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Colonial dispossession, developmental discourses, and humanitarian solidarity in 'Area C': the case of the Palestinian Yanun Village

Lena Meari*

Abstract Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Yanun village, which was categorized as part of 'Area C' by the Oslo accords, this article analyses the collusion of the mainstream hegemonic developmental discourse with the colonial project in colonized Palestine. It also analyses the politics of and limitations of contemporary forms of international solidarity with Palestinian communities in 'Area C'. The article situates the devastating life conditions of Yanun community within the Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine with its ongoing structural and violent forms of dispossession, land appropriation, expulsion and displacement of Palestinians, particularly in 'Area C', which constitutes the current frontier for Zionist settler colonial expansionism. By examining Yanun community's survival tactics, the article illustrates how the hegemonic developmental discourse on 'Area C' constitutes the masses of Palestinians as subjects of humanitarian aid. The article also shows how the humanitarian approach of solidarity with Yanun's community constitutes the condition of Palestinian victimhood, cancels its anticolonial agency, and patronizes its forms of anticolonial resistance by employing the tactics of eye witnessing Palestinians' life under occupation and employing the language of non-violence.

**Address for correspondence*: Lena Meari, Department of Social And Behavioral Science And Institute of Women Studies, Birzeit University, Birzeit, West Bank, Palestine; email: lmiari@birzeit.edu

Introduction

Yanun village, located in the West Bank of colonized Palestine, was categorized in 1995 as part of 'Area C', a categorization invented through the Oslo 'peace process' which divided the West Bank into categories A, B, and C. 'Area C', in which Israel retained full control, covers 60 percent of the West Bank. Yanun is composed of a small population of community members that is persistently decreasing due to military and settler colonial attacks. Despite the singularity of Yanun's case and its community's struggle to protect its livelihood and living space within the colonial geography, Yanun village embodies the features and effects of the continuing Zionist settler colonial project that Palestinians have been facing and struggling against since the late nineteenth century. It also exemplifies the limitations of dominant developmental approaches and international solidarity activism that have emerged within the neoliberal post-Oslo era in Palestine.

This article identifies the structural foundations of oppression that constitute the lived conditions of the Palestinian community in Yanun; and it analyses the limitations of the developmental discourses and solidarity strategies deployed to cope with these conditions. Part one discusses the emergence of community development as a colonial tool and Palestinian attempts to radicalize it through the legacy of radical community organizing, an approach to development that was re-appropriated in the post-Oslo era. Part two displays and analyses the structural conditions that have led to the devastation of Palestinian livelihoods today with a focus on the invention of 'Area C'. I contend that the invention of 'Area C' is a continuing settler colonial technique aimed at dispossessing Palestinian lands and resources, displacing Palestinian communities, and replacing them with Zionist settlers. This section thus provides a critical analysis of dominant international and national development frameworks that seek to define 'Area C' and the challenges it faces. Instead, I situate Palestinians' lived realities and struggles within the structural conditions of the Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine. In doing so, I illustrate how mainstream economic developmental discourses on 'Area C' are in fact entangled within that settler colonial project and are, therefore, part and parcel of the structures that have constituted Yanun's devastation and the creation of Yanun community members as subjects of humanitarian aid. Part three depicts the impacts of colonial dispossession and displacement on the livelihoods of Yanun community as narrated by its members. It elucidates the community-based tactics deployed to face these conditions and it also analyses the limitations of international solidarity initiatives with Yanun community that emphasize a 'humanitarian' approach.

The analysis is informed by ethnographic research I conducted in Yanun village as part of a broader research project on gender and households in 'Area C' conducted by the Institute of Women Studies at Birzeit University during 2014–2015. The research project included quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative part consisted of a comprehensive survey of households and their members, which provided a detailed overview of the demographic, socio-economic, and human security situation of Palestinian households in 'Area C'. Qualitative research explored in depth the complex life conditions and coping strategies of households in seven localities categorized as 'Area C'. It addressed the gender/age dynamics of the systematic and continuous colonial dispossession within each locality[1] (more details on the survey and the qualitative research's main findings are available at Meari, Alazzeh and Adwan, 2016; Hammami, 2016). Drawing upon that research, this article focuses on the local community of Yanun village.

