

Reflections of a professional educator in Israel

The work of a professional educator does not take place in a vacuum. The values of a professional educator are formed in society: formed interactively. The practice of a professional educator is never context free. Here is one of the contexts in which I developed, tried out, modified and learned about my own professional values. It is not an exhaustive account. Neither is it intended to be any kind of model for others but I hope it stimulates interest.

It has been said that the personal is political. So also is the professional. If you manage to read through all this you may notice that at one point I ask what the first seven letters of the word 'professional' spell. To me they prompt the question: what do we profess?

In August 2009 I left Israel for the last time; a place I first went to in 1996 and visited two or three times each year. If anyone reading this is expecting an outpouring of hatred I am afraid that you will find little sign of it in what follows. I certainly witnessed injustice, racism, ignorance, prejudice and falsification of history: a list of human wrongs and political stupidity so long it could be read out as a litany for which the response by the congregation to each item chanted by the priest would have to be 'guilty'. Some of that guilt ought, however, to be shared by a number of other countries, including the one in which I live.

In Israel I also found and witnessed love, generosity, fairness, co-operation and a confirmation of the humanity to be found in the sheer ordinariness of living with neighbours, bringing up children, caring for aged parents and complaining about the traffic. Some of that love emerged from 'losing' arguments with Israelis who enabled me, not to change my mind or my values, but to think more deeply. In reality you do not lose such arguments: you move from the intellectual shallow end to the deeper waters in which you not only discover some of the wretchedness of humanity but also its potential for nobility. Eventually, you may discover that this is about self as well as about others.

Close analysis of what I see as the problems posed by and *for* Israel is easy to find. So many books, articles, reports and films have been produced that it would take a lifetime of study to get through them. At the end I shall try to list some of them and also provide a few links to relevant material I have discovered and written for this website. Israel is not the easy country TripAdvisor presents to the world: it requires you to question old and comforting assumptions: it requires you to discomfort and, perhaps, discover yourself.

Outsiders often perceive what is happening as a conflict between two simply described coherent groups. It is far more complex than that and we forget the impact of a long term set of economic policies that have widened the gap

between rich and poor regardless of any ascribed cultural identity. My guess is that if every single member of the indigenous population (Israel chooses to refer to them as Arabs but, in contrast to the Jews of European descent that I grew up being so fond of, they are the descendants of the mostly Jewish, though not exclusively so, population of ancient days). If they left overnight Israel would become an even more dysfunctional country. As one of the Israeli friends I refer to below told me, without the Palestinians the Israelis would fight each other. Name almost any kind of issue that history has shown to be the cause of a civil war and I believe you will find it in Israel. For now, politicians such as Netanyahu maintain a fragile coherence by concentrating their rhetoric upon a constant reiteration that Israel is under threat from within and without. It seems to work. Subtract the Palestinians and the imagined (cynically constructed) Iranian threat and my guess is that all the internal tensions and differences would tear it apart. We might include Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which were established long after and in response to Israeli aggression, who are also essential to the official narrative of threat. Subtract all these and it would certainly become an even more impossible country in which to live or to govern.

My guess is not something I hope for because I have in mind little kids I have known since their early innocent childhood who may one day hold a rifle in their hands. I also have in mind friends now in their 80s who once upon a time bought a socialist Zionist dream that they have watched turn into a nightmare. The present integration of Israeli society is best described in the terminology of Fred Riggs (see note) as malintegration. When the forces that bind society together are no longer effective I believe that we shall see something best described as disintegration. It will not be a pretty sight.

Here I wish to provide background for my description of part of my last week in Israel, outlined below in the form of an email letter sent to friends very quickly afterwards. It is only a fragment but it might be of interest. I am sure that neither this background nor my now slightly edited letter, into which I have just inserted some links, will satisfy everyone (or even me) but allow me to say that, although I am very likely, and probably far too willing, to be drawn into arguments about Zionism in all its ever changing forms, about the misuse of terms such as Semitic and Arab and about the falsification of history, more and more I see matters in terms of humanity versus inhumanity. I am also aware that I have just used two terms whose defining we could argue about, not just now perhaps!

In 1995/6 the Education Department and Faculty of the University of Liverpool responded to an approach by an Israeli bloke who had spotted an opportunity. Schoolteachers in Israel, irrespective of their cultural, racial, religious and political backgrounds, were not only entitled to a year long sabbatical every seven or so years but also to a wage increment and improved pension if they had a masters degree. Understandably, there was a demand for such degrees. It was, however, a demand that could not be fulfilled within Israel. If anyone reading this works or has worked in universities you will know that at times they can behave rather

selfishly. Universities in Israel had the power to prevent what in the UK we used to call Teacher Training Colleges awarding masters degrees. It was a case of demand exceeding supply and control of the supply was in the hands of the established universities of Israel.

