

Dear Angela,

**I once saw you generate tears of hope in the eyes of experienced primary heads when you talked of bringing humanity back into the classroom. But now I find you as deputy to someone who supports a regime in Israel that employs snipers, holding British manufactured rifles, to shoot at the knees of indigenous primary aged children as they walk towards the houses and the land from which their grandparents were expelled at gunpoint by Europeans and Americans with not the slightest legal or historical justification for doing so. That is inhumanity. Please allow me to make some points.**

## 1. SEMITIC

Keir Starmer has chosen to make things worse by his deliberate (or is it due to ignorance?) misuse of the word Semitic. In the late eighteenth century the term was coined and used in the Gottingen School of History to classify a family of languages. During the mid to late nineteenth century in Germany, however, Wilhelm Marr began (he was not the first) to popularise the idea that German Jews were members of a race and because in the synagogue they used Biblical Hebrew (one of very many Semitic languages) he used the word Semitic to identify them. In 1879 he formed the Anti Semitic League. In fact German Jews spoke Yiddish. If speaking a little of an ancient language in a place of worship identifies you as a member of a race we might equally argue that all Catholics are Romans. It is a nonsense but, in this case for Jews, a lethal nonsense. They were killed because of this misuse of the word. Neither using a language that is one of many such languages nor following a religion shared by many can identify someone as a member of a race. Who was it who most energetically promoted the notion that to be a Jew is to be a member of a single, coherent, narrowly-defined race? Hitler.

Please do not see this as some kind of obscure academic point. Millions have died because racism has been visited upon people who are not members of a Jewish race but followers of the Jewish religion. There is no Jewish race. I assume that Starmer has been to Israel. Clearly he did not visit the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv. When I went, over the entrance was a prominent display of people from different races. All of these people, the museum pointed out, are Jews. Because there is no such thing as a Jewish race why encourage people to be racist towards Jews by using nonsensical terms such as Anti-Semitic? Why endorse what Hitler believed about Jews? Or has the Labour Party, under its current leadership, turned from scholarship to favour a very wrong and very lethal deliberately anti Jewish misuse of the word Semitic?

Palestinians are Semitic. They use a Semitic language. To call Modern Hebrew a Semitic language is rather stretching a point. It was invented by Ben-Yehuda who died the year my parents were married (1922). Every day it acquires more Arabic slang so one day it may be considered almost a Semitic language. There are, in fact, a large number of Semitic languages and, as the Pope had to point out to Netanyahu, Jesus did not speak Hebrew. He spoke Aramaic, another Semitic language. It is still in use.

My point is that there is enough confusion around the use of the word Semitic so why on earth would any member of the Labour Party wish to simplify matters by choosing to follow Hitler's preferred but nonsensical racial definition? I am fully aware that the misuse of the word 'Semitic', as in 'Anti-Semitic' when applied to Jews, has long been embedded in the discourse but can I at least ask you to remember that while Palestinians and very many millions of others are entitled to and do see and describe themselves as users of at least one of many Semitic languages this is the case for very few Jews?

## 2. EDUCATION

Some of your colleagues or former colleagues in the Parliamentary Labour Party have chosen to promote seriously damaging ignorance of school-based education in Israel. Having taught and examined Palestinian and Israeli schoolteachers at masters level over thirteen years in Israel I was astounded to hear one of your former fellow Labour MPs, Louise Ellman, attempting to convince other members of Parliament that the Palestinian educational system is biased against Israel. She sounded like John Wayne protesting that native Americans have a different point of view from the Hollywood version of American history. How dare they?

Let me suggest just two books for her and others like her to read. The first is **Palestine in Israeli School Books, Ideology and Propaganda in Education - By Nurit Peled-Elhanan**. Her scholarship is impeccable. She happens to be the granddaughter of a signatory to the 1948 so-called Declaration of Independence and the daughter of General Matti Peled who was, at first, in favour of provoking the 1967 War but later wanted withdrawal and peace. He forecast that without the return of land and with continuing occupation the IDF would become a bunch of thugs. And that is what has happened (please see the link below).

