

Editorial

UNESCO's Jerusalem Storm:

The Real Danger

A special committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) passed a resolution in October deploring Israeli policy toward Jerusalem's Old City, with a focus on the al-Aqsa mosque and its surroundings. The resolution, which does not constitute a decision by UNESCO as much as a recommendation to its director-general, condemned Israel's use of force against worshipers and restrictions on the staff of the Awqaf authorities, as well as the ongoing archeological excavation by the Israel Antiquities Authority under and around the mosque. The resolution acknowledged the significance of Jerusalem to all three Abrahamic religions and did not deny its connection with any of them. However, it appears that both the Arab press and the Israeli propaganda machine saw in this resolution (based mainly on the exclusion of references to Jewish terminology and attachments to sites within the Noble Sanctuary) an affirmation of the Islamic right to Jerusalem and a denial of its connection to Judaism, thus exciting Palestinians and angering Israeli politicians. While the former reaction is rather optimistic, reading into the (nonbinding) resolution much more than it states, the latter seems to reflect a kind of intentional paranoia.

The real danger is that the Israeli authorities will now escalate their violence against Palestinian Muslims' right to access and maintain the status quo at al-Aqsa mosque. This would mean further settler provocations and attempts to break into al-Haram al-Sharif, Israeli military closure of the mosque to Muslims going to pray, and the closure of the city and denial of access for Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to it, among other measures. An

escalation of these policies can be expected on the horizon. Needless to say, *Jerusalem Quarterly* is deeply concerned with such escalation of punitive measures, which can only feasibly end with the end of Israeli occupation. To Palestinians and most Arabs, the issue of claims to holy sites cannot be separated from the territorial conflict over Palestinian lands, and nothing short of a total end of the occupation would bring about an end to harassment and exclusive claims over holy sites throughout historic Palestine, including Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem and the Tomb of David in Jerusalem. The partition of the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron, which has proven time after time to be disastrous and a cause of further tension and violence, appears to be the model that Israel seeks for al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem.

The Israeli position decrying the UNSECO resolution represents nothing new. The situation on the ground does not support the image perpetuated of a small state threatened by a hostile world community, but rather that the reality of a people residing under occupation that are under continuous threat and whose cultural heritage is being gradually erased from the landscape. The ongoing and escalating effort to deny Palestinian rights in and to Jerusalem can be seen in new developments with regard to Israel's revocation of Jerusalem residency permits. Following *JQ*'s publication of a report on punitive residency revocation by the Community Action Center at al-Quds University in our previous issue (see "Punitive Residency Revocation: The Most Recent Tool of Forcible Transfer" in *JQ* 66), Karel Reybrouck provides a brief history of the recent shift in Israel's policy of residency revocation from the "center of life" criterion to the "breach of allegiance" criterion. Reybrouck points to the numerous ways in which this new Israeli tactic violates the rights of Palestinians guaranteed under international law. An infographic designed by Visualizing Palestine presents the impact of this violation – in concert with a host of others – on Palestinian life in Jerusalem.

Aya Hijazi, meanwhile, writes about another form of erasure when she discusses the destruction of the Mamilla cemetery in Jerusalem to make room for the so-called Museum of Tolerance. The cemetery holds the remains of many historic Muslim figures as well as prominent Palestinians. Hijazi points out that the demolition of the cemetery is part of a general attack not only on Palestinian presence and day-to-day life, but on Palestinian sites of remembrance and historical narrative, and constitutes part of a larger campaign of "spacio-cide" against the Palestinians. The opening of the museum is scheduled to coincide with the seventieth anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel: by celebrating the Israeli statehood with yet another cleansing of Palestinian presence, the state insists – as it has since its inception – on erasing not only the Palestinians, but any material evidence of their historical patrimony.

