



# From the Editor

WITH THE ADVENT IN WASHINGTON of an administration with radical new priorities regarding Israel, and a disdain for Palestinian rights, Palestine is hovering on the brink of a seismic shift. In recent years, the American and Israeli political systems had already begun to merge. We have now reached the point where envoys from one country to the other could almost switch places: Ron Dermer could just as easily be U.S. ambassador to Israel as Israeli ambassador in Washington; while because of his intimate ties with, and support for, the settler movement, the U.S. ambassador-designate to Israel, David Friedman, would make a fine ambassador in Washington for the settler-dominated Netanyahu government.

The days when the United States masked its solicitous concern for Israel and its disregard for the Palestinians with a falsely high-minded rhetoric of evenhandedness are finally over. We are about to see the unveiling of what in fact has become more of a merger between the United States and Israel than it is an alliance. And this is not a merger with the romanticized and imaginary “light-among-the-nations” Israel beloved of U.S. liberals. Rather, it is a merger with the most chauvinistic, religious, expansionistic, and extremist right-wing government in Israel’s history. And it will be this government, and its American soulmates, who will continue to call the tune in Palestine for at least the next several years.

In this context, the Palestinians face a radical set of choices. The entire political and economic edifice constructed in the more than twenty years since the Oslo Accords was predicated on the idea that this framework was the embryo of a real, viable, contiguous Palestinian state. That illusion has now swirled down the sewer of false notions. The flawed structure was further based on the premise, naïve at best, that the United States saw it as in its national interest to moderate Israeli behavior, and to act to achieve a Middle Eastern settlement embodying a modicum of justice. That premise, too, has finally been demolished.

The choices that are left to the Palestinians are stark: they are either to submit to the dictates of Washington and Tel Aviv, or to fundamentally and urgently redefine their national movement, their objectives, and their modes of resistance to oppression. In spite of encouraging shifts in public opinion, especially among young people and liberal Democrats, it is abundantly clear that the United States in the age of Trump and Israel in the age of Netanyahu-Bennett-Lieberman will continue to be on the wrong side of history when it comes to Palestine.

This issue of the *Journal* includes an article by Alaa Tartir that starkly describes how Palestinians experience the actions of the security establishment that is the centerpiece of governance efforts by the Palestinian Authority (PA). Few people understand that the colonization of Palestinian land and a nearly fifty-year Israeli military occupation, the longest in modern history, would not be sustainable today without the sponsorship of the United States and Israel, and the U.S.-trained Palestinian security apparatus. Tartir shows what the criminalization of any form of resistance, peaceful or otherwise, to dispossession, discrimination, and permanent military control means, as the PA has in effect been turned into a tool of collaboration with the occupation. He provides a chilling picture of how this repressive institution operates against its own people, and of the future

that the United States and Israel envisage for Palestinians in the occupied territories: a future that is constricted, controlled, and void of sovereignty and self-determination.

This issue includes as well a special feature on Palestinian migration, with prefatory remarks by Cecilia Baeza. It includes articles by Lauren Banko, Nadim Bawalsa, and Jacob Norris, each of which highlights important aspects of the phenomenon of emigration from Palestine before the British Mandate and also in its early years. Banko and Bawalsa's articles expose the effect of British Mandate laws on the sense of identity and the legal status of these emigrants when they tried to return to their homeland. British laws, tailored to further the Mandate's core mission in Palestine—the implementation of the Jewish National Home policy—disrupted the more flexible citizenship and residence arrangements that had prevailed under Ottoman rule. In particular, the 1925 Palestinian Citizenship Order-in-Council, which regulated citizenship and nationality under the Mandate, was designed to privilege Jewish immigrants and had the effect of disenfranchising returning Palestinian emigrants. Palestinians who had previously been able to return freely to live as citizens in their homeland suddenly found themselves deprived of that right. This was the small beginning of a Palestinian diaspora that grew to include a majority of the Arab population of the country in 1948 and afterward. Norris finds that most emigrants had no intention of settling abroad, and that many of them returned regularly to invest in their places of origin. He shows, moreover, how important the return of emigrants with new social and financial capital was to the development of the Palestinian bourgeoisie.

Also in issue 182 is a review essay by Elliott Colla of Bashir Abu-Manneh's new book, *The Palestinian Novel: From 1948 to the Present*. Colla reflects on the entanglement of the Arab novel with nationalism, a connection that he shows is raised anew by Abu-Manneh's work. Colla describes how Abu-Manneh links realism and modernism in the work of the novelists he examines—Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Ghassan Kanafani, Emile Habiby, and Sahar Khalifeh—to different phases in modern Palestinian history. In spite of disagreeing with aspects of Abu-Manneh's study, he finds it “uniquely original, valuable, and smart.”

This issue concludes with a remembrance by Salim Tamari of the renowned Palestinian architectural engineer, intellectual, and political leader Ibrahim Dakkak. One of Jerusalem's most prominent figures for close to half a century, Dakkak was the leader of several civil society groupings that opposed the Israeli occupation in the years after 1967. As the man responsible for heading the restoration of al-Aqsa Mosque following the arson attack of 1969, Dakkak was a much respected figure, whose integrity, wit, and ability to bring people together provided an important element of leadership and consensus to Jerusalemites and other Palestinians living under increasingly harsh conditions imposed by the occupation authorities.

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