



## **The Other Side of Israel: My Journey Across the Jewish/Arab Divide**

*Susan Nathan*

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In 2003, Susan Nathan moved from her comfortable home in Tel Aviv to Tamra, an Arab town in the northern part of Israel. Nathan had arrived in Israel four years earlier and had taught English and worked with various progressive social organizations. Her desire to help build a just and humane society in Israel took an unexpected turn, however, when she became aware of Israel's neglected and often oppressed indigenous Arab population. Despite warnings from friends about the dangers she would encounter, Nathan settled in an apartment in Tamra, the only Jew among 25,000 Muslims. There she discovered a division between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs as tangible as the concrete wall and razor-wire fences that surround the Palestinian towns of the West Bank and Gaza.

From her unique vantage point, Nathan examines the history and the present-day political and cultural currents that have created a situation little recognized in the ongoing debates about the future of Israel and the Middle East. With warmth, humor, and compassion, she portrays the daily life of her neighbors, the challenges they encounter, and the hopes they harbor. She introduces Arab leaders fighting against entrenched segregation and discrimination; uncovers the hidden biases that undermine even the most well-intentioned Arab-Jewish peace organizations; and describes the efforts of dedicated individuals who insist that Israeli Arabs must be granted the same rights and privileges as Jewish citizens.

Through her own courageous example, Nathan proves that it is possible for Jews and Arabs to live and work peacefully together. *The Other Side of Israel* is more than the story of one woman's journey; it is a road map for crossing a divide created by prejudices and misunderstandings.

## **The Other Side of Israel: My Journey Across the Jewish/Arab Divide Details**

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Author : Susan Nathan

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## **From Reader Review The Other Side of Israel: My Journey Across the Jewish/Arab Divide for online ebook**

### **Beorn says**

Essential reading for anyone wanting to scratch the surface of the Israel Palestine conflict. Nathan, a reformed Zionist, tracks her formative years growing up under the spell of the Zionist ideology up until the time she undertook the 'Aliye' (the law of return).

She exposes the theocratic way that the state of Israel is run, and racist bureaucracy & repressive domestic policy all designed to disconnect Palestinians living within Israel both from the state and from their cultural identity as Palestinians.

Nathan avoids being blindly committed to one cause by basing her arguments on her actual experiences in Israel.

An eye-opening read for anyone with an interest on the conflict.

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### **Foxtrot says**

Like Susan Nathan, I am also a Jewish woman raised in the Diaspora to believe that Israel could do no wrong. Unlike the author I do not have immediate family members who escaped or were murdered during the Holocaust.

My parents' generation lives with the guilt that they should have done more to help their European brethren, and our post war clergy reinforced this collective guilt by encouraging my parents' generation to have large families (replacing murdered souls) and contribute heavily to Israeli fund raisers. We planted the trees that, thanks to Ms. Nathan, I now know cover the lands illegally confiscated from the Palestinian owners. We donated generously to the JNF, bought ambulances and irrigation systems.

The phrase, "never again", is indoctrinated into every Jewish student in Sunday school and Hebrew school classes. This mantra has been used over and over again to explain away the actions of the Israeli government and military in regards to Palestinian issues. However, even as a young child, I had trouble understanding how Israel could create a similar situation with the Palestinians as what those very Holocaust survivors had experienced during Nazi times. The founders of modern Israel experienced government mandated, sanctioned and encouraged job discrimination, evictions from property, crowding into ghettos, denial of critical services before emigrating. To turn around and do the same thing to the Palestinian population makes them not much better than their former tormentors. Jewish resistance to Nazism arose, just as Palestinian resistance to Israeli brutality has arisen. Who should know better than Holocaust survivors as to what happens when a group is continually beaten down? And, who should know better how kindness towards others is appreciated?

That being said, while I found Nathan's experiences illuminating, I felt her presentation was often a bit one sided, perhaps overly accusatory toward Jewish Israelis and defensive when others criticized her positions. Such defensiveness is not going to move her argument forward.