Community development versus community resistance

The colonial legacy of 'development' and the continuities between temporary development management and colonial administration have been extensively analysed. This literature illustrates the traces of colonialism that pervade the workings of the postindependence international development aid industry, the institutionalized links between colonialism and development, and the conceptual colonial foundations of development management (Cooke, 2003; Kothari, 2005).

British colonial administrators and theorists coined the term 'community development,' out of their endeavour to develop 'mass education' and 'social welfare' in the colonies, in accordance with the colonial rule's 'dual mandate to "civilize" while exploiting' (Mayo, 2011, p. 75). Marjorie Mayo explicates the self-interested political reasons behind Britain's concern, post-Second World-War, with the social and community development of the colonized subjects. Britain's rulers particularly feared the implications of independent self-government in the colonies. Britain and its imperial successor, the USA, thus used community development programmes for colonial and neocolonial political, economic and ideological goals and to disguise counter-insurgency activities. Such programmes aimed at encouraging capitalist 'free market' economies, reorganizing the former colonies according to the interests of Western Imperial powers and promoting

1 The quantitative research team consisted of Rema Hammami, Laura Adwan, Rita Giacaman, and Ayman Rezeqallah. The qualitative research team consisted of Lena Meari and Ala Alazzeh, with research assistants Laura Adwan, Arafat Barghouthi, Rand Ahmad, Tareq Mattar, and Saleem Shehadeh.

favourable ideologies and attitudes in the face of more radical challenges (Mayo, 2011, p. 77).

Community development took a more radical turn when invoked by national liberation movements in their struggles. These movements radicalized the term by promoting, for instance, popular education, which 'frequently became a source of strength to the emerging nationalist movements' (Mayo, 2011, p. 81), and by employing it for the purposes of national liberation and decolonization. However, community development has been constantly re-appropriated and co-opted by international and national developmental organizations. These tensions between politically radical and mainstream forms of development and community organizing are evident in Palestine also.

Palestinians in the occupied West Bank engaged in radical forms of community organization and development before and during the 1987 Intifada (uprising). Samara (2007) outlines the features of Palestinians' radical development or what he calls 'development by popular protection' in the face of colonialism's, imperialism's, and globalization's hegemony. Samara (2007) identifies radical development as a political and free decision by the masses, involving the contribution of each individual, to participate in a collective project of production according to their needs. Radical development in the context of colonized Palestine is inevitably enmeshed with resistance and involves delinking with capitalism as an exploitative mode of production. 'Development by popular protection', according to Samara (2007), emerged among the masses during the Intifada to resist Israeli occupation and simultaneously to challenge capitalist invasion. It involved projects for self-employment; boycotting foreign and the Israeli occupation's products, substituting them with local products; and developing conscious modes of consuming. It was initiated, led, funded, and employed by Palestinian workers and peasants themselves. These small projects should have been further developed and completed through investments from local capital and the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization [then in Tunisia], as a starting point for national economic independence and delinking with the occupation economy. Yet, this did not happen as an integration between the economy of popular protection and the capitalist economy was impossible (Samara, 2007, p. 3).

It should also be noted that community organizing led to and accompanied the proceedings of the Intifada, including its commitment to radical economic development. Taraki (1989, p. 431) identifies the infrastructure of mass organizations, which predated the Intifada and 'facilitated the mobilization of different sectors of society to take part in the struggle'. Relatedly, scholars such as Hiltermann (1988) have studied the organization and mobilization of Palestinian workers and women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip before the Intifada.

The emergence and proliferation of mass organizations in the West Bank and Gaza began in the mid-1970s. While specific leftist forces initiated their formation, the national movement as a whole adopted mass organization. A configuration of factors led to the founding of mass organizations as 'open, semi-legal structures, designed to mobilize and work among specific sectors within the population', and which 'actively' sought 'to recruit new membership and engage in sustained effort to widen the social base of their membership and constituency' (Taraki, 1989, p. 433). They included women's organizations, student and youth organizations, labour blocs and unions, and voluntary work organizations, and they each defined themselves as an organic component of the national movement that takes political stands for the liberation struggle.

