



## Message from the Editor

Nineteenth-century Palestine was an intriguing place. The country rose from the relative obscurity into which it had fallen under the Ottoman Empire following the tumultuous years of Crusader wars and Ayyubid, Mongol, and Egyptian Mamluk rule. Napoleon's failed attempt to conquer the Holy Land at the century's turn and Egypt's brief reign in the 1830s preceded European countries' increasing engagement and intervention that started in mid-century, possibly due to the Ottoman Empire's decline. This rich issue illustrates numerous aspects of how history in the Holy Land unfolded during this time, in particular, the conditions and developments in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, shedding light also on the so-called Status Quo agreements. Particularly interesting are the population's continuous efforts to defend their rights and livelihoods, the early voices that warned of the Zionist threat, and the country's rich cultural life, exemplified in the highly educated Palestinians who led and documented the developments of their times.

Thanks go to the **Jerusalem Fund for Development and Economic Growth** and **Abu Dhabi Fund for Development** that supported this issue. Our special gratitude goes to the authors: Dr. Issam Nassar, a professor at Illinois State University's Department of History; anthropologist Dr. Ali Qleibo, a specialist in Palestinian social history; Tarif Khalidi, the Shaykh Zayid Professor Emeritus of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American University of Beirut; artist, cultural historian, and author Dr. Sary Zanani; Khalid Zaki Hussein, a Jerusalemite project development professional with a special interest in socioeconomic issues; Dr. Zeina M. Barakat, academic coordinator of the European Wasatia Graduate School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at Europa University in Flensburg, Germany; prolific author Khalil Shokeh, who held numerous academic and administrative positions at Bethlehem University before serving in the Palestinian government; Xavier Abu Eid, a political scientist with a master's degree in diplomatic studies; author Dr. Nazmi Jubeh, the director of Birzeit University Museum; and Munib R. Masri, the president of the National Palestinian Independents Party and a leading businessman.

Our Personality of the Month is publisher Najib Nassar who issued early warnings of impending developments. Our Artists of the Month are Irina and Maher Naji from Gaza. Visit Steve Sabella's *Elsewhere*, our virtual Exhibition of the Month, or cook a warming soup according to Riyam Kafri AbuLaban's recipe. In Where to Go, Bassam Almohor takes you to Beit Felasteen in Nablus. And in Ahlan Palestine Postcard, Malak Hasan and Bisan AlHajHasan invite you on a hike near Ramallah.

From the entire team at TWiP, we wish you a healthy month of February,

**Tina Basem**

