration, Khaled Elgindy provides insight into the broad base of support that Zionism already enjoyed in U.S. political and cultural spheres at that early stage. This is not surprising when one realizes that very early in the history of the Zionist movement, a number of its key leaders were based in the United States, and much of its substantial funding came from there, with pivotal figures like David Ben-Gurion building support for the movement among Americans as early as 1917.

This issue includes examinations by two members of the *Journal*’s editorial committee, Leila Farsakh and Noura Erakat, of the diplomatic, political, and legal ramifications of some of the historical landmarks that I discuss in my essay. Farsakh analyzes the 1947 partition resolution in particular, with a view to exploring the comparative status of a partitioned Palestine versus a binational one. For her part, Erakat focuses on UN Security Council Resolution 242 and its legitimization of much that the Israeli occupation has done in the past fifty years, underlining the damage this resolution has inflicted on the Palestinians under occupation.

While the Balfour Declaration, the Partition Plan, UNSCR 242, and other international interventions operated to the great detriment of the Palestinian people, there are other significant landmarks that constituted important advances in their struggle. Charles Anderson has produced a striking reappraisal of key achievements of the 1936–39 Great Revolt, while Khalid Farraj offers a gripping personal account of his experiences during the First Intifada (1987). Both provide penetrating insights into the resilience, originality, and remarkable successes of these two significant episodes in the Palestinian people’s grassroots resistance to the war that has been waged against them persistently for a century now.

It is impossible to cover adequately all of these crucial events in the history of Palestine in summary fashion, nor do we presume to have done so in this special issue. Nevertheless, each of the authors has offered a novel perspective on some of the most important landmarks in the history of Palestine since Lord Balfour’s statement gave international sanction to the process that resulted in the dispossession of the Palestinian people, setting off one hundred years of colonial conflict.

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* The English title was translated by Richard Bayly Winder (Beirut: Khayat Publishing, 1956).