Here is the last paragraph of my review of Nurit's book.

"Do buy, read, disseminate and argue about this book: a book to which I have done scant justice. I have used the word 'exceptional' a number of times. I wish I could say that Nurit Peled-Elhanan is not exceptional. Unfortunately, she is. I met her briefly when she did some work on a programme that I directed in Israel working with teachers across cultural, religious, ethnic and political boundaries. She is a co-recipient of the 2001 Sakharov Prize for Human Rights and the Freedom of Thought awarded by the European Parliament. I knew before I met her that her daughter had recently been killed by a suicide bomber. What I did not then know was the huge extent of her intellectual capacity to focus upon and reveal the power of official discourse and narrative to create the conditions for killing. After reading this book no-one should think that discourse analysis is only for ivory tower academics. It has the potential to relax a few trigger fingers."

A fellow academic at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is **Samira Alayan**. Her book is called **EDUCATION IN EAST JERUSALEM, OCCUPATION, POLITICAL POWER AND STRUGGLE**. It is, by the way, now in the House of Commons Library. It has always been the case that Palestinian schools are funded at a lower level than Israeli Jewish schools and that only if they agree to teach what Israel wants them to teach do they get extra funding. If they do not, they are punished by having less money while being accused of bias. Her range of sources is very impressive. Here are the last three paragraphs of my review of the book.

"Including the index the book is one hundred and sixty five pages long and yet it is full of well-researched detail. Samira Alayan carefully explains her methodology and provides thirteen and a half pages of references. That does not mean that her writing is over saturated with citations but it ought to convey a sense of the serious scholarship on which the book rests.

"Here I have attempted to simply provide a flavour of the book. Open almost any page at random and there will be so much of interest, especially, perhaps, those censored blank pages that shout so loudly.

"It is an expensive book but I am sure that the House of Commons Library can afford it. Even then I can think of certain MPs that would read it with their eyes wide shut."

You may have noticed that I use the term 'Palestinian'. For Zionist Israel, having the power to control how others are labelled, the descriptor is 'Arab Israeli'. That is not what they, the indigenous people, call themselves.

The Labour Friends of Israel ought to be forced to read just these two books before they spout nonsense about the education of Palestinian children. And, yes, Palestinian school textbooks are subject to censorship while, at the same time, the textbooks used by Jewish teachers must all be officially approved, another form of censorship.

### 3. HISTORY

First, there is absolutely no evidence that King David ever existed except as a fairy tale. Next, the Romans did not expel the Jews from Palestine who are now 'returning'. They expelled them from Jerusalem and when the Muslims invaded they allowed them back in. There never stopped being Jews in Palestine or in what today we call Lebanon and Syria and Jordan and Iraq and also in Egypt.

Also 1948. Zionists will tell you that Israel was attacked that year. Read the book **1948 by Benny Morris**, a self-confessed Zionist. He upset fellow Zionists by telling the truth about their inhuman

behaviour towards the indigenous people. He defends his truth, however, by saying that the massacres of innocent villagers was necessary to fulfil the Zionist dream.

#### 4. ZIONISM

Perhaps **Ilan Pappé** makes the best attempt to define the ever changing categories of Zionism in his book **The Idea of Israel**. Zionism is based upon a fantasy that the Jews of, mostly Europe, are 'returning'. Such Jews are descended from converts. 'Jews by choice' were always welcomed by other Jews, which is another reason for debunking the notion of a Jewish 'people'. I dare say that you could easily arrange a face-to-face chat with Pappé. He is an Israeli based in Exeter. You might also read **The Invention of the Jewish People** by **Shlomo Sand** of Tel Aviv University. You could go to Oxford to have a chat with **Avi Shlaim**, another Israeli academic. His wife, by the way, is a great granddaughter of Lloyd George. That did not prevent him being very critical of Lloyd George and, especially, of his support for Balfour.