The relationship between the physical erasure of Palestinians from the history of Palestine and visual erasure is explored in Elisabeth Friedman's contribution to this issue. Her study is on the work of the artist Dor Guez, particularly a series of multimedia installations produced between 2009 and the present. From 2009 until 2013, Guez's work examined the history of his own maternal family, the Monayers, whose lives were transformed after their hometown of Lydda was ethnically cleansed in 1948. Friedman examines the relationship between photography and the archive in Guez's, pointing out

that his changing use of photography redefines actively and conceptually the relation between Palestinians and the archive. Since 2013, meanwhile, Guez has embarked on a five-part installation project entitled *The Sick Man of Europe*. Its title a clear reference to the Ottoman Empire, Friedman illuminates this project's engagement with both sides of Guez's family (his father's family were Mizrahi Jews from Tunisia) and the violence wrought upon them and others by the transition to the post-Ottoman order. Guez blurs fact and fiction to highlight regional states' "bargains with modernity and the gendered rejections of their pasts" and to "narrate those costs on the scale of individual lives." Similar issues lie at the core of *A Magical Substance Flows into Me*, directed by artist Jumana Manna and reviewed in this issue by Hanan Toukan. Toukan points out that Manna builds on the genre of postcolonial trauma and collective memories of violence in Middle East filmmaking by showing how the subconscious pain and suffering that is born in contexts of obliterated geo-histories may lie in the realm of the musical, familial, and sensorial that bind communities together.

In addition to the work of Guez and Manna, this issue continues to focus on visual representations of the Palestinians through the study of two special photographers of the Palestinian Revolution: the Palestinian Hani Jawhariyyeh and the East German Horst Sturm. Artist Vladimir Tamari, Jawhariyyeh's childhood friend, has written a moving remembrance of Hani, who photographed and filmed the second flight of Palestinians in 1967 and the new generation of revolutionary *fida'iyyin* in Lebanon and Jordan. Doreen Mende writes about a series of educational collaborations between the East German state media and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, during which Sturm was to teach a new generation of *fida'iyyin*-photographers. Mende uses a photograph taken by Hurst of his bodyguard Khaled in a Beirut hotel room before the departure of the Palestinian fighters from Lebanon following Israel's 1982 invasion to consider the meanings and limits of solidarity and the transition from the "militant image" of the Palestinian Revolution to the "incurable image" of humanitarianism.

Of course, European imaging and imagining of Palestine predates the socialist solidarity of the 1970s and 1980s; much of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century European visualizations of the Holy Land were inspired by or drew on its place in the Western biblical imagination. Sary Zananiri examines the shifting representations of Jerusalem, and the Palestinians, in this biblical imagination from the era of still photography – discussing the popularity of the biblical panorama, in which photographs of Jerusalem were used to "scientifically" recreate the setting of his life, crucifixion, and resurrection – to the era of the moving image, in particular the depictions of Palestine in Hollywood's biblical epics in the silent era (Cecil B. de Mille's 1927 film *King of Kings*) and after the introduction of sound (George Stevens's 1965 film *The Greatest Story Ever Told*). Also addressing the visual production of Jerusalem from a European missionary perspective, Nazmi al-Jubeh contributes a study of the enigmatic nineteenth-century Orientalist Conrad Schick, a missionary who arrived in Jerusalem in 1846, and lived, died, and was buried there. Though religiously trained, Schick – an autodidact in a number of different fields – went on to become a prominent architect, archaeologist, scholar, and maker of models of Jerusalem's iconic monuments.

Among Schick's numerous and varied projects was a plan to link Jerusalem to Jaffa by rail; though it never came to fruition, "Schick's pioneering thinking about the subject put forward innovative ideas to facilitate the train's arrival in Jerusalem." In this issue, Salim Tamari recalls the extension of the railroad from Jerusalem to al-Bireh during World War I. He uses aerial photography from the German air force to sift evidence of the short-lived and largely forgotten train. Tamari ponders the frailty of Palestinian collective memory of World War I, but hears echoes of the train's whistle reverberating in the wedding songs that are part of the folkloric tradition of al-Bireh. World War I is central, too, to Vicken Kalbian's article about malaria in Jerusalem. Combining his medical training and expertise, historical research, and his own memories and the accounts of his parents, Kalbian describes the conditions that bred malaria in Jerusalem and the various efforts (from personal practices to government schemes) to disrupt or eradicate it. Kalbian's father Vahan was chief medical officer in Jerusalem during World War I, and may just have saved the life of a malarial young soldier who turned out to be none other than Amin al-Husayni, later al-Hajj Amin, mufti of Jerusalem. Not all were so lucky, however, and the number of casualties of the battlefield paled in comparison to the casualties of disease, in particular malaria and an outbreak of Spanish Flu.