A number of overseas universities, including Liverpool, obtained approval to set up extensions in Israel to satisfy that demand, bringing down on our heads annual inspections within Israel by a body controlled by the home universities. They were, however, the kind of inspections that concentrated upon ensuring that you stuck to what you originally said you would be doing in order to obtain approval, including using the same texts. As it is impossible to teach creatively by sticking to the script we didn't; but we said we did.

At first the programme involved a summer school in Liverpool and a winter school in Israel. After a short while it was realised that it was far cheaper for the students if all the work was done in Israel. There was, however, a lovely Friday night in Liverpool's oldest synagogue when the place was full of locals and Muslims, Christians and Jews from Israel all together. I cannot be certain but this could have been the synagogue that Herbert Samuel, first Governor General of Palestine, went to when young. Liverpool being Liverpool, his family would have had to walk past a Welsh church to get there.

For the first six months my involvement was peripheral but after a bit of a dust up the programme was brought inside my area of responsibility. Looking at it closely I realised that it required more detailed costing and that cost had to be demonstrably linked to a plan to always work on the improvement of quality.

An aside

What follows are two of the reasons for the dust up.

On arrival for my first trip I found waiting for me in my hotel room some details of an extra programme I was there to validate. I noticed that the person I had gone there to train to become an associate tutor, as a preliminary to validating the programme, had already told his students, none of whom were registered with us, that they would get a qualification from the University. He had been teaching a programme that had not been approved. When we arrived for the meeting I was further disappointed to discover that, despite my repeated messages about needing an overhead projector and about how I wanted matters to proceed (I had previously asked if they were happy with this and was told 'yes'), the table was groaning with food and there seemed to be no intention of doing any work. I felt that they believed that they had simply bought the right to use our name. The person I was supposed to train was a well-known professor in Israel who's CV was so long you could have wall papered our house with it. Perhaps he thought he was above all this.

A few days later my deputy who did most of the heavy lifting on the programme in its early days had to meet a student we had decided to fail after he had re-submitted an earlier failing piece of work. He was an internationally famous football referee. When he said he should be allowed to continue she told him that his first fail was his yellow card and his second was his red card; the possibility that we might do this and require him to take the work seriously seemed not to have crossed his mind.

For me it was the response to such incidents that was most important. It was not simply a case of me/us insisting upon a high level of quality but the realisation by all involved that doing so was very fulfilling. I don't wish to make extravagant claims but the programme brought together tutors and students with widely differing religious, ethnic, political and cultural backgrounds and provided the opportunity to create personal and professional fulfilment.

I am well aware that things are very bad today in 2015. They were not entirely brilliant when I was there. It seemed to me, however, that there is/was a sufficient residue of natural human commonality to allow us to bring people together positively.

In order to obtain a masters degree you are likely to have to come to terms with that good old reliable academic assessment criterion *critical reflection*. I won't go into detail but both tutors and students addressing that criterion have to identify and challenge assumptions: all sorts and conditions of assumptions. Challenging long held and comforting assumptions can be transformative. It can also shock. The student writing about the programme that sent Israeli teenagers to tour the death camps in order to confirm them in their Jewishness was shocked to be failed. She assumed that because of the subject matter she would pass. It was reassuring to hear my Jewish Israeli colleague take her to task for her lack of critical reflection. It certainly was a serious subject but, my colleague pointed out, that was no reason to assume it must not be subject to serious questioning or to fail to quote the research that showed that the programme was not entirely effective.

I was able to present to one of our students a prize from the International Professional Development Association (ipda). She is headteacher of a school in East Jerusalem and her presentation was witnessed by a cross section of people who live in Israel. Not long ago I referred to her masters dissertation in a speech to people from many different countries. Then it occurred to me to tell her this in an email. She said it made her day, though some of her days are not so good right now.

You might be interested to know that her dissertation told a story that is totally at odds with conventional and, particularly, official thinking about the education of

young people. Our governments set targets from on high, tell schoolteachers how to hit them, performance manage those teachers who must go on courses to learn how to manage the behaviour of children. Then the teachers are inspected and punished if those targets have not been hit.

My student reversed some of this. She told a tale of a group of teenage girls who were desperate to learn but suffered under a teacher who was unenthusiastic about teaching though rather keen on provoking a disturbance leading to punishment. The girls learned to manage their teacher: to show the teacher how interesting her job could be. When I come across the view that education is about doing something *to* young people I think of this. Remember please where this took place: in East Jerusalem. Those that classify Palestinians as inferior primitives might reflect on this.