#### 5. SOCIALISM

Just what is it? It might not be a bad idea to ask that question of the man after whom Sir Keir was named. He wrote plenty. There have been and are likely still to be many attempts to define socialism. Of one thing we can, however, be sure. No socialist prefers inhumanity over humanity. Are you in favour of stealing the houses, the land, the lives and the history of others, especially when those 'others' are indigenous and you are not? Do socialists approve of apartheid?

Imagine your child is ill. A hospital is only a few minutes away. But you are forbidden to drive on the most direct road. You are not allowed on some buses. Then you must get through some checkpoints. What is this, humanity or inhumanity?

I once had the pleasure of presenting an international prize to a former student, a Palestinian. Having flown approximately 2,500 miles I had no difficulty getting to the event in Jerusalem. Why, though, were people late? You guessed it, checkpoints erected on their own land by people with no claim to that land. None of this can be countenanced for one second by anyone identifying as a socialist.

Imagine your partner is nearing 60. You plan a party. The actual birthday is months away but a summer party in the garden would be nice. You have a job as a Peace Envoy. Israel is killing, killing. killing indigenous refugees in Gaza. It is your duty to be there. But the massacre weather is nice for a party in the garden so that is what you choose. Why, how, is Tony Blair still a member of the Labour Party?

To give you some idea of what life and death is like for people in Gaza here is a short piece I wrote after reading the book of **Mushier El-Farrar**. He lives in Sheffield. A chat with him would be easy to arrange.

#### **Musheir El-Farra (2012), GAZA, when the sky rained white fire.**

"How casual, how ordinary, to sit in a tank, take aim at an ambulance, shoot at and destroy it and the people inside; and it is a matter of a few moments to order a family out of their house so that it becomes easier to machine-gun them: mothers rushing too late to protect with their own bodies young children and babies; fathers and uncles forming human shields round the young and the old so that the bullets would hit them first: an automatic response from human beings. In those moments race, religion or political affiliation mean very little. Humanity, however, means everything; except, of course, to those that have chosen to disregard it.

"I wonder how the self-styled 'New Historian' Benny Morris would respond to this book detailing the stories of families, sometimes of three or four generations sitting down to eat before the unexpected bombs fall; the survivors identifying the dead from fragments of flesh; or the mother, so proud of her skill as a seamstress making clothes for the family, grabbing her needle and thread to stitch up the bullet holes in her son's chest because the Israeli army won't allow an ambulance to approach. She stopped the bleeding for a while but then it seeped through the stitches and he died in her arms. After that would you pick up your needle to mend the slightest tear or sew on a button?"

Morris is not one to hide horror but he justifies it and takes the view that while Israel has made mistakes mostly the fault lies with the 'others': humanity should surrender to inhumanity because of the Zionist destiny.

## 6. YAD VESHEM

As the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party I am sure that at some point you will be invited to Israel and shown round the Holocaust Museum. During such a visit you are expected to switch off your critical faculties. I found my visit a very moving experience but could not help asking myself why the museum needed to be so big. It was as though, having made its point it could not stop itself repeating the point. Coming out I asked about all the cranes and was told that American money was paying for its expansion. Back then I had no idea that it was built upon the land and overlooking the village of Deir Yassin. When Itamar Shapira who worked in the museum pointed out that the Zionists had engaged in the massacre of innocent people Yad Veshem sacked him.

Israel would like to possess the word 'holocaust' and reserve it for its own use. This use of the word advances the Zionist project. Pointing out that a greater percentage of Roma; that communist Germans; and that Germans classified as racially inferior because of health problems suffered in exactly the same way is not popular. Imagine if any Jew that suffered and died in the holocaust came back to life long enough to learn how their death had been used to further the Zionist narrative, well, what do you think might be their reaction?