'Development by popular protection' and the 'mass organizations' represented forms of radical development and community organizing, connecting social and economic development with liberationist politics. These approaches and formations experienced a gradual demise following the Oslo 'peace process'. Mainstream international, national, and local developmental discourses and practices that delinked development from politics gradually replaced the popular grassroots approaches for which economic development and political liberation were mutually interwoven. While the dominant development discourses claimed that development requires professionalization and expertise, this change had detrimental ramifications for Palestine.[2]

The invention of 'Area C': 'Peace Process' as settler colonial procession

The cumulative effects of the Zionist settler colonial project and its ongoing and multiple transforming policies and practices have disrupted all aspects of Palestinians' existence as they continue to constantly dispossess Palestinian lands and create new conditions of hardship. 'Area C' is an expression of these dispossessions and their consequent hardships at their most extreme.

A constructed conceptual and geographical space, 'Area C' was invented by the Oslo 'Peace Process'. Depicted as seeking 'to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process',[3] the Oslo accords, in practice, constituted a crucial means for the procession and expansion of the Zionist settler-

2 On the transformation of post-Oslo developmental discourses and forms of organization, see Hammami (1995), Jad (2008), and Kuttab (2010).

3 Israeli–Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Washington, DC, September 28, 1995.

colonial project in Palestine. In September 1995, Israel and the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization signed the 'Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip' commonly known as 'Oslo II'. Accordingly, the West Bank territory was divided into three areas with distinct security and administrative powers. 'Area A', with full Palestinian civil and security control,[4] currently comprises about 18 percent of the land in the West Bank and includes all the Palestinian cities and most of the Palestinian population of the West Bank. 'Area B', which has full Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli–Palestinian security control, comprises approximately 22 percent of the West Bank and encompasses large rural areas. 'Area C' is subjected to full Israeli control over security, land-related civil matters including land-allocation, planning and construction, and infrastructure. The Palestinian Authority is responsible for providing education and medical services to the Palestinian population. 'Area C' constitutes over 60 percent of the West Bank territory (about 330,000 hectares) and includes around 180,000–300,000 Palestinians living in Bedouin-herding communities and agriculture-based settled communities, in addition to refugee camps. 'Area C' holds most of the West Bank's open spaces, agricultural and grazing land reserves, and natural resources. Most of 'Area C' has been designated as military zones and for expansion of Israeli settlements (B'Tselem, 2013; UNOCHA, n.d.a). Many critics of the Oslo accords focus on the articles concerning the security arrangements,[5] arguing, rightly, that the accords established the Palestinian Authority's security forces as watch-dogs for 'Israel's security' by preventing any form of Palestinian anticolonial resistance.

I situate 'Area C' within the broader Zionist settler colonial project: that project has subjected Palestine and the Palestinians to ongoing structural and violent forms of dispossession, land appropriation, expulsion and displacement. It has been expressed through different modalities of colonial discourses and practices aiming at eliminating the Palestinian Indigenous people for the establishment of a new Jewish state and society. '[A]s for other settler colonial movements, for Zionism, the control of land is a zero-sum contest fought against the indigenous population. The drive to control the maximum amount of land is at its centre' (Salamanca *et al.*, 2012, p. 1).

4 This had not prevented Israeli security forces from invading these areas and arresting Palestinians on a constant basis.

5 Article xii of the agreement concerns the 'arrangements for security and public order'. The third section of the article states: 'A Joint Coordination and Cooperation Committee for Mutual Security Purposes (hereinafter 'the JSC'), as well as Joint Regional Security Committees (hereinafter 'RSCs') and Joint District Coordination Offices (hereinafter 'DCOs'), are hereby established' (Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 1995).

