

Jonathan Cook. 2008. *Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair*. London & New York: Zed Books. 294 pp.

What will become of the millions of Palestinians without Palestine? Dispossessed of their land in 1948, subjected to continuing illegal occupation since 1967, and sold into accepting the lies of a ludicrous unilateral disengagement since 2005, the Palestinians are losing—or had lost—their homeland in a combination of deceit, bad faith, and outright policy to have them evicted, expelled, or even erased from the face of the earth to secure a land for the Jews and Jews only. Jonathan Cook, in this persuasive book, provides the proper context on how to view the current impasse between Palestinians and Israelis. Cook is also able to demonstrate how the Israeli party, instead of bringing the conflict into its resolution, actually instigated what had been misleadingly perceived as “terrorism” by Hamas to deflect the attention of the international community from the real reasons they are resisting the bogus offer of peace and sovereignty by Israel.

Cook, a British journalist living in Nazareth, had written on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for a number of international publications, Arab newspapers and magazines, and is the author of two other books on the same topic. Awarded the 2010 Martha Gellhorn Special Prize in Journalism, Cook is noted for his ability to sift the lies in official propaganda and reveal the truth in his analysis of the Middle East conflict. This book is a firm testimony that journalism, for it to be a liberating tool in the quest for what is right and good, must not sacrifice the truth for the sake of mere reporting and keeping one's career. It is a job that requires all honesty and candor, one that is fraught with risks and dangers, that only a person with truth as his passion is capable of doing. Reading the book makes the truth more compelling as it is written by someone who lives in Israel after having married a Palestinian and sired a daughter.

The book has two parts. The first part, consisting of four chapters, gives a good introduction to the conflict and its ramifications through the years. Efforts to revise and invent history to suit the objectives of Zionism, like denying the existence of Palestinian people and the questionable use of Biblical archaeology to give credence to an ancient Jewish state, are examined in light of recent research and debates. Quoting Israeli historian Shlomo Sand, Cook says that most Jews of present-day Israel are not descendants of those who had lived in

Palestine but rather converts to Judaism; those who had remained in Palestine were the Jews and Christians who converted to Islam. The tenuous claim to nationhood by Israel had to deny the existence of other people in a land that they are said to own by historic right. To accomplish a plan of ethnic cleansing, Jewish forces as early as 1948, even before the exit of the British, had succeeded in expelling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, some killed in horrendous massacres and rapes. But there remained in what became Israel Palestinian cities and villages that Jewish officials wanted to erase from the map that they are making. Since they are unwelcome, Palestinians suffer from “an almost permanent state of social, economic and political underdevelopment” (32). The so-called Judaization program is meant to dispossess the Palestinian minority of their lands through legal and bureaucratic ruses so that today only 3 percent of Israeli lands are in their hands.

But the greater threat to their existence as a people is deftly tackled by Cook in chapters 2 and 3 in which the true motive of the Six-Day War is unraveled and the rise of settlement activities in the occupied territories is examined in detail. Cook does not believe that the war was fought in self-defense but finds the reason in the long-term goal of cleansing “West Bank, as well as Gaza, of many Palestinians as it could under cover of war” (50) for “an expanded Jewish state, the realization of the long-standing Zionist ambition for a Greater Israel” (59). Israel employed legal tricks to circumvent international law to deprive the Palestinians of their rights. To make life unbearable for the Palestinians, a sort of apartheid has been erected, with Jewish immigrants and residents in the colonies afforded all the benefits and protection by the occupying power along with first-rate roads proscribed to the Palestinians. Since the aim of the occupation is the “creeping annexation” of West Bank and Gaza, the settlement of these lands will continue unabated until all the lands “dunam after dunam” had been “recovered,” which makes everybody pause on the sincerity of Israel in pursuing peace and justice with the Palestinians.

In chapter 4, which carries the title of the book, Cook analyzes the content of a 2007 leaked paper supposed to be guidelines after the failed negotiations, which was scheduled to resume in 2001, by the Israeli side that apart from the forced concessions by the Palestinians to the Israelis, the deal would give the Palestinians “a very compromised sovereignty over no more than about 14 percent of their historic homeland” (100). Cook also discusses the two positions by the parties in Israel in relation to the status of Palestinians: Labor wants to