## 7. A PERSONAL STORY (just one of many)

In 1956 an American Jewish friend, thrilled by a belief that Zionism and socialism could co-exist, migrated to Israel and lived on a kibbutz. She worked at times with Hanan Ashrawi and was in contact with Sari Nusseibeh, the former President of Al Quds University and husband of Lucy Nusseibeh (<https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-137455734/peacemaker-lucy-nusseibeh-builds-nonviolent-movement>). I never met Lucy but I am sure a chat with her would be easy to arrange and very useful.

My friend took me to Palestinian villages to visit friends who fed us outside while children played, old men smoked and drank coffee and the moon shone through the olive trees. Back then many people like my friend were trying so hard to become part of an integrated community. And then I received an email from her describing how appallingly racist Israel has become since my last visit. It is, she says, worse now than the American Deep South of the fifties and sixties that she had witnessed. She wishes she had never set foot in the place. I find that to be tragic.

The racism is, by the way, not entirely directed at the indigenous people. Ethiopian Jews are black (what price a coherent Jewish 'race'? ). For many years the young women were given, without their knowledge, contraceptive medication. You can guess why. And it is only just over three years since, after a fuss, Ethiopian blood was accepted in blood banks. In my time in Israel everyone knew about this. It was only when this particular example of racism could no longer be officially ignored that something was done about it.

## 8. MORE BOOKS AND AUTHORS

A complete list of books would be huge. Let me mention just a few and other Israeli authors whose books you might wish to dip into.

### Tom Segev.

Possibly his most famous book is **1967**. This, as Ilan Pappé points out, is a year taken by so many Israelis these days to be the starting point of their modern history. A consequence is that fewer Israelis call into question the behaviour of Zionists during, around and after 1948.

### Shlomo Sand.

Publishing **THE INVENTION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE** he upset those that believe that it is possible to define Jews genetically. Scientific research keeps appearing to contradict previous research which is then complicated by different Jews identifying with treasured cultural markers, none of which are universally shared by Jews from very varied cultural backgrounds. It would seem that although Ashkenazi Jews might be genetically identifiable there is no DNA evidence that demonstrates a reason for propounding the idea of a coherent, world-wide Jewish race. There may be some use for DNA testing but when it comes to interpreting history it ought to be set to one side. So should all those rabbis demanding DNA tests prior to marriage. What, I would ask, are the DNA markers for humanity?

His second book of this series, **THE INVENTION OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL**, is dedicated to the Palestinian village upon whose land he now lives and upon which Tel Aviv University, where he remains a professor emeritus, is built. In this case there was no massacre. It was more a case of making clear to the indigenous people that immigrants wanted their land. A Jewish Israeli friend remembers as a little girl being taken to the village open air market. All gone now to be replaced by a beautifully landscaped site. That has so often been the case: landscaping for the invaders but dispersal and displacement for the indigenous people.

### **Naeim Giladi.**

The book of this, now dead, Iraqi Jew is called, **Ben-Gurion's Scandals: How the Haganah and the Mossad Eliminated Jews**. Against the advice of his father and not then knowing the extent of Israeli sponsored attacks upon Jews in Arab countries in order to provoke migration to Israel, he too migrated to Israel. It was not a good experience for him or for many other Arabic speaking Jews who were often used as cheap labour to replace Palestinians as they were cleansed from their own land.

### **Miko Peled.**

His visits to Labour Party Conferences will have provided wonderful opportunity for members to learn from someone with vast experience and remarkable insight. He is driven by exactly the same set of values to which all genuine socialists are totally committed. I have used the word that summarises them before in this letter. It is **HUMANITY**. Can there really be a member of the Party that is unaware of his book, **The General's Son, Journey of an Israeli in Palestine**.

Here is the last paragraph of my review.