The roots of the settler colonial project in Palestine go back to the end of the nineteenth century when the first Zionist congress, held in 1897, adopted the Basel programme stating that, 'Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law' (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2015). For achieving this goal, Nur Masalha (1992) exposes the concept and practice of 'transfer', that is the expulsion of Palestinians, which was embraced by the Zionist movement's leadership. The Zionist project of dispossessing Palestinian lands that spread over several years culminated in 1948 with the Nakba, when 530 Palestinian towns and villages were depopulated and more than 800,000 Palestinians were expelled. The Nakba took various forms:

> military plans directed to conquer the land and settle Jewish immigrants; elimination of the refugees' physical presence by expulsion, massacres and killing returnees; looting and plunder; destruction of villages; political campaign to justify denial of the refugees' right to return; creation of a fictitious legal web to justify confiscation of Palestinians' vast property and, meanwhile, importing Jewish immigrants to replace Palestinians. (Abu-Sitta, 2010, p. 121)

Throughout the proceeding years the Zionist state continued to seize Palestinian land and property and transfer them to Jewish settlers through a series of 'laws' enacted to prevent the return and resettlement of the rightful owners (e.g. Absentee Property Law 1950). By 1967 the Zionist colonial project had expanded by occupying the remaining 22 percent of Palestine (the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem), displacing 300,000 Palestinians and confiscating more lands (PASSIA, 2004).

Since its beginning, the Palestinians had struggled against the Zionist colonial project in various ways. While there have been transformations in the attitudes and practices of the Palestinian liberation movement over time, the Oslo accords constitute a point of rupture in the liberation struggle. The accords, which originated from a Madrid conference, were signed in 1993 as the 'Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements' known as 'Oslo I'. Since the signing of the Oslo accords the number of Zionist settlements and Zionist settlers has continued to increase. According to Oxfam (2013), the 'number of Israeli settlers has more than doubled from 262,500 settlers in 1993 to over 520,000 today, across the West Bank, including 200,000 in East Jerusalem'. Settlement activities are backed by formal state institutions. 'The Israeli government provides a subsidy of up to $28,000 for each apartment built in a settlement, and settlers enjoy access to numerous financial benefits, including tax exemptions' (Oxfam, 2013). Outposts are a key feature of the settlements project. 'Today, there are more than 100 outposts. Combined, they control over 16,000 dunums of land in the West Bank'

(Oxfam, 2013). Crucially, rather than reading these facts as a failure of the 'peace process', the 'peace process' should be read as another means for the continuation and expansion of the settler colonial control of Palestinian lands and for replacing Palestinians with Israeli settlers.

While land appropriation and Palestinian displacement are the main features of the Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine, 'Area C' constitutes the current frontier of this project as the following United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports illustrates:

> Most of Area C has been allocated for the benefit of Israeli settlements or the Israeli military, at the expense of Palestinian communities. This impedes the development of adequate housing, infrastructure and livelihoods in Palestinian communities. (UNOCHA, n.d.a)

> The allocation of public land to settlements and the takeover of private land by settler groups have reduced the space available for Palestinians to sustain their livelihoods… Combined with the unlawful and discriminatory zoning and planning policy applied in Area C and in East Jerusalem, these settlement-related phenomena have undermined the living conditions of Palestinians and rendered them increasingly vulnerable, including to the risk of individual or mass forcible transfer. (UNOCHA, n.d.b)

The settler population in 'Area C' is comprised 'of at least 325,500 living in 125 settlements and approximately 100 outposts' (B'Tselem, 2013), and continuing Zionist settler expansionism seeks to control and dispossess more Palestinian agricultural and pastoral lands. Wolfe (2006, p. 396) points to the distinctive function of agriculture in settler colonial projects, '[i]n addition to its objective economic centrality to the project, agriculture, with its life-sustaining connectedness to land, is a potent symbol of settler-colonial identity'.

The importance of agriculture for settler colonial projects explains why most Zionist settlements are located close to water resources, which Palestinians are restricted from accessing,

> Israel controls 80 percent of Palestinian water resources and the 520,000 Israeli settlers use approximately six times the amount of water that the 2.6 million Palestinians in the West Bank use… Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley use large quantities of water to grow agricultural produce for export, while Palestinian farmers struggle to irrigate their crops. (Oxfam, 2013)

Despite these daily realities, dominant international aid and development discourses and approaches for supporting Palestinian communities

de-link 'development' from the ongoing realities of colonial expansion, land confiscation, and their consequences. Instead, they work hand-in-hand with structures that keep colonialism in place as is shown by the World Bank report that is discussed in the following section.

Developmental discourses on 'Area C'

In 2013 the World Bank's *Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department of the Middle East and North Africa Region* published an economic report entitled 'West Bank and Gaza – Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy' (World Bank, 2013). It focuses on the economic growth potential of 'Area C', depicting it as key to the future of the Palestinian economy while ignoring the violent structural nature of the Zionist settler colonial project. The report provides 'soft criticism' of Israeli practices, representing settler colonial policies as 'Israeli restrictions' on the Palestinian economy, and calling for their removal 'with due regard for Israel's security' (World Bank, 2013, p. viii).

In addition to mystifying the settler colonial reality in Palestine, the World Bank (2013) report promotes a raw resources export economy funded by private and foreign investors in accordance with the basic principles of a neoliberal/neocolonialist market. It emphasizes economic sectors in agriculture, Dead Sea minerals, cosmetics, stone mining and quarrying, and tourism, all envisioned with foreign markets in mind. The report notes the potential for vegetation exportation:

> [t]his large potential [for Area C agricultural productivity and export] is confirmed by the fact that the settlements currently provide most of the pomegranates exported to Europe and Russia, in addition to 22 percent of the almonds and 12.9 percent of the olives among others. The Jordan Valley settlements produce 60 percent of the dates destined to Israel and 40 percent of the exported dates. (World Bank, 2013, p. 10)

It envisions a parallel export economy under Palestinian Authority control in 'Area C' only to be completed with 'substantial investments' in water irrigation (2013, p. 10). This agricultural model relies heavily on the economic potential of vegetation exportation to foreign, predominately European and Israeli, markets.

Additionally, the World Bank envisions the establishment of a Palestinian Dead Sea cosmetic industry geared for foreign distribution and guided by Israeli corporations, proposing that this is feasible based on the 'availability of cheap and unique raw materials', the expanding global demand for natural cosmetics products, and the potential for 'cooperation

with the Israeli cosmetics industry; [who's] companies appear to be interested in working with Palestinian companies to help them gain access to lucrative Arab and other predominantly Muslim markets' (World Bank, 2013, p. 29).

As already noted, these developmental discourses construct the problem of 'Area C' as a problem of 'Israeli restrictions' and of Palestinian administration that negatively affects the potential of economic investments. They thus reflect the entanglement of the developmental discourse and its proposed solutions with the settler colonial project that aims to control the land and eliminate the Palestinian native population. The report depoliticizes Palestinian development issues, instead urging that colonial relations be turned into relations of cooperation by integrating the Palestinians within world markets as exporters of agricultural and raw materials through Israeli corporations: all this to be done without deconstructing the colonial reality. Instead of regarding the colonial settlements as illegal, they are presented as an ideal economic model to be imitated by Palestinians. Ultimately, the report focuses on economic development within the confines of the colonial order. While the report depicts these economic operations as beneficial to Palestinians, the suggested solutions actually benefit business elites, colonizers and foreign markets. Simultaneously this approach to development turns the masses of Palestinians from *political* subjects, struggling for liberating their lands, into *vulnerable* subjects of humanitarian interventions,[6] as the following case of Yanun community illustrates.

The case of Yanun: a story of settler colonialism

Yanun community's lived reality is a condensation of the lived conditions of Palestinian communities in 'Area C'.[7] Located 15 km south-east of the city of Nablus, the original lands of Yanun extended over 16,450 dunums. Now surrounded by settlements, 85 percent of its land is controlled, under a process of forced displacement and subjected to persistent colonial military and settler attacks. Since 1967, Yanun has been the target of Israeli settler colonial practices. The majority of its lands were confiscated to build the 'Itamar' settlement in 1983 and in 1997, colonial authorities confiscated thousands of dunums to establish the 'Gidonim' settlement. In 2000 Israeli settlers controlled the western side of Yanun's lands to build 'Givat Alam Afri Ran,' and other outposts such as '776', '777', and '778', leaving Yanun with 2000 dunums (of which 60 percent is pastoral land).

