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**Book Reviewed:** Ali Abunimah, *The Battle for Justice in Palestine*, Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2014, pp. 224, ISBN: 9781608463244 (Paperback).

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Ali Abunimah, the Palestinian-American journalist, the co-creator of the Electronic Intifada web site and champion for the one state solution to Israel-Palestine, in a glittering and optimistic tone proclaims that the Palestinians are winning and Zionists are losing as a fascinating argument at the outset of this book. He believes that in spite of the physical and territorial success and domination of the Israel over Palestinians, there are considerable changes in the perception of the Israel-Palestinian conflict around the world that sounds an alarm for Israel as many voices vociferously reverberate over the world against the Israel's perpetual aggression, oppression and discrimination against the Palestinian population. Many "academic associations, trade unions, churches and pension funds are debating and adopting policies" according to Abunimah "to isolate Israeli institutions and foreign companies that are complicit in crimes against the Palestinian people" (p.xiii). He believes that things are changing fast now, global solidarity movements particularly BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) are mobilizing sustaining support for the Palestinian cause. The book under review explores and highlights that in the coming few years there would be promising and exciting fundamental changes towards the Israel-Palestine conflict. It demonstrates that the battle for justice in Palestine has always been "a battle of ideas" (p. xiv), which the author explores throughout the book.

Chapter I, "shared values, shared struggles", explores bilateral relations in many aspects—ideology, technology, strategy of cooperation—between the US and Israel. It explains that both these states share many common unethical strategies—racial prejudice, discrimination, public profiling against black and Muslim populations. Abunimah shows how America has radicalized crime in the drug war, which has been waged exclusively in poor communities of color; reflecting the American whites' inherent seeds of racial discrimination, which continue to prevail there. However, after the 9/11 event, this drug war has taken on a new formulation, "terror war." mainly against the Muslim population. He draws attention to an important point that the USA's security policies are a direct inspiration from "Israel and its occupation of the Palestine" (p. 10). This is evident from the fact that the Israeli government is directly invested in promoting amiable relations with US agencies to boost Israel's lucrative 'homeland security' export industry. (p. 16). The continued racial discrimination against the African Americans and other immigrants in the US, suggests Abunimah, offers critically important lessons to Palestinians and emphasizes that the Palestinian struggle for human rights must be viewed along with the struggle for human rights in the US and around the world. This is a significant inference that Abunimah draws that might further mobilize global support on



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humanitarian grounds against the perpetual gross human rights violations by the so-called upholders—US and Israel—of equality, justice and democratic principles.

Chapter 2, “Does Israel have a Right to Exist as a Jewish State?” explores different arguments on the bases of which Abunimah insists that Israel has no right to exist as a Jewish state; he even questions that Israel has any “right to exist” at all. (p. 44) He argues that Israel as “a Jewish state” has no proper legal or moral remedy as it was created on the basis of perpetuating terrible wrongs by expelling the Palestinians from their homes and preventing their return. Abunimah states that Israel only survives by perpetually maintain current and committing future human rights violations: denying the Palestinians’ access in various basic social, public and administrative services; profiling, abducting, killing of innocents; divide and rule policy; enacting discriminatory laws. They do so, writes Abunimah, to change the demography of the Israeli and Palestinian state as the majority of the indigenous population is Palestinian. Israel is tied to go to any extreme in order to maintain the *de facto* ideological bi-national solution.

Chapter 3, “Israeli Jews and the One-State Solution”, explores, counter to the Jewish two-state solution, which provides an even more open atmosphere to perpetual Israeli domination without any reprisal of the real long-standing Palestinians problems, the feasibility and future of a one-state solution. Abunimah suggests and hopes that what he observed from the political transition to democratic systems in South Africa and Northern Ireland after their unending and unflinching resistance against the long and powerful apartheid and colonizing regimes; that in the current political deadlock of the two-state solution, it is a time “to shift our discourse and practice towards democratic and decolonizing alternatives”. (p.47) He concedes that a one-state solution entails severe implications especially the economic crunch for the Palestinians. Nevertheless, he suggests and insists for economic justice as integral part of the Palestinian struggle for liberation from Zionism. Here he enjoins on the BDS movement—a big source of intimidation for the existence of Jewish State, as the movement is gaining increasing global support for the Palestinian cause mentioned earlier—engaging in researching and economic activities.

Chapter 4, “Neoliberal Palestine”, analyses the Palestinian “Fayyadism” (after Salman Fayyad, the US arbitrarily chosen PM for Palestine) liberal reforms as manifested in the city of Rawabah which is akin to the Israel cities. These selective developmental projects (“economic peace”) were backed by Israel and its’ international allies’, which, according to Abunimah, sought to demonstrate to the Palestinians that real development would be possible only in opting for leaders chosen by the US and Israel rather than on their own. By these selective reforms, he states that the inequality gaps got further widened between the majority poor and minority elite Palestinians. As such, Palestinians now feel under double occupation; one from Israel and the other from US-backed Palestinian government. Abunimah makes an important point that these economic changes weakened the resilience of Palestinian households (p. 86), if not extinguishing the Palestinian struggle. He also points out that under the guise of development and modernity, state building and Israel’s economic peace they in effect want to camouflage the abuses of occupation. In such dismal poverty and conditions, he suggests the Palestinians to mobilize for economic democracy and to break the neoliberal ideological hold of the international monetary bodies (IMF and World Bank).