"A final thought: his mother in her garden growing plants: not a house or a garden stolen from a Palestinian family (she had the chance of that but utterly rejected it as immoral) but close to what was the village of Dier Yassin where the Palestinian inhabitants were massacred in 1948. I think of the growth of her plants as I think of the growth of the values that her children are propagating."

Also anything written by the journalist **Gideon Levy**. He writes for Ha'aretz. On my first trip to Israel in 1996 I asked about this 'right wing' newspaper. I was told that I was in Israel where it is regarded as left wing.

It is often the case that when an Israeli author writes something that departs from the official narrative it will be described as 'discredited'. That only means that it does not fit the chosen story. I once asked a very senior Israeli journalist if government censorship was a problem. He replied that government does not have to censor the media because most journalists have swallowed the official narrative to such an extent that, while a crime by a Jew is prefixed with 'alleged' when writing a report on a Palestinian the word 'terrorist' is automatically deployed.

## **9. SOME ITEMS THE LABOUR FRIENDS OF ISRAEL MIGHT LIKE TO HIDE OR FORGET**

Probably every Israeli I taught, worked with or knew in some way or another had been a member of the IDF. I may simply have been lucky but, although, to put it mildly, I did hear stories of very bad behaviour by the IDF, nothing was like the example below. It illustrates, I believe, how bad things are today.

[Israeli IDF Snipers Boast of Shooting 'Ducks' in Gaza'. Boasting About Their Hits. Unspoken Crimes against Humanity - Global Research](#)

And here is Gerald Kaufman who, after making this speech was referred to by Zionists as, yes that word, 'anti-Semitic'.

[British Jewish Zionist MP Gerald Kaufman says Israel acting like Nazis in Gaza](#)

If, Angela, you have managed to read the above, many thanks.

I have many reasons for treasuring my time in Israel. Having grown up mostly close to Liverpool whose Jewish community can be traced back to 1750 and, later, becoming familiar with different Jewish communities in greater Manchester, my first shock on going to Israel was that it did not feel remotely Jewish. Teaching teachers I was, at first, surprised by how often they used the word 'homogeneity'. This, of course, meant the casting off of old culture and the adoption of a constructed Zionist culture and narrative. Shlomo Sand, in **How I Stopped Being a Jew**, describes the shame he felt in class of having put up his hand when all students were asked if they spoke Yiddish.

Perhaps, however, the strongest experience that I felt while in Israel was that of someone with one foot firmly planted upon the land in which humanity ruled but the other upon land ruled and totally controlled by inhumanity. When the people of those two lands meet the results can be wonderfully inspiring. They can also be devastatingly depressing. It does not surprise me that so many Jewish Israeli friends cannot wait, if they have the money, to get away on holiday as often as they can. Unless you are totally committed to inhumanity your values, quite simply, need respite.

Prior to the Labour leadership election the Party did not seem able to decide if I were a member or not. I received an email saying I was but was not then given the opportunity to vote. Bill Esterson is my MP. A nice bloke is Bill and I know he does not like Gove! I have, nevertheless, told him that because Starmer has become leader I shall not be voting Labour.

Corbyn released us from the Blairite prison. At last we were allowed to talk about equality and fairness and social justice and rights instead of ersatz socialist values such as modernisation and aspiration and choice. At first I attributed his failings to someone that, in the school playground, never punched a bully on the nose. I knew that there were plots against him funded by the Israeli embassy. I am afraid that, then, I had no idea that members of the Party, often paid employees of the Party, were working towards losing the general election so that this fundamentally decent man with ordinary decent values (hardly Robespierre) could be replaced by a supporter of Zionist inhumanity.

I am so glad that during her last illness my wife did not have to witness the Labour Party deserting humanity in order to embrace inhumanity. For her Blair was bad enough. And for me!

With respect, thinking of the knees of primary school children as they walk out of their prison towards what is rightfully their land and their houses,

Cliff Jones

27th. April 2020

<http://www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk>