DESCRIPTION

Official figures classify some fifty million of the world's people as 'victims of forced displacement'. Refugees, asylum seekers, disaster victims, the internally displaced and the temporarily tolerated - categories of the excluded proliferate, but many more are left out of count. In the face of this tragedy, humanitarian action increasingly seems the only possible response. On the ground, however, the 'facilities' put in place are more reminiscent of the logic of totalitarianism. In a situation of permanent catastrophe and endless emergency, 'undesirables' are kept apart and out of sight, while the care dispensed is designed to control, filter and confine. How should we interpret the disturbing symbiosis between the hand that cares and the hand that strikes?

After seven years of study in the refugee camps, Michel Agier reveals their 'disquieting ambiguity' and stresses the imperative need to take into account forms of improvisation and challenge that are currently transforming the camps, sometimes making them into towns and heralding the emergence of political subjects.

A radical critique of the foundations, contexts, and political effects of humanitarian action.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michel Agier is an anthropologist and director of studies at the Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales.
FEATURES

• Michel Agier is an excellent French anthropologist who works on an extremely important topic: refugees and refugee camps.

• This new book focuses on life inside refugee camps and detention centres, based on his research between 2000 and 2007 in Somali, Sudan, Rwanda, Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Europe.

• Agier explores the complex ambiguities of life inside the camps and the tensions, forms of power and protest that emerge within them, as well as the experiences, attitudes and despair of refugees themselves.

• This should have a readership in anthropology courses as well as a wider general readership.

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