

Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni and Sari Hanafi (eds),
The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2009; 643 pp.: ISBN 9781890951924, US\$38.95

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This volume originated in the discussion group called 'Israel–Palestine: A Catastrophe in the Making' that was hosted by the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. The group's name could have provided the most adequate title for the book, since the latter reflects the authors' ideological views rather than any other characteristics of the team. Starting from the chapter 'The illegality of the occupation regime', it includes another 14 chapters of the same political kind: 'From colonization to separation', 'Colonial capitalism in the occupied territories', 'Occupation as disorientation', 'From domination to destruction', 'An introduction to geography of disaster', 'Israel/Palestine and the shadow of Apartheid', etc. Most of the authors are either sociologists, or political scientists or lawyers, whereas others are not. What is common to all of them is their active participation in various Israeli radical leftist political movements, such as Ta'ayush (Gadi Algazi), B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (Orna Ben-Naftali), Physicians for Human Rights (Hilla Dayan, Neve Gordon and Dani Filc), Zochrot – a group of Israeli citizens working to raise awareness of the Nakba, the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948 (Ariella Azoulay) and in some moderate ones, such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (Aeyal M Gross). Probably in order to be balanced, the volume contains a number of essays authored by Palestinian Arab academics, but, unfortunately, not even a single one by any Israeli Jewish non-post-Zionist scholar.

This monumental book, which includes not only essays, but series of meaningful photos and a lot of sometimes less important routine documents for some unclear reasons published both in their original Hebrew version and in English translation, aims to educate readers about human rights violations in the Occupied Territories, to combat the phenomenon of denial prevalent in the Israeli public, and, probably, to help create an alternative civic and political culture in Israel. The authors' objective is, first and foremost, to change Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories and ensure that the Israeli government complies with its obligations under international law, rather than to analyse various complicated political and social processes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The editors' claim that 'clichés taken from ideological narratives about the history of the Jewish people, the Zionist movement, the Holocaust, and the Israeli–Arab conflict are too often mobilized to close questions' (p. 20) is, of course, correct. However, clichés taken from the ideological narratives of the other side are useless for a constructive analysis to no less an extent. Faithful members of the Israeli self-appointed 'peace camp', the authors of the book perceive the Israeli occupation as the main, if not the only, reason for all the problems faced by the Palestinian people. The volume includes no analysis of the Jordanian and Egypt regimes in the West Bank and Gaza before the June 1967 War (both Arab states were reluctant to fulfil the UN 181 Resolution and did not establish the

Palestinian state in the territories occupied by their military forces in the course of the 1948 War), as it does not address the fundamental unwillingness of the Palestinian national leadership to recognize Israel as the Jewish state and to advance the peace process towards the 'end of claims, and of conflict' agreement. The volume does not contain a single paper which would focus on the discrepant Israeli governmental strategy and policy regarding the status of 'the territories', so that Israeli policy is represented only through the prism of its implementation by various local military and civilian authorities. As a result, significant dissimilarities between various governments and prime ministers are underestimated or even ignored altogether.

Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria in August 2005 (within the framework of this withdrawal more than 8000 Israeli settlers were evicted from their homes) is almost ignored, as well as the problems caused by the victory of the Islamic fundamentalist movement Hamas in the Palestinian general elections at the end of January 2006. The only essay on Hamas's ascendancy in this volume, authored by Neve Gordon and Dani Filc, focuses primarily on the problems of the Palestinian health-care system and Hamas's network of social welfare and health-care. The fact that hundreds of Israelis were killed and wounded by its militant guerrilla units is not mentioned at all. Surprisingly, describing Hamas as a 'postmodern phenomenon' (p. 474), the authors say nothing either about Hamas's military buildup (a total of 1750 rockets and 1528 mortar shells landed in Israeli territory in 2008 alone) or about its leadership's reluctance to implement the Mecca accords or other agreements signed with the official representatives of the PNA during recent years. In order to help both Israelis and Palestinians who wish to live in peace achieve a better future, the analysis should be honest, balanced and open-minded. Unfortunately, that is not the case when Hamas is presented as an umbrella for a number of charitable NGOs for the suffering population *per se*.

As mentioned by Tamar Hermann in her scrupulous book about the Israeli peace movement, published recently by the Cambridge University Press, 'beyond their fatal physical impact, the deadly terrorist attacks by Palestinians against Israeli civilians conducted in parallel to the peace talks were psychologically devastating, because they made it difficult, if not impossible, for Israeli Jews to develop a more positive view of the other side's intentions' (p. 113). However, 'it was extremely rare for Palestinian peace organizations to come out openly against terror activities, even suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. On the few occasions when they did so, their statements often included expressions of empathy, not with the acts *per se*, but with the underlying circumstances' (p. 252). The complete ignorance of all the issues related to Palestinian combatants' use of force against Israeli civilians and military personnel as well as against other Palestinians, is something that cannot be justified in a volume like this one.

As mentioned in the editors' introduction, 'this book does not offer a new perspective on the history of "the conflict". . . . The aim of the book is to turn attention from the past and from the future to the present' (pp. 15–16). The question is whether there is a need in such a volume, more than 25 years after the late Baruch Kimmerling's *Zionism and Territory* (1983) saw the light. Not to mention that the books published since then by Ilan Peleg (*Human Rights in the West Bank and Gaza*, 1995), Shlomo Gazit (*Trapped Fools*, Hebrew edition 1999, English edition 2003), David Kretzmer (*The Occupation of Justice*, 2002), Maya Rosenfeld (*Confronting the Occupation*:

Work, Education, and Political Activism of Palestinian Families in a Refugee Camp, 2004), Elisha Efrat (*The West Bank and Gaza Strip: A Geography of Occupation and Disengagement*, 2006) and Neve Gordon (*Israel's Occupation*, 2008), to name but a few, altogether provide the reader with theoretically sophisticated and most detailed analyses of the Israeli patterns of control implemented in the West Bank and Gaza. After the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the Hamas victory, which resulted in the formation of two separate and conflicting Palestinian governments in the West Bank (lead by Salam Fayyad) and Gaza (lead by Ismail Haniyeh), and in the rise of three separate centres of power in Palestinian politics – in Ramallah (Mahmoud Abbas), Gaza (Ismail Haniyeh and Mahmoud al-Zahar) and Damascus (Khaled Mash'al), both Israelis and Palestinians face an unfamiliar situation. The conflict between two national movements – the Zionist and the Palestinian – has been transformed into a clash of another kind, in which the role of religious fundamentalism is higher than ever before, in both societies. These developments should be analysed most carefully.

However, it seems that it was easier for the authors of the volume to return again and again to the accusations of the 'colonial' nature of both Zionism and the Israeli regime than to face the new situation in its tragic complexity. Probably, this could have been helpful several years ago, before the Oslo process or at its early stages, but I am afraid it is far less helpful, if not to say misleading, now.

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