

## Editorial

A glance at the front page of the Jerusalem-based *Al Quds* newspaper of June 17 is revealing. The top story warns of a “dangerous escalation in racist attacks” on Palestinians in Jerusalem by Jewish extremists. The accompanying photo shows a young woman with a black eye and wearing a neck brace, Layali El Sayyid, who was attacked while waiting at a stop for the Light Rail in West Jerusalem. On the other side of her photo is the second top story: the new (and now caretaker) Palestinian Authority Prime Minister, Rami Hamdallah, has visited Al Aqsa mosque and vowed that “the steadfastness of Jerusalem, its institutions and its people is among the most important priorities of the leadership and the new government.”

Certainly, renewed attention to Jerusalem by the Palestinian leadership would be very welcome, coming after long periods of relative neglect since the death of political leader and leading Jerusalemite Faisal Husseini (May 2001) and the closure of Orient House (August 2001). But Layali’s bruised countenance seems to ask the crucial question: what can you do? On the face of it, Palestinian leaders, negotiations frozen and Jerusalem out of bounds for any Authority presence, whether politics or policing, seem powerless. But are they?

A new report by the International Crisis Group, *Extreme Makeover (II): The Withering of Arab Jerusalem*, cannot by any stretch be called optimistic – noting, for example, “the virtual eradication of organized Palestinian political life in the city” since 2000. Based on extensive interviews with Palestinian Jerusalemites, Palestinian Authority officials, and political analysts, the report paints a picture of what one Jerusalemite calls “an orphan city, “abandoned by Israel and the Palestinian

leadership in Ramallah. Acknowledging the centrality of Israeli policy and particularly Israeli security agencies in undermining Palestinian political presence in the city, the authors complete their picture of a desolate city by pointing to an accompanying “social crisis” with a “rapid proliferation of criminal gangs” and a wider social breakdown.

Allegations of rising crime (along with drug use and other signs of social breakdown) are common enough in the talk of Jerusalemites but should be treated with caution as hard evidence is scarce and the politics of fear widespread. The role of Israel in undermining social and cultural life is more evident: we simply note the Israeli Interior Minister’s closure of the Children’s Puppet Festival at Hakawati (the Palestinian National Theatre in East Jerusalem) this July which could be considered a *reductio ad absurdum* if it was not so harmful to an important cultural institution and to Palestinian children.

The report does, however, suggest avenues for action, perhaps most controversially a re-consideration of the Palestinian boycott of Israeli institutions in the city since 1967, saying that with Palestinian Jerusalemites “bereft of representation,” it is time for “their national movement to reassess what, no longer a considered strategy, has become the product of reflexive habit.” The authors also examine other options, such as a shadow municipality or a list composed of Palestinians living in the city who are Israeli citizens, but insists that the crucial factor is that Palestinians need a “representative voice.” Whether in agreement or not, the report is well worth the reading, not least because it calls for new thinking: the fate of the “orphan city” cannot be a tragedy foretold but rather a spur for sustained discussion and action.

In this issue of *Jerusalem Quarterly*, we publish a segment of UNCTAD’s report on Jerusalem, “Communal Impoverishment in Jerusalem,” authored by economist Raja Khalidi and colleagues, which highlights the dire economic and social conditions that stem from Jerusalem’s fragmentation from its West Bank hinterland, its political abandonment, and of course Israel’s annexation and settlement policies. The UNCTAD report offers a contrast (possibly an antithesis) to the prognosis made by ICG’s Report. While noting the severe contraction of the East Jerusalem economy due to its separation from the rest of the Occupied West Bank, the authors state:

The endurance of these Palestinians under duress also offers a glimpse into the survival, coping and adapting strategies to which Jerusalemites have resorted in maintaining a distinctive, if dependent and vulnerable, Arab economy at the heart of the Old City’s “global” market, while striving to maintain links with the rest of the Palestinian economy. This precious heritage also constitutes the supreme resource for a future Palestinian economy and its core, emanating from Jerusalem and integrated with all markets – east, south, north and west.