6 For an analysis of the anti-political bias of humanitarianism, see Tabar (2016).

7 Thanks to research assistant Arafat Barghouthi for assisting the research in Yanun.

The community members with whom I held intensive interviews observe that the expansion of settlements on Yanun's lands increased discernibly post-Oslo. Yanun village was divided into Yanun North and South; Yanun North classified as 'Area C' and Yanun South as 'Area B.' As 'Area C,' Yanun North's community is prevented from building any form of construction, including restoring houses or building infrastructure to supply electricity and water. One community member states:

> before Oslo we could herd our sheep and move in the pastoral lands, we could build simple constructions such as adding a room to the house. Post-Oslo there is no possibility for putting a stone on another, and the violent presence of soldiers and settlers had increased. Consequently, we cannot herd our sheep, and we have to sell some of them in order to be able to feed the other part.

The remaining land of Yanun, as well as Yanun North's community are violently targeted by settlers who aim to empty and control the village. 'We face settler violence backed by the Israeli military on a daily basis. The violent practices include burning our lands and houses, and shooting at our houses,' a community member explains. Another states:

> the settlers were coming during day and night, they throw stones at the houses, and were standing at the house windows carrying their M16 weapons and threatening the people and cutting the road that connects Yanun to the outer world.

Consequently, the inhabitants started to leave the village gradually. As a community member explains:

> In 2002 after intensive settler violations and terrifying daily acts, we left the village and moved to the nearby village of A'qraba out of fear for the security of our families. Few families (six households with thirty seven individuals) have been able to return after an international solidarity group had entered and lived in the village, yet we are still subject to military and settler violence.

Today, Yanun inhabitants are prevented from ploughing their remaining agricultural lands. Rashed, a former head of village council and currently a council member representing Yanun in the A'qraba council, comments ironically:

> the people here depend on agriculture and livestock, al hamdulillah [thank God] there are no agricultural land or pastoral land left as 90 percent of the area of Yanun composed of 16,450 dunums is totally controlled by the occupation army and the settlers, and the number of livestock is decreasing.

The colonial agents, military and settlers are transforming the mode of production and the material base of Yanun community's mode of production and living. Rashed does not differentiate between the soldiers and the settler:

> the soldier is the settler; they work in concordance with each other. We were plagued by a form of cancer that is settlement. The settlers own livestock that they leave in our planted lands. They eat the trees and the fruits. We have 3500 olive trees and we get a small amount of the olives as part of it is eaten by the livestock and the other part is stolen by the settlers. We are provided with permits for three to four days in the year to plow the olive trees lands. The olive tree needs care, it is like the small son that needs care and service from the parents, you need to visit it daily, trim the tree, build retaining walls, and clean the land.

This systematic, continuous dispossession of land affects households that relied on agricultural and herding activities. Because much of their lands were confiscated, villagers can no longer rely on grazing to feed livestock but must buy expensive fodder, intensifying the financial and work burden, especially for women who are responsible for feeding animals.

The women of Yanun mostly work in house-based production, processing dairy products. They express feelings of insecurity, fear and worry for their children and husbands, particularly when they go to harvest their lands near the settlements. They also express concern regarding the sustainability of their living space.

The village lacks health services and transportation systems connecting it to other villages. Education has become very important to Yanun's community as a result of its material insecurity. Males and females continue their education at Palestinian schools and universities outside the village. But as one community member indicated, 'we here are interested in educating our community yet the transportation to the nearest university is a real financial burden.'

Because institutions will not risk conducting projects in 'Area C' as these projects are persistently subject to Israeli demolition, Yanun community currently depends on humanitarian assistance sought from international funders, local NGOs, solidarity groups, and the Palestinian Authority's various ministries. Rashed constantly attempts to approach these constituencies to secure aid for Yanun's community in order to sustain people's lives and encourage families who left to return. He tries to urge assistance to obtain a tractor, fodder, a generator.

Such efforts by community members are centred on accessing humanitarian aid from development agencies and solidarity groups to alleviate daily hardships. This approach emerges from/reflects the post-Oslo reality: dominated by mainstream developmental discourses and approaches that

compartmentalize social–economic–political issues; ignoring the colonial structures of domination and dispossession; and delinking development from liberationist politics. This stands in opposition to Palestine's traditions of radical developmental politics and mass organizing, traditions that connected development with resistance and addressed developmental issues while simultaneously prioritizing the deconstructing of overarching colonial structures.

