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From the Editor

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FROM THE EDITOR

CAN PALESTINE ACHIEVE LIBERATION unilaterally by state-building and economic growth, despite the ongoing constraints of a suffocating occupation? Is a two-state solution of any sort still possible, and is it even desirable? What more can we learn about key turning points in Palestine's history like 1917 and 1948? The articles and essays in this issue of the *Journal* address these and other concerns about Palestine.

An article of faith in mainstream discourse on Palestine is that there exists something called a "peace process," that its ultimate end—the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel—is a foregone conclusion, and that the policies of institution building and economic growth followed by the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Ramallah is bringing this goal closer. An article by Raja Khalidi and Sobhi Samour and an essay by Ghada Karmi challenge these assumptions. They argue, though from entirely different perspectives, that two decades of this "process" have made peace less likely and have further entrenched the occupation and reinforced Israeli control even while relieving Israel of responsibility for the population it controls. A Palestinian state is farther away than ever before as a result of core issues unaddressed by this process. Thus, since the Madrid Conference of 1991, the number of illegal Israeli settlers has doubled to over half a million, while the matrix of Israeli control over the occupied territories and the Palestinians who live there has become more complete.

Under the current process, the most that could be hoped for is a dependent, non-sovereign state. Karmi argues that any solution with such an outcome is not desirable. She stresses, however, that alternatives based on equality between the two peoples of Palestine/Israel are unrealistic without much more serious efforts to map out how they can be implemented in practice. Economists Khalidi and Samour take aim at the neoliberal underpinnings of the Ramallah PA program aimed at achieving statehood by the end of 2011. Their arguments are based on the largely negative results of such neoliberal policies worldwide and on the conviction that neoliberal good governance under occupation (in any case an impossibility) cannot take the place of a strategy for liberation, equality, and self-determination. Several documents in this issue, notably World Bank and International Crisis Group reports, and a declaration by PA Prime Minister Fayyad, provide important background for this crucial debate.

Dan Freeman-Maloy contributes to our understanding of the many reasons for Israel's victory of the 1948 war, underlining the indispensable contribution of foreign volunteers, many of them experienced World War II veterans, in its nascent armed forces; William Mathew provides new insight into the much debated reasons for Britain's issuance of the Balfour Declaration, noting that it represented a unique departure in British colonial policy worldwide.

The issue also includes an essay by Yosefa Loshitzky examining whether Stephen Spielberg's film *Munich* in fact represents a departure from the Hollywood tradition dating back to the film *Exodus* of diffusing and reinforcing basic tropes of the Zionist worldview. This article underlines the crucial role played by popular culture in influencing Western public opinion since the beginning of the struggle over Palestine.

—Rashid I. Khalidi