

# **"YOUR GRANDMOTHER CAN KEEP HER KEYS, BUT I SHALL KEEP THE HOUSE."**

**I think that ought to have been the sub-title of Nir Cohen's book LOVE ISRAEL SUPPORT PALESTINE (2023).**

**He might have added that he would be happy for your grandmother to to come and be photographed, smiling of course, in front of what was once and for generations her family house.**

What follows is not a conventional review. It is a series of responses that I recorded as I read through the book. I have numbered them.

The shock that the book presents is that it seems official Israel found that the book might depress its citizens.

What is it that we are supposed to swear in a court of law? Something about "Telling the truth, the half-truth and only a bit of even that truth"?

I think that would be his version of the oath.

Except that the writer is probably the one person most deceived by the book. It is a story of someone never quite waking from a dream.

"Please let me go back to sleep and wake up to find that my dream was true."

There is no bibliography so it is not possible to cross check to see what Israeli researchers he is aware of, people who know about falsified history and propaganda and censorship, people who do not make excuses or live in dreamworld.

In one of his books Ilan Pappé lists and describes the changing definitions or gradations of Zionists. I wonder into what category he would place Nir Cohen. "Agonising Zionist" would be my category.

"I know my country is inhuman, but I want to love it."

My words, not his, but I think they sum up the book.

## **First response.**

I understand why Nir Cohen's book LOVE ISRAEL SUPPORT PALESTINE was accused of hurting the feelings of the Israeli public and that attempts were made to scrap it.

So far I have read just the first two chapters. As I see it by the time that he ended his army service he had realised how thorough was the brainwashing he had gone

through. And he was aware of the extent to which the army to which he has devoted so much of his life was used to humiliate Palestinians.

In Miko Peled's book, *The General's Son*, he describes his father, Matti Peled, saying that if Israel did not make peace and return land the army would become a bunch of thugs.

Cohen prompts my memory of a young lad who had just left the Israeli army telling me of a bunch of soldiers occupying a Palestinian house and wrecking it, even shitting on the furniture.

'Thugs' is the word.

Cohen mentions the assassination of Rabin. He was no saint but his negotiation of a peace agreement condemned him to death by the unhinged Zionists. Travelling by taxi to visit a neighbour of Rabin our driver told us, "The man who killed Rabin killed Israel."

As Netanyahu felt and feels that his political power was and is under threat he did and does more and more deals with the unhinged.

For years whenever Israelis faced a crisis they would tell each other, "Yer besedr." It translates as "Don't worry, it will be all right."

Perhaps today the general majority are beginning to realise that is no longer the case. But is their unrest confined to the bubble of brainwashing in which they were educated and brought up? They are uneasy that Netanyahu has made big changes to what they valued as civil rights.

But those rights hardly mean anything to people whose houses are being demolished and whose little children are murdered on their way home from school.

Imagine Afrikaners demonstrating because their Apartheid regime disturbed their bubble, but not bothering to glance over the wall.

We might think of Rabin as Israel's FW de Klerk. Today I see no equivalent.

Neither do I see a President of the USA with the courage and eloquence of Harold Macmillan who, in 1960, in the Parliament of Apartheid South Africa, delivered his Wind of Change speech that effectively told them that the game was up.

This is not a review of Cohen's book. Reading so far fifty pages out of one hundred and seventy one is hardly sufficient for that.

I am simply making a record of my thoughts as I progress. And if the book was thought to possibly hurt Israeli feelings then I claim the right to make sense of my own.

The leaders of the two major U.K. political parties? Self declared supporters of Zionism.

**Second.**

NO, I do not agree with everything written by Nir Cohen in his book LOVE ISRAEL SUPPORT PALESTINE. When he uses the word 'terror' I would write 'resistance'. But I have just read his chapter on life after the army.

In my experience many Israelis love to leave their country for even a short holiday. I have always attributed this to the sometimes unacknowledged or unrecognised need to escape for a while from the tensions of a society built upon false history and the perceived need to oppress innocent people. Innocent people classified as 'terrorists'.

Cohen's description of life after the army I found to be simultaneously optimistic and deeply upsetting.

Reviewing Miko's The General's Son I felt just a tiny bit optimistic. Perhaps that was me welcoming someone expressing their humanity. At one time I cried reading Miko's book. I have just done the same reading Nir Cohen's.

Perhaps I am a sucker for signs of humanity. Or might that old saying be true that the Welsh bladder is just behind the tear ducts?

For now my reading was slowed by meeting a friend who devours books. He intends to buy this one. Good!

That word 'Woke'.