The politics of solidarity in Yanun

As a community member explains, 'there were always solidarity groups and individuals coming to the village, but since 2002 solidarity groups organized by the EAPPI are living in the village.' On the significance of the solidarity group, he states:

> it is true that these Internationals have no weapons but they are beneficial for media reasons. Their pens and cameras confront the settlers' weapons. They provide psychological security to the children and elders of the village…this compares to providing a pain killer to someone.

Media has become a central means for enacting and recording solidarity with Palestinians, where internationals go around with their cameras documenting and reporting the abuses Palestinians face from the colonial machine. Media is an important tool because settlers strive to avoid being captured on camera while attacking native land owners. Thus, the presence of internationals partly constrains the settlers' violence based on the colonial–racial order that perceives Westerners as more worthy than Palestinians. Yet as the community member states above, the role of international solidarity activists is limited to providing psychological security and despite its importance, it is 'a pain killer' amidst the reality of structural colonial violence.

The solidarity group that has existed in Yanun since 2002 is part of the 'Ecumenical Accompaniment (EAPPI) programme.[8] '[C]oordinated by the World Council of Churches, founded in response to a call from the local Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, the programme brings internationals to the West Bank. Since 2002, over 1,500 volunteers have come for three months to be Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs)' (EAPPI, n.d.b). The main goals of the programme are presented as: 'eye witnessing life under occupation', and 'offering a protective presence to vulnerable communities and monitor and report human rights abuses'. The programme highlights its

8 Accompaniment is 'a theoretical model for humanitarian work in conflict zones. It is also a biblical model for acting justly in the way of Christ. The legal framework for accompaniment is International Humanitarian Law. Accompaniment must combine a strategic local presence with international pressure in order to be effective' (EAPPI, n.d.a).

joint work with Palestinians and Israelis 'who work in non-violent ways for peace and support the local churches' (*ibid.*).

EAPPI's goals mentioned above embody the main problems of the current politics of solidarity with Palestinians. EAPPI understands its volunteers as eye witnessing life under occupation. Eye witnessing has become one of the central ways for expressing solidarity with Palestinians. Having studied and analysed the image of the witness, Didier Fassin (2008, p. 531) contends that 'the witness has become a key figure of our time, whether as the survivor testifying to what he has lived through or as the third party telling what he has seen or heard'. Fassin's analysis of the politics of testimony reveals 'how the humanitarian agents define the legitimate manner to tell the world the 'victims' truth''(*ibid.*). The two subjectivities, that of the eye witness and of the victim, are mutually constitutive: the Palestinian becomes a subject in the capacity of the victim for the solidarity of the eye witness. While solidarity with Palestinians was previously framed in political terms, and Palestinians were perceived as freedom fighters, the humanitarian form of solidarity constitutes them as victims of abuses to be eye witnessed and reported. More importantly as Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman (2009, p. 193) note, 'in the testimony produced by humanitarian organizations, the voice that is generally heard is not that of the victims, but that of their self-appointed spokespeople'. The voices of the EAPPI volunteers, in this sense, substitute for the voices of Yanun's people while also framing Palestinians in a depoliticized humanitarian language. In a conversation with an EAPPI Australian volunteer in Yanun, he stated:

> Yanun is there yet and like I said before their land is getting smaller and smaller so practically they need more land or I think they practically need food to feed their sheep which they cannot, they cannot graze on the hills because they get shot by settlers and that's their main livelihood so maybe at this stage they just need food, food to feed their sheep and so that they can keep their lands free to grow for themselves maybe.

The volunteer's sense of injustice done to Palestinians is clear from his words, yet he perceives and expresses this injustice as a humanitarian problem not a political one. Thus he suggests feeding Palestinians (or their sheep) but effectively ignores colonialism in his analysis.

The depoliticized humanitarian solidarity approach also conflates solidarity with developmentalist logic as the words of another EAPPI volunteer from Switzerland illustrate:

> Internationals have been staying here for thirteen years now and you know it's quite good from one side, and from the other side it means that maybe this let them become dependent on the presence of internationals, so maybe it is not good in the sense that when you put in a place a project

> then the final aim that this project will be autonomous, they don't need the people from abroad, so I do not know if the international presence here is good in the sense that maybe people here will try to find by then an alternative and should try to find a way of resistance that could pull other people to come here and to resist together without internationals.

