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Daniel Bar-Tal and Izhak Schnell (Eds.), *The Impacts of Lasting Occupation: Lessons from Israeli Society*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2013.

The Impacts of Lasting Occupation is a sober and critical analysis by twenty three Israeli academics on the effect of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza on Israeli society over the past forty seven years. The book is organized in four sections: “Fundamentals,” “Politics,” “Society and Economics,” and “Culture.” The first section begins with a chapter on the legalities of the occupation and the means by which Israel has circumvented international law concerning state seizure of land. For its part, Israel attempts to justify its “belligerent occupation” of the West Bank and Gaza, its settlements there, its confiscation of Palestinian land, and a great deal more. David Kretzmer examines the main legal issues surrounding Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, including those pertaining to the existence of the Israeli settlements within the region, the Israeli-built separation barrier along the West Bank border, the expropriation of land designated as Palestinian territory for the highway system, and the security of the Israeli populations residing in the contested area. Kretzmer concludes that Israel is, in fact, running two parallel systems of law: one that guarantees human and legal rights for all Israelis and another, for Palestinians, under which military force is justified and no guarantee of human or legal rights exists. “Thus,” Kretzmer asserts, “legal mechanizations have been found to justify all forms of plunder, exploitation, and control” (p. 53).

A chapter on morality follows section one and notes, among other things the relevance to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of Franz Fanon’s concept of “colonization of the mind,” in which the colonized are brought to accept of the moral superiority of the colonizer, who works in many spheres to establish it. This segues into a tightly argued discussion of the elements of conflict resolution, which, alas, offers no resolution for the current conflict. Izhak Schnell offers a fine discussion of the use and manipulation of spatial/geographic features to define a “sense of place” in his chapter on the geographical ramifications of the occupation. He argues that Israel has used a wide variety of mechanisms to privilege Israeli identity and perspective, including the creation of school textbooks and maps that present the territories as Israeli land; the offering of tours to the region, thus highlighting Israeli “ownership” of the land; the “Hebraizing” of names of streets and neighborhoods within the occupied territories so as to emphasize the Israeli connection to the area, the creation of Israeli settlements within the territories so that Israelis may feel that it is their birthright to reside there, and the glorifying of the “working of the land” by Israeli settlers so as to incorporate the occupied territories into Israeli society’s view of the national homeland, thus ignoring and eliminating Palestinian identity.

Chapter 4, “Psychological Legitimization” is a lengthy 63 page, multi-authored discussion of the changing political portrayals and public perception of the occupation since 1967. Name concludes, “Partly due to the concealed yet deliberate acquiescence of the elected politicians of the state, the legal and law enforcement authorities of the state of Israel persistently failed to subordinate the settlers’ illegal and often violent actions to the law.... The process of self-democratization of the state...was seriously hampered, if not reversed” (p.190). The conclusion is based on a chronological reading of political leadership statements and empirical studies of public attitude surveys.

Chapter 5, “The Occupation and Israeli Democracy,” the introduction to the section on politics, considers the effect of the occupation on Israeli democracy. The chapter sub-headings tell a story all their own: “The Failure to Tame Extralegal Force” (with respect to the

settlements), “The Defense Army Becomes an Army of Occupation,” “The Uncivil Administration” (of the occupied territories), “The Occupation and Israeli Arabs,” “The Occupation and the Place of Religion in Israeli Society,” “The Occupation and the Deterioration of Civic Education,” and “The Occupation and the International Legitimacy of Israel as a Democracy.” The author, Yaron Ezrahi, concludes that Israel has moved from an idealistic liberal democracy to a militarized democracy, in which a steady erosion of law and an increased reliance on military force has resulted in a democracy that is compatible with occupation and ideological lawlessness—particularly after 1977 and the political shift to the Right (Likud)—resulting in a loss of international status.

In Chapter 6, “The Effect of the Occupation on the Military,” Reuven Pedatzur points out a fundamental truth: Israeli soldiers are not trained as civilian policemen (something the United States learned belatedly in the months following its invasion of Iraq). “In practice,” he asserts, “[Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)] soldiers do not enforce the law, are not familiar with the protocol, and are not interested in the least in functioning as policemen” (p. 232). Indeed, says Pedatzur, the IDF has become an active partner in the settlement enterprise. Local, armed settlement militias have formed in the territories in cooperation with IDF reserve duty soldiers. IDF cooperation with such militias may be due, in part, to the fact that the settlers have the ear of the politicians, who can influence military promotions. By 2005, the army had re-focused its activities from XYZ to fighting “terror” in the occupied territories, by using imprisonment and torture as acceptable tools. Pedatzur draws a parallel between the conflict over the West Bank and Gaza and the Algerian war between the French and the Algerian National Liberation Front (*Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) and its effect on the French military—although he fails to draw out one important point: unlike the French volunteer army, Israel’s IDF is an army of conscripted Israeli citizens. All citizens of Israel complete a mandatory term of military service and then return to their civilian lives directly affected by what they experienced in the territories.

Chapter 7, “Inter-domestic Bargaining over the Lands” deals with Israeli political party struggles over the issue of whether or not to give up land for peace. Doran and Rosenthal conclude, unsurprisingly, that a coalition of Right (Likud) and Left (Labor) parties will be needed for settlement withdrawal. The subsequent chapter, “The Impact of the Occupation on the Political Discourse of the Arab Israelis,” reviews the attitudes of Arab Israelis since 1948 but especially after 1967. Before 1967, Arab Israelis were politically fragmented and focused on communal affairs; after 1967, they began to focus on Palestinian national matters, identifying with their compatriots on the West Bank while expressing more openly their religious affiliation. By 2000, marginalized by both Israelis and the PLO, Arab Israelis began to emphasize “equality and peace” in their politics. A document issued by community leaders in 2006, “Future Visions,” gave full expression to their rejection of Israel’s now dominant theme of Jewish statehood, supporting the idea of Israel as a single state offering equality to all residents, regardless of religion or ethnicity.

