

# Palestine: The Biggest Prison on Earth - A History of the Occupied Territories

## A Book Review

By [Jim Miles](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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*The history of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine is continued with **Ilan Pappé's** recent work, **The Biggest Prison on Earth**. For those who have read Pappé's earlier histories, it is clear the original Zionists recognized the existence of the Palestinian population and the resistance most likely to rise from it. Also recognized are the actions taken throughout the occupation and settlement that the Jewish settlers were intent on marginalizing, displacing, and cleansing as much of Palestine as they could of its residents.*

The revelation in this continuation of the history is the high degree to which these policies were officially planned and ready for action starting up to four years before the 1967 six day pre-emptive war against the Arab states. The details of control, the laws and institutions necessary to contain the Palestinian population and to try and force it into exile were developed before the war started – and implemented immediately afterward. These rules and regulations essentially made all occupied areas into large open air prisons.

Pappé argues that the term “occupation” is invalid for two main reasons: first, it is not a temporary situation; and it denies 80 per cent of the Palestinian Mandate. I understood the latter to recognize that in reality all of the British controlled Mandate is occupied by Jewish settlers. Israel is in its entirety a colonial settler society and not an occupying power: it is permanent and it practices ethnic cleansing.

Demographics above all plays a major role in Palestine. With the 1967 war about to start, the Israeli's recognized they were absorbing an even larger demographic deficit by acquiring the new territories. The means to control the situation domestically and with foreign countries was important, and most importantly was the support of the U.S. politically, militarily, and financially. The goal, apart from completely eliminating the Palestinians, was to hold territory without annexing it and preventing any contiguous Palestinian control. The book works through the political discussions before and after the war, and then through the different periods leading up to the Oslo Accords.

The Oslo Accords fit perfectly into the Israeli plans of never intending to create a Palestinian state. Domestically, the PLO and Fatah were not only sidelined, but with the creation of the Palestinian Authority and the three zones of control in the West Bank, essentially became partners in crime. Internationally, the politicians talked, and talked some more while more and more settlements were established in the newly occupied zones...and the international community accepted the ploy.

Pappe also takes the reader through the two Intifadas and the various onslaughts/punishments handed out to Gaza. In sum, Gaza has served as a maximum security prison, without recourse to any international recognition except for a few moments when the assaults killed large numbers of women and children. It has served in some respects as a training ground and munitions testing site for the Israeli army highlighting mostly what the world should know about its complete lack of morality and its general lack of on ground fighting efficiency.

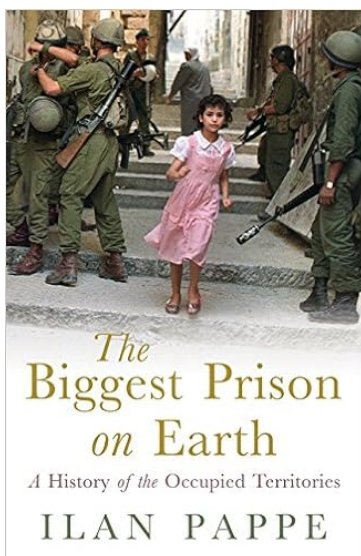
Israel never intended from the start to do more than nod their collective heads and continue on with their well planned zones of military control. *The Biggest Prison on Earth - A History of the Occupied Territories* is essential reading in order to help complete the overall picture of Israeli intransigence in regards to international law and international human rights standards and their callous subjugation of the Palestinian people.

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***Jim Miles** is a frequent contributor to Global Research.*

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## **The Biggest Prison on Earth: A History of the Occupied Territories**

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