



## FROM THE EDITOR

THIS ISSUE OF the *Journal of Palestine Studies* goes to press between May 15 and June 7 2012, the sixty-fourth anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba and the forty-fifth anniversary of the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. The lives of every Palestinian, and of many others, have been indelibly marked by these two seminal sets of events, which changed the course of the history of Palestine and the entire Middle East. These two markers of loss have defined many of the concerns of the *Journal* over its more than forty years of publication. During this time, it has been part of a broad effort to redefine the understanding of the meaning and valence of these two milestones.

In the initial decades after 1948, the events of that year in Palestine were thought of in the West almost solely in terms of the miraculous birth of the state of Israel, only three years after the revelation of the horrors of the Nazi death camps. The Palestinians did not exist for all practical purposes in this narrative. Today, partly thanks to the efforts of many contributors to the *Journal*, the importance of the Palestinian Nakba is finally beginning to be recognized, and the true import of the occupations of 1967 is becoming understood.

This issue features several items related to these events. One is an interview with the celebrated linguist Noam Chomsky, who has been involved with the Palestine question from multiple perspectives for a more considerable time than most people realize, going back indeed nearly to the Nakba. Both the evolution of Chomsky's views over time, and his consistency, are on view in this interview. Sara Roy, another unsparing long-term observer of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, contributes an astringent but bracing reassessment of it. She argues that over the past twenty years of the so-called "peace process," the Palestinians have suffered losses on a scale not seen since 1948, due to paradigm shifts involving acceptance of key elements of the status quo that are highly favorable to Israel's hegemony over all of former Mandatory Palestine. Like Chomsky, she is deeply pessimistic about the possibilities of a near-term resolution of this conflict.

Israeli academics Yinon Cohen and Neve Gordon show in an article how what they call Israeli unilateralism—notably its unstoppable bulldozer-like settlement project—has undermined any possibility of a two-state solution. They analyze demographic and social indicators and come to striking conclusions, such as the fact that the settler population, which has doubled since the Madrid peace conference, has grown the most rapidly when Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were underway and violence was at its lowest points.

This issue includes as well two historical articles, one by Jean-Pierre Filiu which traces the origins of Hamas, which has been obscured by competing narratives, and another by Awad Halabi which argues that national identities, both among Turks and Palestinians, only displaced Ottoman ones after the establishment of the Turkish Republic and the promulgation of the Palestine Mandate. The final article, by three authors, concludes with an assessment of how big a role the environmental policies of the Israeli occupation play in the impact of climate change in the occupied Palestinian territories.

—*Rashid I. Khalidi*