Perhaps I need to do some critical reflection of my own at this point. I can imagine an Israeli challenging my support for BDS, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. If I continue to believe it possible to achieve a little possibility by bringing disparate people together why do I wish, for example, the EU to exclude Israel from involvement in a range of co-operative educational programmes? My response would involve making a distinction between the state as an institution and people as freely co-operating individuals. And, yes, I am aware that the distinction is blurry and not easy to define or maintain.

Whenever I hear people telling other people that their value positions are insufficiently pure I try to remember Calvin ordering the burning of Servetus because he was not the 'right kind' of Protestant. On Facebook there are far too many people falling out with each other for similar reasons.

When I first went to Israel the rhetoric was all about 'Peace Tomorrow'. Reading much later what people such as Ilan Pappé have to say (see the link below) I now realise that by 1996 the foundations for that hope were very weak.

http://www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk/assets/Ilan_Pappe_Response.pdf

Nevertheless, back then it sustained and encouraged us. Having a chat at a conference in the UK with a British professor and his Lebanese former student a couple of years ago they asked me why I had not boycotted. In my response I said, 'we began at a time of optimism but when things turned bad I could not boycott my students'. They immediately understood. As a professional educator you don't do that. Furthermore, had I walked out because I refused to work with Ashkenazi Jews from Europe and the USA who had come there as part of a Zionist enterprise I would also have been walking out on my Palestinian students and my Mizrahi and Sephardi students and my lone Ethiopian student. Incidentally, there was an Israeli educator at the same conference. By sheer chance I knew people who knew them both. It is, however, not a good idea to

force upon strangers a false familiarity over the space of a couple of days. Such things need a little bit of self-propagation.

Another aside

One of my students was an Israeli journalist. Whenever it was just him and me I was eager to probe him about how news was managed in Israel. I mentioned official censorship. That, he said, is not the problem. Israeli journalists automatically self-censor: they have internalised the official narrative so deeply that although, for example, a rape in Tel Aviv is reported as 'alleged' a Palestinian who is killed will be labelled as a 'terrorist'. 'Alleged' does not apply in this case.

He said that this is compounded by an ignorance of history, which leads me to consider the contrast between Palestinians for whom remembrance is so very important and those Israelis for whom ignorance of the past is essential for peace of mind.

I want to mention two Palestinian students, mother and daughter. They struggled at first, possibly because our teaching was not the traditional lecture, note taking and test. It also came as a surprise to all students (I think it was a nice surprise) when we explained that we did not wish to read the re-gurgitation of the works of great authors. 'If', I would say, 'you have been teaching for twenty years you can use that experience to engage with, to challenge, what those authors have to say'.

For a while I worried that mother and daughter were wasting their money and I knew that they had problems apart from the masters programme and having to do so much work in English. When they reached the stage of writing the long dissertation they would come into our office with their youngest children who were close in age and friends: far too young to see each other as aunt and niece. The mother's youngest, who had the most brilliant smile, was dying of cancer. Their individual tutor at this research stage was a professor at Al Quds University who I heard from the other day.

Despite all that faced them they both produced great work on educational policy for 'Arab' schools in Israel. It is my guess that, just as in the UK (particularly England), policy makers will go on their way undisturbed by the brilliant words of professionals. Nevertheless, the quality and value of the work was very impressive. I was really pleased.

By the way, we strongly suspected that when Palestinian tutors worked with Palestinian students they drove them harder because there was absolutely no way they wanted anyone to think that the Palestinians passed because of sympathy. And I will risk a sexist stereotype and admit

that in discussion groups I never worried about the men outnumbering the women: when it came to a combination of knowledge and the ability to construct and articulate an argument the women usually won hands down. At times I felt sorry for the men.

Another student had responsibility for Bedouin education. His research was on the impact upon Bedouin women of receiving formal education for the first time. Can you guess what the older Bedouin women thought about it? In their minds it was a bad idea. The younger women wanted it.

Key to our work was creating a sense of community, particularly among our tutors, many of whom were academics working in Israel. When I began working in the University I felt that we needed a set of clear assessment criteria plus guidance on what they might mean. I came with a lot of experience in public examining but at first there was resistance to what I was doing on the grounds that the judgment of an academic about the work of a student needed no explaining. I wanted us to develop the language that we used when we made critical sense of learning and as we were gathering together more and more people who would be making critical sense of learning it seemed important to share the development of this language. When you do this eventually students become involved especially when they show you, for example, that a criterion on the management of evidence can mean more and other things than you thought it could.