Currently, Israeli government is more of an Orthodox theocracy and this is something that even many Jewish Israelis, especially of the unaffiliated younger generation, may see as too restrictive. In the Western world,

we are brought up in the firm belief of separation between church and state. Contrary to what we may have believed, this has probably never been the case in Israel; I'm not sure it was ever intended to be a Western type democracy.

Whereas Israel has a long way to go to becoming a democracy for all, I hope and pray that this is the direction modern Israelis will head, and may someday be the case for not just Israel, but all of the Middle East.

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### **Jan says**

Really strong piece of work on the facts of Palestinian existence within the Israeli state (I've tried to put that as neutrally as possible..). Nathan also offers some valuable analysis of the psychology of Zionism in Israel. A small gripe that the structure, and in some cases the tone- which could be patronising- of the book could have been improved with some smarter editing.

A really brave book (and even braver life led to be able to write it).

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### **Nicole says**

I picked up this book as it looked like it would be very interesting to read. Insider-stories such as this one usually give an account of life-on-the-ground that is not always portrayed in the mainstream media, and I was interested in this new viewpoint.

My fascination with the Middle-East has a lot to do with its religious history, and a lot to do with its people. This means \*all\* people, which is why this book appealed to me.

The writer, Susan Nathan is a Jew and a former ardent Zionist who moved to Israel in 1999. She writes (p.39), "The object of my desire was to make aliyah, the Hebrew word for 'ascent', an idea that in returning to Israel a Jew is fulfilling a divinely ordained mission."

She then realised that there was a large non-Jewish population living inside Israel - mostly Palestinian Arabs who had lost their homes and lands yet gained citizenship as Israel became a nation in 1948.

Reading this book highlighted a lot of issues that I was vaguely aware of, but did not know much about. I feel that after reading, I have a better understanding of the lives of the Israeli Arabs and some of the challenges they face.

I didn't agree with everything Nathan said in this book, but did find that it gave me a lot of food for thought. All in all I found this a very interesting book, and definitely one I'd recommend to others interested in the other side of Israel.

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### **Huyen says**

I was always meaning to write a proper review for this brilliant book because it is one of those books that shape my viewpoint on Israel and the conflict. But I left for Australia shortly after I finished it so never got

around to write a review until now. I'd not be writing if it wasn't for the fact that recently I watched this documentary called Arna's Children, which greatly upset me. It tells a story of a Jewish woman in Hebron opening a theatre and home for Palestinian children to teach them to express their anger through songs, plays and drawings. She devoted her life to supporting Palestinians' struggle for the establishment of a Palestinian state through non-violent resistance and art. But she had cancer and left for Israel. When her son came back to Palestine ten years later, all the kids he used to teach to act in his plays have become militants and suicide bombers. It is often disturbing to think about how violence, humiliation and intimidation can dehumanize and brutalize such innocent children. But Israel is not just destroying itself from outside, it is really tearing down the very fabric of its own society from inside.

This is a great book, a must read for anyone who wishes to understand Israeli politics and its relations with its own Muslim population and the Palestinians. If you truly believe in what mainstream media try to sell: the image of Israel as the bulwark of democracy and the enlightenment, the beacon of hope for the unrenassanced Middle East, the land of the free and brave, you will think very differently after reading this book.

Susan Nathan brings the story to you from a personal perspective with her witness of very human stories and abysmal sufferings that Israeli Muslims have to endure living in the land that once belonged to them. Susan Nathan is definitely my hero, really the kind of writer who goes out there to seek the truth rather than sit in ivory towers to second guess what it is like to suffer and preach victims to "tighten security and control terrorists".

She is originally a British Jew who once lived in apartheid South Africa and came to Israel with all the noble ideals about her country. But gradually over time, she realized there was something very troubling about her country: it is basically an apartheid state with all kinds of state-sanctioned racism. And she has all the reasons in the world to believe so.