The volunteer frames solidarity as a 'project' and the people of Yanun as a target group that is becoming 'dependent on the presence of internationals'. Solidarity in this iteration is not framed as joint struggle against forms of oppression.

EAPPI'S emphasis on its joint work with Palestinians and Israelis 'who work in non-violent ways for peace', reflect another current hegemonic frame of solidarity with Palestinians. This frame is dominant in both international funding and international solidarity work where Palestinians cannot stand on their own and must work with Israelis. Such funded projects and solidarity work align with a politics of 'normalization' and 'coexistence' that is focused on bringing the two sides together without trying to change the colonial conditions that position Israelis as dominant over Palestinians. This work promotes peace (without justice) that is framed as collaborative and beneficial for both sides. It ensures the security of the colonizing state while ignoring the need to deconstruct the colonial structures that are destroying Palestinian lives, history, and existence.

Furthermore, highlighting that the programme supports Palestinians 'who work in non-violent ways', delimits the 'legitimate' ways in which Palestinians should oppose the violent colonial regime.

The discourses of non-violence had flourished in the last two decades among solidarity groups with Palestinians, the following words of an EAPPI volunteer in Yanun echo this discourse: 'non-violent resistance for me is the only way because responding in violence is exactly what Israel wants Palestinians to do to give them a reason to attack them'.

Alazzeh (2014) follows the multiple entangled processes that enabled the discourse of non-violence to flourish in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and shows how the dominant liberal hegemonic understanding of morality is used selectively by the powerful to delegitimize political struggles of the less powerful. Alazzeh (2014, p. 37) points to the bulk production of NGO reports, academic articles, documentary films, books, and media writings addressing the question of non-violence in Palestine, and argues that 'these writings on non-violence have become a form of rewriting the history of Palestine thematically through a violence/non-violence binary'. The focus on the paradigm of non-violence decontextualizes settler-colonialism as a fundamental premise in understanding the struggle of Palestinians. Thus, it excludes the multiple forms of colonial violence imposed on Palestinian

communities over the decades (Alazzeh, 2014, p. 40) and that have constituted their life conditions.

Conclusion

The case of Yanun village provides ample examples of the colonial forms of dispossession and transfer faced by Palestinian communities in 'Area C', which constitutes the current frontier for the settler colonial project in Palestine. While the devastating life conditions of Yanun's community are created by the structural violence of the Zionist settler colonial project that targets their lands and strives to eliminate them, the mainstream developmental discourse of the World Bank represents 'Area C's' conditions as problems of Israeli restrictions; problems that can be resolved through the better administration/management of investment. Consequently the World Bank suggests solutions that are focused on neoliberal/neocolonialist economic development, based on the exportation of agricultural products and raw materials geared for foreign and Israeli markets. These solutions benefit business elites, Israeli corporations, and foreign markets within the constraints of the colonial order. These solutions ultimately depoliticize Palestinians' structural colonial problems, impoverish the masses and turn them into dependent subjects of humanitarian aid. The devastating life conditions of Yanun community, whereby they are subjected to a process of land theft, are thus reinforced by the very humanitarian assistance that aims to alleviate their practical needs. This humanitarian developmental approach collides with a *solidarity* humanitarian approach that prioritizes eye witnessing Palestinian life under occupation, constituting Palestinian victimization and then reporting it to human rights organizations. Thus, the solidarity humanitarian approach cancels out the anticolonial agency of Palestinian communities and it delineates their struggle within the language of non-violence, effectively proposing that the struggle should be waged in cooperation with Israeli groups.

Within this context Palestinian local communities' survival tactics as exemplified by Yanun's community reflect the hegemony of post-Oslo developmental practices. They thus lack the radical conceptions of development and radical forms of community organizing of the kind that emerged in the pre-Oslo era and integrated social–economic development with liberationist anticolonial resistance.

Lena Meari is an assistant professor of Anthropology at the Department of Social and Behavioral Science and the Institute of Women Studies at Birzeit University, Palestine.

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