All of this could have taken place without setting foot in Israel. But I want to emphasise how important it was for me that I developed my thinking and ways of working in the context presented by Israel. I doubt if it would have ever occurred to me that what I was looking for in a piece of academic work presented for examination would describe what life was like for a family divided for decades by a fence. On special occasions such as weddings the family would stand at each side of the fence simply to be near each other (they needed permission to do this). Back in Liverpool I would have had no idea that my precious assessment criteria would have to cope with contexts such as that. In other places I have written about the development of what was a living language of assessment but here, for now, I simply want to convey a sense of what can be achieved when learning, no matter how formal, becomes interconnected with the realities of social life.

There are three writers I often mention when I write about this, not specifically about how the language of assessment has to be developed and shared but usually in more general terms. Here is a link to one of the pieces I have written about this and them. Perhaps John Dewey and Stephen Kemmis are on one side of the fence and Nurit Peled-Elhanan on the other but I believe they stand close to each other and are in the same family.

<http://www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk/assets/Perspectives.pdf>

Believe me, I have done my share of fulminating and ranting about Zionism and the politicians of Israel. I shall do more and about Palestinian politicians who so badly let down the people they purport to represent. And while doing so I have not excluded Tony Blair whose behaviour as a Peace Envoy has been nothing better than despicable. Nor do I exclude David Cameron whose party has been so generously funded by a company (JCB) that sells bulldozers to Israel for the purpose of ethnic cleansing and whose owner was recently given a peerage. Please, what is the difference between that and the behaviour of the Mafia? I think the Mafia have given us less hypocrisy.

Right now, however, I am trying to make sense of what Israel contributed to my development as a professional educator. For my masters degree I was tutored by Ray Derricott who was great to work with. He once told me that an essay of mine seemed like a draft for something I might wish to do more work on. Then he softened the blow by saying that he supposed that in a sense everything he wrote was a draft. Later I got his job and remembered what he said.

I admit that I need to do more work on this. I do, however, believe not only that my profession has something positive to contribute but also that it has a duty to do so. What word, after all, do the first seven letters of professional spell out? If we are educators what, exactly, do we profess?

Do we stand to one side, observe and write eruditely about it or do we inefficiently, messily, confusedly and uncertainly have a go at doing something about the issues Zionist Israel presents? Whatever, I am sure we will carry out and witness lots of cock-ups and trip over each other's arguments. But, come on, which is better: imperfect humanity or perfect inhumanity?

When senior management at the University of Liverpool decided to close the programme I was asked by my biggest competitor UK University (Derby) to be an external examiner for them. This meant another five years of going to Israel, meeting my mates and also going to Vienna to examine the work they did there (another culture shock). If my letter below conveys a sense of selfish relaxation it is because, being my last visit, I paid extra for some self-time.

For the moment I shall refrain from revealing my views on the behaviour of my own university. I have tried to anonymise the friends to whom I refer.

A letter to friends and colleagues with whom I worked in Israel

Note.

Please tolerate the uncertain email syntax and note that, in addition to some slight editing, I have now inserted (a bit clumsily perhaps) some links that might provide both a sense of the potential for respectful and harmonious living but also, for me at least, a foreboding realisation that not only is Palestinian culture under attack but also all that is admirable in Jewish culture, including the European Yiddish culture that has been stamped out by the Zionist enterprise.

All of this is supported enthusiastically by Tony Blair and David Cameron. The culture represented in the link to the song below may still speak 'Jewish' to people in the UK and in the USA but in Israel it has been eradicated. We have to ask: 'to what purpose?'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xe2UXccid40>

So that was probably my last trip to Israel.....a week long.....very hot which I do not mind....travelling this time via Brussels on an El Al flight which demonstrated all of its typical cultural characteristics.....lots of children.....very young looking mothers....fathers reading bibles.....matrons complaining....each with a ton of hand luggage....a total disregard of any instructions regarding seat belts, mobile phones etc.....I have been doing all of this travelling for thirteen years....two...or three times a year....I love working out which route the taxi driver will take from the airport....these days most of them aim to go along Allenby Streetthere is an Allenby Street in Beirut as well....as I tell people in Israel.....so that they can join Hayarkon Street as it emerges from Jaffa/Yaffa/Yaffothis means that they can stop at the imposing entrance to the Dan Hotel....built in 1953 as a late modernist expression of self-confidence.....if you are familiar with the hotel you might think over-confidence.....