After the 1948 war, hundreds of villages were destroyed and the authorities registered all property in the new Jewish state. 750,000 people were displaced and lost their land, possessions and were scattered throughout the region until today. For those who stayed in Israel, they are squeezed into tiny pieces of land, and their houses constantly under threat of demolition. While Israel raves about expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank to support "natural growth" on occupied land, inside Israel, Jews are subsidized by the state to buy massive mansions with swimming pools while Muslims live in separate slums with no chance of expansion. They can't really build houses or cultivate their land and can lose their homes at any time. Arab towns are not registered on the computer system and not provided with state services like Jewish neighbourhoods. They don't get government investment and are overcrowded with terrible living condition.

In all aspects, Arabs are discriminated against: their schools are underfunded, their curriculum racist and degrading, their freedom of speech curtailed, their employment limited. What worries me is the fact that most extremist religious schools in Israel receive a lot more funding than secular schools, so increasing numbers of parents are sending their kids there. It scares me to think about what they're brainwashed into thinking in such schools. Ariel Sharonism?

In employment, many areas of the economy are closed to Arabs, and it makes Arabs the most vulnerable to unemployment and poverty. And because the state has confiscated most of Arab lands and passed to Jewish farming communities, Arab Israelis are left with very few opportunities in life.

As for Jews, they are discouraged from providing services for Arabs and get into trouble if they help Muslims buy houses. Men are drafted into the army at the age of 17 to serve for 3 years mainly to patrol at checkpoints. Refuseniks will face a lot of difficulties later in their career, be shunned by society and are

excluded from government benefits. So it isn't worth it to mess around to fight for others' rights.

While reading this book, I always wondered how can Israelis let this happen? How can they turn their eyes away from the sufferings of their fellow men in their first world country? But sadly, since Arabs and Jews live separately, they are probably not aware or apathetic. Susan Nathan points out even some of the most "liberal" Israelis she talked to turned out to be hypocrites, they hold great contempt (and possibly fear) for Arabs and have little concern for them. Peace movements inside Israel are often weak, unenthusiastic and initiated by Arabs. Which really disappoints me because I'd like to see more aggressive action from the enlightened Jewish population to solve such a dire problem. At the end of the day, they still live in a (arguably functioning) democracy and face much less danger than Arabs or Palestinians. And unless Israel improves its treatment of its own Arab population, how could I expect it to change its direction in Gaza and the West Bank? In fact, I've given up that hope after the Gaza massacre (with overwhelming popular support from the population) in January and the election of Netanyahu. It angers me that such a racist/violent state can get so much acquiescent support from America (\$3 billion in military aid per year!) even if it has viciously corroded America's image in the region for the past 4 decades. Is it worth the price?

I am often appalled by the idea that some people honestly believe with the fiercest conviction in their heart that this piece of land was given to them in a book written more than 2000 years ago and that it is a decent excuse to steal other people's land, raze their homes and subject them to the worst kind of denigration. At the end of the book, Susan compared the sufferings of Palestinians to those of Jews in Europe. Of course, they are different: Israel has never built gas chambers or exterminated wholesale. But that doesn't mean that the sufferings they're inflicting on Arabs are justifiable or less cruel. It has derogated, dispossessed and dehumanized a whole population, in that process, dehumanizing itself. Israeli society is possibly permanently shackled to the traumatic past, like an abused child that grows up into an abusive husband and constantly seeks to oppress someone else to feel secure inside. It has this tremendous existential fear of being wiped off the map even if it is the only country in the region with nuclear power. I wish Israelis that freedom from fear, peace of mind and the real courage to break with the past to look at their own mistakes, to make peace with Palestinians to really make Israel the land of the free and brave.

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### **Annukka Ruusula says**

Mietin tähditystä neljän ja viiden välillä, päädyin viiteen.

Ajatuksia herättävä, tunteita nostattava kirja. Ehdottoman tärkeä, ei-niin-tavallinen näkökulma Isarelin ja Palestiinan kysymyksiin. Ehdottomasti sellainen näkökulma, johon kaikkien pitäisi tutustua. Kenellä on oikeus maahan, kenellä on oikeus kansalaisuuteen, entäpä ihmisoikeudet? Voiko kokonainen valtio olla sokeaa omille kipupisteilleen ja/tai voiko kokonaisella valtiolla olla kipupisteitä? Mitä tehdä, jotta kansakunta heräisi näkemään ihmisen myös siinä toisessa kansakunnassa? Mitä tehdä, jotta kansakunta tajuisi sen, että tuo toinenkin kansakunta koostuu yksittäisistä ihmisiä, joilla on unelmia, pelkoja, historiansa, ihmisoikeudet?

