



From the Editor
by *Rashid I. Khalidi*

FROM THE EDITOR

Some issues relating to Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict seem always to be with us. And they seem always to be treated the same way in certain quarters, starting with much of the U.S. media. Whether it is about terrorism, 1948, or current events in the Palestinian-Israeli vicinity, we can expect heavily biased commentary—when there is not silence. This issue of JPS addresses aspects of these broad topics, although certainly not from the conventional perspective.

Lisa Hajjar analyzes the increasing convergence between the “wars on terror” being waged by the United States and Israel in terms of rhetoric, tactics, methods, material support, treatment of prisoners, and legislation. Particular emphasis is given to how both powers seek to reinterpret international humanitarian law and circumvent the international legal consensus to serve their own political agendas.

The dominating event of the quarter was unquestionably the war in Lebanon pitting Israel against Hizballah, designated as terrorist by both Washington and Tel Aviv. In a long interview with JPS, Augustus Richard Norton, a renowned expert on Hizballah, provides fact-based and insightful analysis of the organization’s development and the war. His dispassionate account contrasts sharply with the products of the ever-expanding guild of “terrorologists” who infest think-tanks and pontificate in the media, many of whom do not know Arabic or the subtle distinctions between Sunni and Shi`a.

On the evergreen topic of 1948, Ilan Pappé offers fresh and startling evidence from the Israeli archives on preparations for the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes that year. Arguing that the Palestinian exodus must be understood in the context of the paradigm of ethnic cleansing, rather than as simply the result of war, Pappé exposes in particular the role of an inner “caucus” of men led by David Ben-Gurion in overseeing the formulation of military plans and a long-term intelligence gathering projects on the Palestinian villages slated for eradication. A related essay by Peter Lagerquist examines the fate of one of the Palestinian villages emptied as a result of the ethnic cleansing described by Pappé.

Also in this issue is the third and last installment of the “life story” of Um Jabr Wishah, which details her organization of visits to non-Palestinian prisoners jailed in Israel.

Interestingly, one of the prisoners she mentions most is Samir Quntar, one of the three Lebanese prisoners whose release Hizballah has been seeking for years. In general, her focus on the prisoner issue sheds light on an enduring feature of the conflict rarely discussed in the U.S. media, a carry-over from British Mandate days when thousands of Palestinians were in British custody, many in the same prisons as today's detainees. Some things apparently do not change.

—Rashid I. Khalidi

Source : [Institute for Palestine Studies](#)

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