Israelis today are awakening to the injustices within their society. Netanyahu has pissed off a lot of people. But only one Israeli eye has opened. The eye that could focus on the inhuman treatment of indigenous people remains tight shut.

**Third.**

### **SCHIZOPHRENIA.**

More than half way through Cohen's book and that S-Word is what comes to mind. Obviously I have more to read, but so far what I see is a well expressed example of what it is like for some Israelis as they cope with the embedded inhumanity of the State in which they were educated and continue to love and believe in.

He now lives in Tel Aviv. I first went there in 1996. Having read the Ha'aretz newspaper I assumed it was right wing. I was told that I was in Israel where it is regarded as left wing.

Left wing/right wing and humanity/inhumanity are both slippery spectrums.

So is love/hate.

I love my Israeli friends, but I cannot love apartheid, genocide and the utter falsification of history.

If I get round to writing a proper review of the book I must declare my view. As a State it is insane.

#### **Fourth.**

He clearly admits that he lives in an apartheid state. He also uses the word 'occupation' very often. He believes that the word applies only beyond the so-called '67 border'. So far, it would seem, it has not occurred to him that Israel itself is an occupation, that it is a state based upon stolen houses, stolen land and expelled indigenous people. And also upon falsified history.

He mentions the Holocaust without acknowledging its cynical use by Zionists to justify the slaughter of totally innocent Palestinians. In 1948 those Zionists surrounded the village of Dier Yassin and slaughtered its inhabitants. Overlooking the village and on its land they built Yad Veshem, the Holocaust Museum. Was that showing respect for the victims of the Holocaust? For me both the slaughter and the building of the Museum demonstrate inhumanity.

Fascinating is his account of his time as a member of the 'left wing' Meretz political party. Like so many political parties that pretend to have ideals it's members are preoccupied with struggling against each other to hold positions of power.

Eventually this dawns on him.

I believe that I am reading a book by someone gradually emerging from a fairy tale world. I have five chapters to go. How far shall he emerge? Might he cling to some of that lethal fairy tale?

#### **Fifth.**

Fifty pages left to read.

He is now describing what it was like to join BREAKING THE SILENCE while maintaining his position as an army reservist. Two very different roles.

Breaking The Silence is an Israeli organisation that challenges the 'Occupation'. Not the occupation of Palestine or the occupation of the minds of Israelis, but the 'occupation' of the territory in which indigenous people are officially allowed to live.

Just think of the Sixth Cavalry invading an 'Indian' reservation. Palestinians are given Reservations, but very insecure ones.

In the first role he is surrounded by people who appear to be aware of unfairness, injustice and downright appalling behaviour by the army. In the second role he encounters many brainwashed people.

I am reminded of a chat with a once prominent Israeli journalist. From him I learned that among his colleagues ignorance of history was accompanied by deep internalisation of official prejudices. Israeli journalists are, by and large, totally convinced that Palestinians (they call them Arabs) are not only inferior, but that everyone is a potential terrorist.

Cohen reinforces this for me by telling how Ha'aretz newspaper was unwilling to print something he had sent them. I used to read that paper regularly but noticed that what in 1996 I saw as right wing was becoming more and more reflective of government policy. Eventually I found it difficult to stomach.

I must keep an eye upon what you might think are my prejudices. So let me point out that over thirteen years of working in Israel plus close observance since, my eyes became very much opened.

Well, I think so.

Still reading.

### **Sixth.**

Almost finished.

The author presents himself as a good person. But what he wants is for a state founded by racist falsifiers of history to co-exist with docile subservient people whose land, lives, culture and independence have been devastatingly harmed by Europeans and Americans with absolutely no claim to live where they now do.

So far he cannot face up to that, hence the first two words in his title, LOVE ISRAEL.

“The only good Indian is a dead Indian”. Remember that quote?

I wonder if Cohen believes that The only good Palestinians are docile Palestinians who do not want their houses or their land to be returned to them.

The indigenous people still holding the keys to the houses stolen from them, are they supposed to be happy?

### **Seventh.**

Close to the end.

He proposes a two state solution. And yet, despite his strong criticisms of Israel and its right wing governments, he cannot stop referring to resistance groups as ‘terrorists’. And his use of the word ‘democracy’ has to be taken with a huge jar of salt when applied to Israel. So far it has not occurred to him that Israel itself is an occupation of the land of others. He was brought up on stolen land.

He loves where he was brought up.