“Wall Keepers,” the chapter introduction to the section on social issues, deals with the wall between peoples, describing how—through media and education control, Israel sees the Palestinians exclusively as “the hated Other,” knowing little about the Palestinians as real people. The physical wall itself is only a part of the story. Chapter 10, “The Economic Cost of the Occupation,” is grim. The author, Shir Hever, indicates based on his research that by 2038, 50% of the Israeli budget will be spent on maintaining the occupation. Israel’s growth rate has gone steadily down since 1967—such a decline being the cost of a militarized state. On the subject of gender (Chapter 11), Hanna Herzog points out that with national security as the social

paradigm, the militarization of society serves to marginalize Israeli women, whose role within a militarized context is primarily to provide support from home for the “fighting men.” Domestic violence is increasing. Chapter 12 “The Psychological and Moral Consequences for Israeli Society,” partially explains this increase in domestic violence. The chapter describes how Israeli soldiers serving on the West Bank are becoming increasingly brutal and, upon completion of their military duty, take such brutality home with them. For them, human life takes on less value. At the same time, violence perpetuated on the West Bank by members of the Israeli Right Wing is carried into Israel proper.

Chapter 13, “Human Rights” (which might have been better put under the section “Fundamentals” or “Politics”) by Edy Kaufman discusses how discrimination against Arab Israelis, though practiced in earlier decades, has increased dramatically since 1967. The use of “casual bigotry” is now commonplace. An example given is the not uncommon use by politicians of the term “dirty Arabush”—a term not unlike “nigger” in its reprehensibility, the only difference being that the use of “nigger” by a US politician would likely destroy a political career or candidacy. The Israeli government and the politicians, relying on the Right Wing vote, have done little to reduce discrimination. A significant minority in Israel (30 to 50 %) supports the torture of Palestinian detainees and perpetrators of violence, the use of live ammunition against non-violent Palestinian demonstrations, curfews for Palestinians, and detention without trial. Given the emphasis in Israeli politics on the themes of a “Jewish State” (i.e. not a state that necessarily offers rights or protection for all) and “Security” (with a heavy emphasis on the need for violence in the name of security against a violent “Other”), discrimination against Arab Israelis tends to grow stronger. In brief, human rights, originally seen in Israel as universally applicable, are now seen as applying only to Jews. The apartheid-like attitude towards Palestinians that permeates the occupied territories is now penetrating into Israel itself. The Israeli settlers in the West Bank and a compliant Israeli government have turned the historical Jewish focus on “justice” into an acceptance of “oppressive occupation.”

The conflict’s impact on the arts is represented by a chapter on theater (Chapter 14), in which plays that reflect the views of playwrights on the occupation are explored. Through their works, playwrights have used their art to display both sides of the occupation. The first play examined, “Co-existence,” produced in 1970, dealt with Israeli Palestinians but ignored the occupation. The second, “Winter in Kalandia,” produced in 2004, dealt directly with the “impossible situation” of soldiers administering the humiliation and suffering of the Palestinians of the occupied territories. Not surprisingly, many plays have generated controversy, given their political nature. One is reminded of the New York Metropolitan Opera’s “The Death of Klinghoffer,” which explores, in part, the plight of the Palestinians. Its global broadcast was cancelled this year amidst accusations that it encouraged anti-semitism. Chapter 15, “Vocabulary and Discourse,” by Nadir Tsur, analyzes the names and labels used to obfuscate and hide the realities of the occupation, the laundering of words by the political establishment, the media, and school text books, the biases of which filter into everyday language on the street. Even the key phrase “occupied territories” was used only in the first week of the occupation and then abandoned, in order to avoid triggering the Geneva Accords requirements. In its place, a variety of more “palatable” phrases have been used to refer to the occupied region: “held territories,” “territories,” “Judea and Samaria,” “liberated territories,” terms that embody the language of separation and disengagement, the language of national claim. It should be noted that “occupied territories” is used throughout this book.

In the last chapter, the editors, Schnell and Bar-Tal, summarize that Israel has undergone a radical reconstruction of its image because of the occupation, which is destructive to both the state and to Palestinians. Legal justification for holding the territories is offered, but the justification excludes Palestinian rights within it. A shift to “neo-Zionist” belief, with messianic sanctification of the land has taken place, say the editors, providing Jews with the sole right to the occupied territories. The occupation is paralleled by an ethnocentric worldview and a shift in morality in which an ethnic “Other” is afforded few (if any) human rights and services. The democracy of Israel is overwhelmed by a “national-religious component”; the quality of Israeli democracy is declining. As Arab Israelis increasingly support the one state/all equal solution, they are increasingly mistrusted by Israeli Jews. On the West Bank, settlers steadily increase in number under creeping annexation, living with full citizenship rights in a contested land; Palestinians among them continue to live without rights under military law. With the ideals regarding the international recognition of Palestinian statehood, Israel is becoming increasingly isolated in the world.

This text is an excellent critical introduction to the dilemmas that face Israel regarding its occupation regime. Each chapter is accompanied by a detailed bibliography. Well-researched and documented, *The Impacts of Lasting Occupation: Lessons From Israeli Society* is a must read for all writers and teachers of the Israel/Palestine conflict, as well as a must-have for all libraries supporting classes and research on Middle Eastern affairs. Although the book will be criticized by many, it ought to be included in an overall assessment of Israeli politics. It should also be read by all members of the United States Congress.

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