

EDITORIAL

The Spectacular and the Protracted: The Palestinian Struggle Continues

Palestine experienced a number of dire developments as this issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly* was in preparation. In the last days of December 2022, Benjamin Netanyahu formed a far-right Israeli government that includes Jewish supremacists from Bezalel Smotrich's Religious Zionist party and Itamar Ben-Gvir's Otzma Yehudit ("Jewish Power") party, among others. This government has advanced anti-Palestinian legislation, passing a law that strips Palestinians convicted of "terrorism," or those who accept financial aid from the Palestinian Authority, of their citizenship or residency, and has announced plans to enlarge Israeli settlements in the West Bank. It has ramped up Israel's policy of demolitions, destroying some fifty Palestinian buildings in Jerusalem and the West Bank in the first two months of 2023. It has launched destructive airstrikes on Gaza and Damascus. Perhaps most conspicuous has been the scale of the violence that it has unleashed on Palestinians through aggressive raids in the West Bank. On 26 January, Israeli forces killed nine Palestinians in a raid on Jenin refugee camp. On 6 February, after a ten-day siege of Jericho and its surroundings, Israeli forces raided 'Aqbat Jabr refugee camp, killing five Palestinians. On 22 February, Israeli forces launched a lightning daytime raid in the crowded old city of Nablus, killing eleven and wounding more than one hundred. Yet again, on 26 February, Israeli settlers went on a nighttime rampage in the town of Huwwara south of Nablus (and in nearby villages of Burin and 'Asira al-Qibliyya), torching dozens of homes, businesses, and vehicles while the Israeli army stood by.

In the aftermath of the raid in Nablus on 22 February, demonstrators took to the streets across the West Bank and Gaza (and also in Haifa). Protestors were urged on by the “Lions’ Den” (*‘Arin al-Usud*), a Nablus-based militant group that emerged after Israel’s assassination of Ibrahim al-Nabulsi in August 2022. The militants called for marches and processions, accompanied by chants of *takbir* (customary exhortations of God’s greatness), at midnight on 23 February. This call spread quickly and widely on social media; one video that circulated online showed prisoners in Lebanon’s notorious al-Rumiyya prison calling out the *takbir* in solidarity with Palestinians.

Acts of resistance and protest are increasingly being described as “disobedience” (*‘isyan*). Israel’s campaign of siege and closure on Shu’fat refugee camp in February, accompanied by what were viewed as particularly vindictive and demeaning actions against civilians, was met with a call for civil disobedience – as described in this issue’s Letter from Jerusalem by Hasan ‘Alqam. In the same month, Palestinian political prisoners – who have been especially hard-hit by the draconian measures introduced by the new Israeli government, in which Ben-Gvir serves as security minister – began what they described as a collective disobedience campaign, to be followed by an open hunger strike beginning on the first day of Ramadan in March if their demands went unmet.

The beginning of 2023 has thus produced a sense of acceleration – accelerated death, destruction, and dispossession, accelerated discontent, protest, and resistance – with momentum seemingly gaining after each new incident. Violence at this speed becomes hypervisible, spectacular. At the same time, Palestinians continue to be subjected to slower forms of violence and wage more protracted struggles, even if these are overshadowed by more dramatic developments. The material in this issue of *JQ* wrestles with these multiple temporalities: the swiftness of expulsion in 1948, and the *longue durée* of demolition described in Yara Sa’di-Ibraheem’s “Jaffa amid Theoretical Transformations,” for example, or the refugee “relief and works” explored in this issue’s focus on UNRWA. As shown by the articles, essays, and interviews that make up this first of two parts of the special issue – guest edited and introduced by Maria Chiara Rioli and Francesca Biancani – the long history of UNRWA is characterized by both moments of acceleration (the Nakba of 1948, the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, and so on) and more minor historical contingencies.

Indeed, the history of UNRWA is an ongoing one; the agency continues to adapt to and with the conditions of Palestinians within and beyond Palestine. In these turbulent times of continued strike actions by Palestinian teachers, lawyers, engineers, physicians, and workers in other sectors, UNRWA claims its share of the headlines. UNRWA employees launched yet another labor dispute over wages and benefit packages in November 2022, followed by intermittent work stoppages and the closure of the main UNRWA headquarters in Jerusalem. The issues, including punitive measures against strike leaders, continue to be unresolved, and affect thousands of employees and beneficiaries of the educational, health, and other services provided to Palestinian refugees.

Finally, *JQ* joins colleagues and collaborators of Professor Elia Zureik in mourning his sad passing on 15 January 2023. Zureik was, along with Salim Tamari, coeditor of one of the seminal works on UNRWA's archives, *Reinterpreting the Historical Record: The Uses of Palestinian Refugee Archives for Social Science Research and Policy Analysis* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 2001), and we are republishing their contribution to that book here, with an introduction by this issue's guest editors. The Institute for Palestine Studies is fortunate to have had a collaborator of the caliber of Elia Zureik, whose work appeared in various IPS forums over the years, including a piece in *JQ* 89, coauthored with David Lyon, on coronavirus surveillance and Palestinians. We also include in this issue tributes to Elia from a number of his colleagues, which speak to his generosity, sharp intellect, critical approach, and bold engagement in public and policy issues.

Errata

Winter 2022 Issue (*JQ* 92):

- On page 97, the following source should be removed from endnote 6:
David Kroyanker, *Dreamscapes: Unbuilt Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Tower of David, 1993).
- On page 140, endnote 2 should read as follows:
Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, transl. T. S. Presner et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 76.

Spring 2022 Issue (*JQ* 89):

- On page 99, the correct information is: Fatima Barnawi died in November 2022 in Egypt.