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_Hotel,_Tel_Aviv

and only a hundred and fifty yards from what used to be the headquarters of the Labour Party.....now...alas....spelled 'Labor' and moved to a more rightwing part of town....the changes may be more than symbolic.....but what I want the drivers to do is to turn off the motorway earlier and go past the Azrieli Centre (a celebration of and a temple to capitalist hedonism)

http://www.telavivguide.net/Shopping/Favorite_Spots/The_Azrieli_Center_2005091337/

where Liverpool University shared its headquarters with our partners in the later years and where we taught, met awkward students, argued with our wonderful academic director in Israel....do you remember that if we said 'No!'....she would pause and then utter the immortal words 'I got an idea' in her New Jersey accent? This time she was in the States for a grandson's bar mitzvah.....I hope to see her next year in Norwich because one of her daughters is doing a post doctoral there....she will need a cardigan....why don't we meet her there?....anyway....past Azrieli along Kaplan Street....my preferred route....past the former British barracks....now the HQ of the Israeli armed forces ...the open space opposite where settlers and other rightwing elements used to demonstrate has now been 'developed' so they can no longer exert that pressure....not that they need to....then onto Dizengoff Streetnow struggling to regain its status as THE place to shop and have coffee and discuss the day's events...and to be seen....to fork right at the colourful but somewhat tacky fountain (you can't see the graffiti in the film below but, as you *can* see, there is no water shortage)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgdjzSguRRQ>

.....two blocks on striking my favourite street...Frishmanit connects the sea with Rabin Square.....the square is often the place for left wing peace demonstrations.... turn left and head for the sea....unfortunately this gets you fifty yards away from the entrance to the Dan and closer to what used to be the Astor....now the Primawhere Liverpool University stayed....far cheaper than the Dan which the University of Derby pays for on behalf of external examiners like me.... the drivers do not like to drop you off even inches away from the Dan so they don't.....so I walk in to be greeted as a friend by the staff and given a room with a view of the sea and of Jaffa

<https://electronicintifada.net/content/jaffa-eminence-ethnic-cleansing/8088>

....it is always nice arriving late afternoon/early evening because I can call up friends and take my bearings.....**now for some negatives**.....the minister of education is calling for the history textbooks in 'Arab' schools to be censored so that they say nothing derogatory about Israel....my mate A says that the proposal will not be approved but that the minister will pick up rightwing votes for suggesting it.... at the expense of making Israel look even more bad internationally and encouraging holocaust deniers.... Another negative.....N and A told me this....in Jerusalem it is proposed to alter the street signs....at the moment throughout Israel the signs are in Hebrew, Arabic (an official language of Israel) and in English.....they will continue to be in those languages but in future only in Arabic and English translations of the Hebrew word....English speaking tourists will be confused but Arab names will be wiped out....I said that I know what would happen in Wales if the English dared to do that.... 'just wait' was the reply.....we agreed that these spiteful proposals are all aimed at securing more rightwing votes..... **some positives** Over coffee on the corner of Dizengoff

and Frishman....the streets where the novelist Linda Grant stayed when writing her non-fiction book....

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/mar/05/israelandthepalestinians.middleeast>

I wonder if Linda Grant ever realised that her secondary school in Liverpool included the house in which Herbert Samuel, the first Governor General of Palestine was born and that just a few yards from where she was staying while writing her book is the promenade of Tel Aviv, now named after Herbert Samuel...

my young friend K....I met her seven years ago when she became a receptionist at the Astor hotel... who has studied Chomsky did a thorough job of showing by analysis that Israel's so-called 'leftwing' newspaper Ha'aretz is nothing of the kind.....I always knew that but had never heard it de-constructed expertly before....she is learning Arabic (her mother's native language).....and A is also learning Arabic because he has become a good colleague of the person who is trying to establish a Bedouin university....using the Open University and a Jordanian one to validate them initially....A is thrilled to be involved....in Jordan he was asked if he was Palestinian and was able to say 'yes'....that this is what his birth certificate states....he was born before 1948..... I had a really good academic chat with R....she likes doing that....she wanted to meet again to talk politics....they all did....but she had to cancel because of the pain from dental treatment....BUT...what is so good is that the day after I got back home I had an email from an Israeli student who I do not know asking for a copy of the paper on which R's article that I commissioned for CPD Update (a publication I used to edit mostly for schools in the UK) three years ago was based....the student must have seen an electronic version....from 2,300 miles away I put them in touch with each other....I feel very pleased about that....also the book on management in which R has a chapter ... that I gave to a colleague in a UK universitywhich was edited by a colleague in another UK university.... was first shown to me by R in the Boccaccio Italian restaurant opposite my hotel