Not a very optimistic scenario, but one that points to a strategy of entrenchment and seeking salvation through dependence on internal resources.

In this issue of JQ Noam Chomsky and Irene Gendzier contribute a timely historical introduction to Amnon Kapeliuk's forthcoming publication about the 1973 War, *Not By Omission*. The book is Mark Marshall's English translation of Kapeliuk's last work which was published in both Hebrew and French during the author's lifetime. While Kapeliuk identified the hidden agendas and behind-the-scenes machinations of that almost forgotten war, Chomsky and Gendzier place the work in the context of the stalled peace negotiations in the post Oslo era.

Alex Winder's "With the Dregs At Sambo Café" is a superb introduction to a diary of a Mandate Police Officer from Mount Hebron (forthcoming from IPS, 2014). Winder traces the national service of Officer Muhammad Abdul Hadi Shrouf from a patrol policeman in Tulkarem to a detective in the Jaffa Criminal Investigation Department in the 1930s and 40s. Shrouf was a meticulous recorder of his daily chores in his diary, revealing a conflicted world between the demands of the national rebellion and the discipline of his calling. Winder concludes that

The diaries of Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi al-Shrouf offer an absorbing account of the continuities and ruptures that taken together comprise the life of an individual as well as the history of a society. The richness of detail with which Shrouf recorded these continuities and ruptures allows us to reconstruct histories that have been overshadowed or marginalized in dominant nationalist and elite-focused narratives, to feel the push and pull of the numerous sub-currents flowing and churning within the overall tide of history. For this, we – as scholars and as human beings – are in his debt.

In "Villagers On the Move: Re-thinking Fallahin Rootedness in late-Ottoman Palestine," Susynne Mcelrone addresses the nature of peasant cognitive notions of locality and regional identity at the turn of the century in the Mount Hebron region, but with significant implications for understanding peasant identity in Palestine and bilad al-sham. She investigates a number of cases from Shari'a Court sijjils involved in mundane economic transactions which suggest that the world of farmers and laborers from the Mount Hebron area transcended their immediate locality, and re-defined the multiplicity of their affinities and self-identities.

Architectural historians Beatrice St. Laurent and Isam Awwad have contributed a most original detective work on the so-called Marwani Mosque in Haram al-Sharif. In their "The Marwani Musalla in Jerusalem: New Findings," they make a formidable argument for why the Musalla in question belongs to Mu'awiya, the controversial founder of the Ummayyad Dynasty, which contributed significantly to the development of Jerusalem as a major urban administrative center in the early Islamic period.

The deserted village of Lifta, on the outskirts of Jerusalem's Western approaches, has been the subject of intensive gentrification schemes in the last few years by Israeli planners. In "Lifta and the Regime of Forgetting: Memory Work and Conservation" three scholars Daphna Golan, Zvika Orr, and Sami Ershied combine an interpretive essay with an activist agenda to illustrate the objective and meaning of these

schemes. They inform us that Human rights activism in Israel has generally focused on (largely ineffective) legal strategy and has been depoliticized and disconnected from the (shrinking) peace movement. As a result, human rights activism has been characterized by dialectics of challenging and reproducing the status quo of the Israeli occupation regime. The Coalition to Save Lifta made successful recourse to the legal channel, but this is not sufficient. In order to be meaningful and fulfil its potential, the Coalition ought to cast light on the interrelations between the building plans in Lifta and other oppressive practices in Israel, and be engaged in both human rights and peace activism. Otherwise, the Jewish-Palestinian cooperation might become another way of reducing conflict while reifying underlying hegemonic assumptions, worldviews, and public policies in Israel and normalizing the oppressive status quo of Israeli domination of Palestinian territories.

In the second of our Re-Readings series, Birzeit University historian Rana Barakat takes a new look at Abdallah Schleifer's *The Fall of Jerusalem*, forty years after its initial publication (Monthly Review, 1972). The book was a landmark publication when it first appeared in that it constituted an eyewitness account of the third occupation of the city in the twentieth century. It all happened yesterday, less than five decades ago. But in Barakat's careful re-reading we are reminded how much the city's predicament has changed.

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