He is familiar with the promenade between Tel Aviv and Jaffa. So am I. It is named after Herbert Samuel, from Liverpool. In the synagogue closest to the family home of the Samuels I was asked one Friday night: “What do you think of Israelis?” Before I could respond my questioner answered for himself: “Arrogant!”

Yes, that was an 'aside'. But perhaps it sums up the foundation of what it takes to unquestionably believe that you have a right to a land to which at no time in history were you ever connected.

European Jews are the descendants of converts to a religion. The Romans did not expel them. They are not 'returning'. Not even Benny Morris, the Zionist 'historian' can produce evidence of that happening.

Every November the citizens of the USA celebrate their theft of land and the apartheid and genocide that went with it. They call it 'Thanksgiving'. You have to be deaf, dumb and blind to reality to take part in such a ceremony.

Cohen points out the ignorance of Israeli citizens, but he uses that word 'Love' when describing how he feels about a country he knows commits atrocities upon indigenous people. He loves a country that is ignorant about its own history. And that ignorance is lethal.

The armed forces of Israel employ professional psychiatrists to support people who kill and hurt the innocent. I have often felt that almost the whole of Israel needs treatment. It also needs to be taught real history, not propaganda.

Yes, that is the case with the people of many countries, but Cohen's is a book about Israel. He may say and think that he is showing respect towards Palestinians who he so often slips into calling 'Arabs'. In fact he is proposing, as I have suggested before, that they live on a reservation like 'Red Indians'.

And yet, and yet, and yet, this book was threatened with suppression in Israel.

I have almost four pages left. So far I think I have been reading a Half Woke book.

### **Final response.**

I used to say that every sentence spoken in Welsh begins with the same English word. The word is 'Well'. It could be 'So'.

That was me psyching myself up to write what follows.

Well, so I have finished Nir Cohen's LOVE ISRAEL SUPPORT PALESTINE.

It is judgement time.

I feel sorry for Nir Cohen. So much of his life and his learning about humanity forms the basis of this book. He says that he loves his country but he is not proud of it. One day he hopes that if he keeps talking to young people, giving two hour lectures and responding to questions from his audiences he might "form a little crack" and help people to think a tiny bit differently. Eventually he hopes to be proud of his country.

The country that he loves is killing Palestinian children as I write. It exists because the USA supports it. In 1948 Truman, standing for the Presidential election, realised that he needed the votes of Jews in New York and so he declared his support for the

establishment of a State of Israel. It is doubtful that the United Nations had the authority to approve the establishment of a state, but, along with conditions that are still ignored by Israel, it happened anyway.

Truman won the election and ever since the USA has been feeding an albatross round its neck. If you were to write down the list of times that the USA has used its Security Council power of veto in support of Israel you would run out of ink.

Friends in Israel were hoping that Corbyn would become Prime Minister. Yes, there are Israelis that do more than merely disagree with the policies of their successive governments. But who, with Starmer and his mates, sabotaged Corbyn's chances of winning a General Election? The actions of the U.K. Israeli Embassy are on record.

I think Cohen wants all the villains, the baddies, of his Disney World to go away. I am sorry, but they outnumber the goodies and they control the schools and the media. Zionism is based upon falsified history.

Repeating earlier points that I have made, he seems to think that the Palestinians whose houses have been stolen, whose children have been killed while supposedly tucked up safely in bed, whose fathers and brothers and husbands have been held in prison for years without even being charged with an offence, he seems to think that they will happily live on a small reservation like 'Red Indians' while Israelis strut about playing the part of John Wayne on the World Stage.

Sorry Nir old chap, the country that you love and wish to be proud of is founded not only upon fake history but also upon officially endorsed, even celebrated, genocide. And all of this has taken place within living memory.

When I first went to Israel twenty seven years ago I casually believed all that stuff about the Romans 'expelling a people' who had 'returned'. But I can read. Sorry, old thing, that never happened.

I once wrote an open letter to Angela Rayner on this subject. I took a lot of care with my research. No reply came. I put it on Facebook and published it in a newspaper. Both of us were shadow banned.

Nick Clegg, former leader of the LibDems, enabler of Cameron and Osborne in 2010, you now work for Facebook. You make quite a few bob. Am I ok to post this?

Nir Cohen tells us that he has for years taken part in hugely exhausting physical exercises and competitions. He has also travelled extensively. Might 'displacement activity' be a phrase for this?

Perhaps, instead of asking us how Israel can be made lovable he might ask himself how he would feel when the bulldozer approaches his family home so that some total stranger from another country who has been allocated the site and the land can steal it.

LOVE ISRAEL BULLDOZE PALESTINE.

**Cliff Jones 13, May 2023**

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