<http://www.boccaccio.rest-e.co.il/>

....a funny Worldon the second day, while having coffee with K, A walked past with his granddaughter....he lives miles away but was visiting his daughter....an hour later he walked back.....K said that she had seen him before visiting his wife J in the linguistics department of Tel Aviv University.... Shlomo Sand works in that university...

here below is Shlomo Sand at a book launch in London....I am not sure he was entirely thrilled by the way he was introduced...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5s_trEBcbU&feature=youtu.be

....it felt good introducing my friends to each other....Tel Aviv University linguistics department once asked me to do a keynote at their annual conference...I was flattered until I realised that I would have to pay for the trip myself!.....that night A took me to a part of Yaffa/Jaffa/Yaffo that I had not been to before.....a huge restaurant on a hill....probably overlooking the sea but it was dark... full of Palestinian parents taking their families out to eat....there must have been about five or six birthdays being celebrated.....sudden bursts of celebratory music and waiters with cakes and candles.....A encouraged me to eat my fish with my fingers as he had learned to do in Gaza years before on yet another of those bridge building projects that politicians brush to one side when they would rather stir up prejudicelots of old Turkish property is being refurbished in the area....unfortunately...as in Wales....it is the incomers that can afford to do this....and can get permission to do it.....and then of course there was my interlude on Strictly Come Dancing.....K has a job which she enjoys immensely because the people are so nice....she is receptionist in a dance studio where every Thursday night they simply invite all their students to a dance party....this time it was the ballroom dancing students....she persuaded me to come....the standard was far too high for me but I did dance with the 19 year old Russian instructress who simply said that she would follow me whatever I did....I said that I made it up as I went along....somewhat post-modern my dancing I like to think....she said that she could see that I did make it up....and that I had more energy than her.....nevertheless it was enough for me....no or ineffective air conditioning and no asthma inhaler with me....K showed me the sight from the building's balcony.she needed a cigarette.... overlooking Dizengoff at night...brilliant.....also visited N's new flat for...awful Americanism....brunch....she said to bring champagne.....later in the week I met N again....at her son and daughter in law's flat.....saw baby E and played L ...4 years and ten months....at draughts...or is it drafts....they call it chequers or is it checkers.... not played for about 45 years but I beat him....really pleased about that!....L and I have always got on wellhe climbs all over me but won't risk his English on me or respond to my Hebrew....he turns to his grandmother to say what he wants to say to me...this was the last evening and N and I then went to see V and her husband and two sons.... the youngest is now 27 and still has all of the motor magazines I gave him from when he was 16..... after a while N and V went to talk in the kitchen while I talked to husband and son.....I really tried to stay off politics but they wanted to talk N took me back to the hotel and I jumped out of the car quickly saying 'no tears'.....it was our last time together and we both felt it badly...**other nice things**.....I just cannot stay away from Jaffa.....I know the poshed up old part very wellRichard the Lion Heart, Napoleon, Allenby all landing there....Alexander the Great probably as well.....and since last time I have explored the flea market...and much more....but this time I simply walked for miles along the main road....nothing spectacular in the way of Ottoman architecture....1950s concrete shops etc.....I was looking for a place selling zaatar for R.... found a small shop...two men inside sitting drinking what looked like Turkish coffee and smoking (you could

imagine their great grandfathers doing the same in Ottoman times)...got a kilo.....V later bought some for you from the ordinary supermarket!.....I kept thinking about my sense of direction....the sea must be over that hill sort of thing.....it was and I emerged by the Greek Orthodox school....the link is about the church...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwXoJ4k8T5M>

...and shortly after the Church of Scotland school....

<http://tabeethaschool.org/english/history.html>

Here, by the way, is the Franciscan Monastery in Jaffa...

<http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/JaffaStPeter.html>

....and then I realised that I was standing on a British Post Office Telephones grid....I have a neighbour whose uncle was postmaster general in Palestine before the war.....took a picture of the grid to show her!!.....this was not far from where K and I once saw a car towing a trailer with Ifor Williams Corwen on the sideWelsh civilisation gets everywhere.....to little avail though....on another hot day...they were all hot....I walked up Frishman to Rabin Square....I looked again at the memorial opposite the steps where he was murdered which is in Arabic and English....no Hebrew

http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g293984-d325429-Reviews-Iltzhak_Rabin_Monument-Tel_Aviv_Tel_Aviv_District.html#photos

....when I told this to K and her friend as we sat in yet another café on Dizengoff the bloke said that I probably did not see the letters in Hebrew because knowing Israelis they would be too huge for me to see....from Rabin Square I went to a coffee shop I know to have an apple strudel with my double espresso....by the way....wherever I went I stopped like this to scribble some more editing of my landmark masterpiece now titled The Values of New Laboura discursion.....nice word.....on its approaches to schooling in England and to government and politics in general.....deathless prose.....now up to 20,000 words....

