

Editorial

JQ 50

This issue of *Jerusalem Quarterly* is the fiftieth. It comes also at a time when the Institute for Palestine Studies, our parent organization, celebrates its golden jubilee. The road that *JQ* has traveled since its first issue, then called *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, was full of challenge and discovery. Little did we know, sitting in the old office of the Institute of Jerusalem Studies in Sheikh Jarrah, the extent to which Jerusalem's living history has been neglected. We had our doubts about the ability to continue with a journal devoted to one locality. However, it is clear now that our fears were largely misplaced. While thousands of books have been written on Jerusalem, only a handful deal with it as an earthly city. Our first steps were hesitant, as we doubted our ability to solicit contributions for a journal whose future, readership, distribution and reputation were uncertain. But we were surprised by the interest in and the need for our publication. Funding the journal was also a challenge. Our earliest attempts to approach a Palestinian funder were discouraging, as we were told there is no future for our journal and that it did not merit funding. But here we are, 50 issues later and going stronger than ever, with a substantial readership, great reputation and a life span that outlasted the funding agency that rebuffed us.

Looking back at the material covered in the past 49 issues of *JQ*, we are proud to say that we are gratified to see that we are making a difference. A number of the essays that first appeared in the journal were expanded into full-fledged books, and many more are cited in books, academic journals and documentaries. Treatments of several topics in the journal have inspired further research, and documentary films have been produced on subjects we were the first to

tackle. Specialists on various aspects of Jerusalem write to and for us, while younger scholars are inspired to specialize in the area as a result of our small publication.

Still, this modest success of the journal has not been matched by the slightest degree of improvement in the life and fortunes of the city. Since 1998, conditions on the ground in the city have worsened in ways that we could never have imagined. The city is fully cut off from its natural and social surroundings, not only by checkpoints that do not let most Palestinians through, but also by a high concrete wall that blocks people outside from simply seeing it. Residency rights for the Palestinian population have been severely eroded with Israel stripping thousands of families of such basic rights. The same is true with the right to build homes in the city, a right that is exclusively granted to Israelis and settlers, never or extremely rarely to Arab Jerusalemites. The face of the city is being changed by an unrelenting campaign to see the city and its past as connected only with Jewish history, and to obliterate many centuries of the Palestinian past.

At *JQ* we feel all these changes in various ways. The editors, like other Palestinians who reside outside the city, were not allowed to enter Jerusalem. The result was that like many other Palestinian institutions, we were forced to move our offices outside the city. Not to mention that our publications, including *JQ*, are being confiscated at checkpoints, or they often fail to arrive at their destinations when mailed using Israeli postal services.

Nonetheless, we continue to be committed to exposing these and other practices as well as shedding new light on the city and its history in relation to the history of Palestine, not in isolation from it. The studies, reviews, essays and commentaries we publish are consistent in seeing the city as part of the history of its people. We continue to celebrate the city's past as inclusive, hybrid, layered and multi-faceted. By doing so, we demonstrate our insistent belief that the future of the city should mirror its history of religious diversity, tolerance and inclusiveness.

The task ahead of us though remains massive. There is a wealth of information about the history and about the current situation in Jerusalem that has not yet been researched or studied. Our pages continue to be open for scholars, activists and specialists from all fields and backgrounds. And we continue to aspire to disseminate information and to present Palestinian voices, largely excluded from any discussions of the city, its history or its future.

In this special issue we continue to tackle both the present and the past. The essays appearing here address topics and themes ranging from the historical to the cultural and political. They include a survey on early European photography, a study of the millenarist settlement in Artas south of the city in the nineteenth century, another on the Palestinian encounters of American Quaker women in the early twentieth century, the history of radio broadcasting in Jerusalem, selections from memoirs on life in Jerusalem during the last decades of Ottoman rule, two studies relating to residency rights for Palestinians in the city, and an essay on the experience of a young female visiting researcher living in and walking through the city. The issue also includes a book review and as usual many historical photographs. In "Polemikos" we initiate a new section that addresses issues of contestation and debate on research and

scholarship pertaining to Jerusalem and Palestine. We also offer an etymological discussion of “Qumamah” that, highlights the controversy about the origins of the Holy Sepulcher in Islamic discourse.

Our intention was to make this a special issue by including fresh material on key topics that have been treated in our previous issues. These original works represent our interest in focusing on topics that we deem important, such as the city in colonial imagination, settler and colonial activities, histories of daily life, and the current political predicament of the Jerusalemites.

Finally, the other members of the editorial committee cannot let *JQ 50* go to press without slipping in an expression of their deepest thanks and appreciation for the great dedication, superb scholarship, inspired leadership, and limitless patience of Salim Tamari, founding father of *Jerusalem Quarterly*.

I.N.