“transfer” all Palestinians, encourage them to immigrate to another place outside Israel while the forerunner of the Likud party, the Revisionists, cares less about removing them than making them acquiesce to Jewish rule. The latter is known as “separation” in which the plan is to make the so-called Palestinian homeland into a series of enclaves and ghettos following the Bantustan model. In addition to making a mockery of Palestinian sovereignty in a sham state, Israel has tried every means to control Palestinian nationalism by controlling its leadership, playing politics with which it could arrogate its will and conditions. Lest it be accused of maintaining apartheid, Israel came up with two options, that of supporting a Palestinian self-rule and that of putting under Jordan un-annexed parts of the West Bank. Yet it is also reported that another alternative could be making two mini states out of Gaza and West Bank—“Western Palestine” and “Eastern Palestine,” respectively—with Egypt and Jordan as their respective hinterlands. Occupation has its benefits, says Cook, as Israel unwarrantedly acquired farmlands, quarries, and the water beneath them. Israel also benefited economically as Palestinians are ready markets for its goods until it began cutting off the supplies when Hamas came to power in 2006 to the detriment of Palestinians and their miserable economy. Despite the economic losses due to the blockade, Cook points out that Gaza and West Bank profitably serve as laboratories for Israel’s high-tech and military industries manufacturing technologies of crowd control, surveillance, urban warfare, and collective punishment. That Hamas and the Palestinians had every right to defend themselves does not need any justification as long as oppressive policies designed to have them exterminated by all means is pursued by Israel. Palestinians are confronting their own genocide as Israel had it planned or as Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling would describe as one of politicide. It is futile to be a Palestinian as Israeli policies would like to say, for Palestinians “are conceived of not as lesser beings, in the way that apartheid conceived of its black population, but as non-beings whose fate should not trouble us at all” (134).

In part two, a collection of published essays, Cook demonstrates further how ways and means are being concocted to suppress Israeli Arab rights, stifle Palestinian resistance to Israeli impositions, control Palestinian nationalism, and influence public perception through a manipulated press. Cook examines the deployment of Zionism in curtailing the rights of Palestinian citizens leading to the persecution of Azmi Bishara who advocates equality among all citizens of Israel. He

records as he had witnessed restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the occupied territories through countless checkpoints; writes about the expulsion of Palestinians who hold a foreign passport; looks at motives behind the bombing of a power plant in Gaza, which is to advance the suffering of the people; and studies how Israel manipulates the division between Fatah and Hamas to effectively divide and contain Palestinian resistance. Cook also documents the inability and ineptitude of Israeli intellectuals and activists to fully express solidarity with the Palestinian people who are often blamed for their plight rather than as a consequence of the illegal occupation. Cook does not mince words in uncovering the reasons behind the Western media's unfair coverage of the conflict, reflecting more of Israeli propaganda rather than the truth, and reveals how Israel controls the flow of information to journalists it could trust and rely upon for the disinformation to continue. Lastly, Cook explores the use of "new anti-semitism" to spruce up support for Israel and create paranoia against Muslims in an effort to paint "a clash of civilizations" in Europe in stark contrast with the plight of Palestinian Christians, threatened by all kinds of intimidation and discrimination, who support their Muslim brothers in their struggle against Israel. Says Cook, "While Israel seeks to blame the growing exodus of Palestinian Christians on the hostile climate being fomented in the Holy Land by its Muslims, it is in truth Israel and the ideology of Zionism that are creating a 'clash of civilizations' that forces local Christians onto the wrong side of the divide" (230). But which is the right side?

Is there a way out of the hellish prison that Palestinians are fenced in literally with high walls? In the afterword directed to "two-state dreamers," Cook makes a convincing position that a real two-state solution is never feasible, citing the vulnerable supply of water, which necessitates an equitable management more suitable in a one-state. The latter, however, meets strong opposition from hardliners wanting to maintain a Jewish state at all costs. Cook correctly identifies the main obstacle to achieving both, which is ethnic supremacy embedded in its ideology, and that "there can be no hope of a solution until the question of how to defeat Zionism is addressed" (251).

With this powerful book, Cook shatters the myths and the lies surrounding the claims of an ethnic state and the doomed efforts of achieving peace in the Middle East, narrates with fair sympathy the painful predicament of the Palestinian people, and offers a balance perspective, that finding the solution to this conflict means seeking

what could give justice to both Palestinians and Israelis.—ERWIN S. FERNANDEZ, *ABUNG NA PANAGBASAY PANGASINAN*.

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Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, ed. 2011. *Global Civil Society Movements in the Philippines*. Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing, Inc. 302 pp.

The research program on which this book is based had an ambitious objective: to examine the transnational nature of civil society movements in the Philippines. The book therefore appropriately focuses on (1) issues raised by local social movements that are international in character, (2) the interactions between domestic and international opportunity structures for social movements, and (3) the strategies and linkages adopted by local social movements that transcend the country's territorial boundaries. These the five case studies do and more. While the book aims to examine the transnational nature of Philippine social movements, it also offers rich historical detail on the genesis of these movements.

The book's editor wrote an excellent chapter that synthesizes the various case studies. An edited volume is always difficult to synthesize—contributors may adopt different organizing frames as a project proceeds—but the synthesis chapters in this book provide a well-developed articulation of the theoretical insights drawn from the cases that illustrate the varying degrees Philippine social movements acquire a transnational character.

Though the book is well-structured, there are still ways for this research agenda to fruitfully move forward. I am proceeding from my own lingering interest in international political economy (IPE), so I shall focus my remaining remarks on issues of international trade, a topic covered by two of the five case studies in the book.

Looking at transnational trade movements (whether pro- or anti-free trade, or in between) in the Philippines offers a fruitful way of linking two literatures that often talk past each other: social movement theory and international trade theory, particularly that which examines the distribution effects of international trade.

Among IPE scholars, there has been a long debate about who wins and who loses in a domestic economy under free trade (whether the