http://www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk/assets/The_Values_of_New_Labour.pdf

anyway this was Friday mid day....shops are closing so I head in the direction of Jaffa where they will be open.....I come to the top of Sheinkin Street.....another British post office grid now we are getting close to what I think of as Soho in the sun....at the fork where if I go left the arty market is already overcrowded and if I go right the Carmel market ...food and

everything...I will have to fight my way through a packed throng....I am getting a bit worried because I need a quiet bar or coffee shop to do more scribbling....a short detour and I find it....a small bar....men in singlets....one with rakish panama hatI order a pint of Gold Star beer....yes the word 'pint' is recognised in a place like this....get a table to myself ...look at my emails and texts....take some photos and write yet more deathless prose....then off again this time to old Jaffa....but this time... having earlier in the week eaten at the Bernhardt Show....they mean Bernard Shaw....they do lots of meat dishes so I told the waiter that Shaw was vegetarian....couldn't resist it
....overlooking the Greek Orthodox church and the harbour.... I went to the Ala Din

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNs1BYV0c7c>

overlooking the mosque and with a view to North Tel Aviv....it is very close to the 'Arab' Theatre..... judge for yourself if the theatre represents a fearless expression of indigenous values or, perhaps, Sitting Bull accepting a role in a Wild West Show. I really don't know but I do know that today artistic ventures in Israel that receive public subsidy must be careful not to rock the official boat

<http://embassies.gov.il/london/culture/IsraeliCulture/Theatre/Pages/The-Arab-Hebrew-Theatre-of-Jaffa.aspx>

....then back along the promenade to the hotel.....when I spent nights on my own or had maybe a couple of hours to myself before midnight I would buy a couple of cigars and sit on the promenade just below the hotel.... From there I could watch the people.... old couples walking off their meals.... runners with heart monitors....couples with babies....young people...the girls slightly on the bling side of smart....the young lads scruffy.....all of them terrorised by cyclists pretending to be Lance Armstrong.....and homeless people sleeping rough.....one night I was listening to what I thought was recorded Latin jazz and then heard some Buena Vista Social Club stuff....took a closer look and found a quintet on the beachI just love to hear a confident trumpeter....it is a fascinating promenade....they take the word literally....at the Jaffa end there are many haughtily confident beautiful scarved Muslim women walking either with each other or with Hollywood husbands and boyfriends....in front of me at the Tel Aviv end was an Ethiopian inviting people to find the lady and quickly pocketing cash from failed gamblers before he could be caught by the authorities.....back in the residents lounge I could not resist texting my friend in Beirut from the seat where I had seen Shimon Peres sit a year or so ago....I mostly chatted to a lovely and charming 80 year old Sephardi Jewish man from Haifa....first language Arabic... who has lived mostly in the US and for decades in London.....a jazz musician.....played with Basieprobably only played dominos with him.... knew everyone..... 'I said to Ronnie Scott that young Tubby Hayes was quite good' but ...guess what... as our conversations went on....it turned out he did not trust 'blacks or Arabs or poofs'....his jazz cannot

have been so good then....it took me a while to realise the extent of the prejudice because you don't often hear such stuff these days and you don't like to challenge an old man....I am afraid that I did eventually and for a while the political argument was very depressing....over the years I have got into so many arguments in this lounge by expressing views that in this country would be regarded as mild....went shopping on Dizengoff with K to buy a dress for her to go to a wedding that night.....she was surprised how good I was at this.....but I have had some practice....and I enjoy it....she ended up with a great frock but she kept asking if it was too short.....and then....late one night in the part of Tel Aviv I called Soho in the sun....where the tone is so relaxed....where N has often taken me to listen to jazz in a cellar....where once after our first degree ceremony Liverpool had a great meal....where R's brother Y once took us for a fantastic meal and wine tasting....where there are little art galleries ...not so far from the Suzanne Delal Centre...where we are on the Bohemian edge just before Jaffa.....a man walked into a gay bar with a sub-machine gun....two killed....more wounded....all traumatised..... we may perceive Israel as simply a uniformly Jewish state in conflict with Palestinians who have hugely justifiable grievances that are ignored by too many countries....on the other hand supporters of Israel will often say that that outsiders do not realise how complicated things are....for years I used to reply that it is NOT complicated....64 UN resolutions say that you are illegally occupying the land of other people....so get off it....but the differences between Jews and Jews within Israel are possibly bigger than the differences between Israelis and Palestinians....this does not surprise me....after all....the differences between and within Arab and Palestinian groups and states can also be wide....so....on the one hand...we have some people trying to make a living and to support their children and their aged parents.....irrespective of race or belief and some humane people trying to build bridges....but on the other hand we have demagogue Israeli politicians appealing to and whipping up base human prejudices.....the thought that Zippi Livni is now regarded as the only prominent Israeli politician with a sense of compromise and live-and-let-live.....is truly amazing....horrifyingto me she is an extreme right winger.....and Israel now has a foreign minister who would be locked up for incitement to racism in many countries.....Netanyahu is now perceived as a weak man scared of everyone...especially his wife....meanwhile the Dan hotel continues to tell us something about the kind of people funded by big business and foreign governments to visit Israel and do business....it is after all just a short distance from the embassies of the USA.....a fortress....France....a well disguised fortress and the UK....suitably low key.....after the Galatasary football team left the hotel the most visually prominent group were soldiers from Columbia....all dressed up and ready to fight.....I expect they were there as part of an agreement between the countries to be trained in some advanced military technique....Israel exports a lot of such expertise and equipment....at the airport on my way home I bought crosses made from the wood of trees on the Mount of Olives...also some oil from those trees....water from the Jordan and soil from Bethlehem...for the mothers of friends.....now feeling sad....friends I may never see again....but I guess that the thirteen years may have crossed a few