Chapter 5, “Israel Fights Back against BDS”, explains Israel’s growing concern about the perceived threat from the BDS movement. He reveals that Israel is facing two impediments in the way of their imagination and the legitimacy of a unilaterally demographic Jewish state. This is a combined threat from a “Resistance Network” and a “Delegitimization (as Obama



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claimed) Network”. The former comprises groups that include Hamas and Hezbollah, while as the latter is the more powerful BDS movement—Palestinian solidarity and human-rights groups and activities spreading over the world (p.126), which has terribly affected the Israeli’s global fame and trade. For this reason, views Abunimah, “fighting deligitmization has become the top priority of major Zionist organizations in Europe and North America” (p. 127). To combat these resistance networks and to camouflage their evil-painted name and fame, Israel orchestrated campaigns of “rebranding” such as “Pinkwashing” (marketing Israel as a destination for gay-male-sex tourism, depicting Israel as a haven for gay life, and financing film screening at LGBTQ film festivals (p. 139); and “Greenwashing” (pretending to pioneer Green technology. Abunimah states that all these activities sought to attract the global market; otherwise, he argues that the Israel’s claim for sustainable development sharply contradicts with the situation at ground level (p. 145).

Chapter 6, “The War on Campus”, is perhaps the longest chapter of the book, which meticulously explores the American public (both Jewish and non-Jewish) support for Israel. Abunimah mainly draws from the “David Project” – a four-million-dollar per year organization focussing on Zionist advocacy on university campuses. The project earlier had revealed the waning of US support for Israel, therefore in order to make sure the US remains pro-Israel, it envisions to garner support from the higher seats of learning—colleges and universities; and simultaneously intimidating the institutions, scholars, students who focus on critical enquiry, teaching, and speech about Israel (p. 174). To silence these activities, it has switched from “anti-Semitism” to self-styled and propounded “anti-Israelism” propaganda in the effort “to restrict campus discussions of Israel’s racist practices or its claim to have a right to exist as a Jewish state” (p. 170). Abunimah recounts how terribly the American Israel lobby persecutes the faculty, the students, and the individuals groups who dare to speak the reality of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, of human rights violation, of discrimination against the Palestinians by Israel. Worthy of note is the lobby’s persecution and false allegations against the famous Columbia University Professors—Edward Said and Joseph Massad. Moreover, he notices an important development that in spite of the Project’s aims and objectives, it in the long-terms would not prove fruitful to Israel as the Palestinian support and activism is on increase. Because owing to the prediction that “what happens on campus can also shape broader views about Palestine and ultimately shift US support away from Israel” (p. 225), the project suffers various setbacks of its own.

Chapter 7, “Reclaiming Self-determination”, demonstrates the purpose, principle and right to “Self-determination.” After analysing a couple of scholars on the right to self-determination, Abunimah states that the Palestinians cannot recognise the national rights of Jewish settlers in Palestine, otherwise it indirectly accepts their right to self-determination. This, he argues, would contradict “the very letter, spirit and purpose of the universal principle of self-determination”—primarily as a means for ‘people under alien domination’— “to realise their rights” (p. 231). Therefore, Palestinian claims for right to self-determination, which is, he asserts, “inclusive and rights-based, nor ethnic or religious” have not been extinguished rather it has gained more momentum through legitimate forms of resistance on the ground, and the growing global BDS solidarity movement. Moreover, Abunimah also draws our attention to an important inference that the Palestinian right to self-determination further loomed and reverberated from the Netanyahu’s remarks that Palestine must accept Israel’s “right to exist as a Jewish state”, is an implicit recognition that without the active consent of the Palestinians no Jewish state has any legitimacy (p. 234).

Abunimah is quite optimistic for the future of a one-state solution for the Palestinians. However, one should not take things for granted: Jewish diaspora support for the Zionist state



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is overwhelmingly coupled with the Israel's strong control over Palestine territory. They can go up to any extent to maintain and secure the Jewish cause, which continuously stands as a threat to what Abunimah calls the Palestinian "global campaign". Even so, Israel is self-sufficient, equipped with highly sophisticated and advanced technology and nuclear arms. Moreover, Abunimah has not addressed the spiritual and religious aspirations the Jews possess towards Jerusalem, which plays a key role for their continuous longing for the Jewish state.

Nevertheless, Abunimah's arguments throughout the book provide much to ponder and reflect upon. He meticulously analyses the historical precedents-covering different countries and times; he presents facts and then suggests the ways ahead to achieve the lasting solution of the long disputed Israel-Palestine conflict. The book is well researched, highly eloquent, incisive, unique, balanced, and a must-read book for all those interested in the Israel/Palestine studies, and international relations.



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