barriers....left a few good memories....done some good for quite a few students and tutors working across political/religious/cultural divides.....I remain immensely proud of what we in Liverpool did....maybe we also spread a little love and tolerance....but to put the thirteen years into perspective...at the start we really thought that peace was just around the corner....it is now around lots of corners and I have just read a piece in the Amnesty International magazine that makes my last week in Israel look far too self-indulgent....

... on my return to Manchester Airport...approaching the last passport check....I was told to stop talking on my phone.....I had not seen the rather small sign facing my back that said not to use phones in this area....Iperhaps irritably....asked 'why' and they shut the gate on me....then they got fed up with me and let me through....through to reflect on the direction taken by UK society over the same thirteen years....

More links, notes, comments and sources (not in any special order)

1. I mention Fred Riggs's concept of *malintegration*. I take it to mean that a society can be made to cohere somewhat unnaturally when a dominant group binds all other groups together to serve its interests or to follow its beliefs. A word that you used to hear a lot in Israel is *homogeneity*. The idea was that Jews from all over the world would come to Israel, suppress their individual culture and become Israelis. This has produced the odd situation where colonisers themselves came not simply to take over but to become transformed into a new type of person. If we think of Zionism as an enterprise dedicated to this it is easier to understand why even the European Jews that invented and adopted Zionism had to leave behind the languages, the jokes, the stories and the songs with which they grew up. Malintegration takes a lot of effort to maintain and the consequences when it breaks down may be far reaching.

To know more about FW Riggs it might be fun to click on this link or, then again, it might not.

<http://www.slideshare.net/akidakhane/fred-w-riggs>

2. Within the link above to my review of Ilan Pappé's book *The Idea of Israel* are links to other reviews but in case it helps I am also placing some here.

<http://www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk/assets/webNurit.pdf>

http://www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk/assets/CliffWeb_General's_Son.pdf

3. In addition to the Israeli authors referred to above I suggest looking at the work of Avi Shlaim, Tom Segev, Shlomo Sand and Naeim Giladi. There

are many more, including that arch Zionist Benny Morris who upset many Israelis by revealing so much of the truth about what happened in 1948. His meta narrative is, however, that genocide and ethnic cleansing are justified to fulfil the Zionist dream.

4. Striking about the work of Benny Morris is, however, the inability to produce evidence for an expulsion of the Jews by the Romans. As that never happened it is hardly surprising that even someone so desperate to justify Zionism cannot produce the evidence it requires for it to be taken seriously.
5. I have not finished Tom Holland's *In The Shadow Of The Sword, The Battle for Global Empire and the End of the Ancient World* but if anyone still clings to the fantasy of a people being expelled by the Romans and now returning they might be shocked to read about Jewish kings, rabbis, soldiers, writers, merchants and more continuing to live in Palestine long after their supposed expulsion. Holland has the professional historian's ability to de-exceptionalise heroes and prophets, ideas and religions and to widen contexts. Devout followers of belief systems might not be comfortable with that. He reminds us that both the word and the concept of 'religion' are Roman and they encouraged us to perceive cultural belief systems more formally. He is not the only historian pointing out the Roman use of religion to reinforce empire and state. We also derive the word 'regulation' from the same Latin root.

Cliff Jones 16th. August 2015