Kirja saa minulta viisi tähteä yheiskunnallisen merkityksenstä tähden. Kirjallisuolta ansioiltaan se on minusta neljän tähden arvoinen.

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## **Tim says**

I had a friend one time refer to a “pluralistic multi-cultural” level of development that only 10% of the world population achieves. I thought about this ability to look to something greater than ourselves as I was reading Susan Nathan’s “The Other Side of Israel”.

Nathan is a Jew who used her “Right of Return” under Israeli law to move to Israel and become an Israeli citizen. Having been born in England, she was a part of the Diaspora that felt out of place. From an early age she had been indoctrinated with Zionist ideology, telling her that the only true home she had was in Israel. So, she left her family behind and traveled to the “Holy Land” and established a good income for herself teaching English in Tel Aviv.

Through a series of events, Nathan was asked to write a funding application for disadvantaged communities in Israel read: ARAB Israeli communities. After visiting one of these communities, and through Nathan’s obvious “pluralistic multi-cultural” level of development, she had the mental capacity to step back and realize that something was not right. So, she chose to live amongst the Arab Israelis and witness first-hand their day to day lives and try to understand the intense discrimination they faced. We must stop for a moment here and realize that this would be equivalent to a middle-class white American choosing to live with the outcasts in the ghettos of our nation. An even greater example would be a white South African choosing to live among the blacks during the apartheid era. In other words, it was unheard of.

Relationships were developed and deep friendships were made. Susan Nathan was shocked. These Arabs were nothing like she had been taught from her Zionist childhood...they were not savages. They were oppressed people...equal human beings...looking for their place and a homeland to call their own much like the Jews who were oppressing them. In fact the greatest irony to the entire situation is that the Palestinian Arabs are the new Jews. They have taken the place of the Jews who were in the past the people without a homeland.

The parallels between the Israeli “left” and the American “left” were what struck me most about this book. There are certain debates...even among so-called liberals...that are not allowed in either country. For example, those Israelis who claim to be leftists will fight for Palestinian rights to an extent, saying that the occupation shouldn’t continue, etc...but will stop at declaring that the Palestinians should have equal rights. Only those who can objectively step outside of themselves, look at the bigger picture of “pluralistic multi-cultural” levels of development will be able to see the injustices. Jews in Israel and the Diaspora are so indoctrinated that the idea of equality has been erased from the collective consciousness. Until we as citizens of the world, and especially those of us activists (myself included) can battle this line of thinking, there is little hope for reconciliation. It will be a slow process, but if you value human rights it is a situation that can not be ignored, especially in the West which often sides unconditionally with Israel. I’m not talking about rhetoric; I’m talking about the stronger language of continued military aid. The opportunity to defuse a situation that could plunge the entire world into war is there...will we take it before it’s too late?

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## **Ghada Arafat says**

Woooooooooooooooooooo. A must read.

Now that I have some time to write my impression on the book, I have to say that it is a really strong book. It talks about something that only minority of people dare to talk about. Actually, I believe that one of the

benefits of occupation to Israel is to keep peoples attention away from the raciest Israeli practices against its Palestinian minority.

I know that for outsiders the amount of stories and facts may seem over-exaggerated, but as most of my husbands extended family has the Israeli citizenship I know that she is not. I have heard similar stories. One of them once told me that we here in Palestine are lucky because at least the world is talking about our suffering not like them. No one knows or care to know what they face every day.

The book actually talked about some of the issues that always bothered me about the Israeli-left and most peace activists. One question I would really like to hear an answer for, what if we got our state and there is peace, but after 20 or 30 years, Palestinian Israelis outnumbered Jews????????????????????????????????? If they want us to have our state to keep the demography of Israel in favor of the Jews, how would they react when this changes due to natural reasons?

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### **Abby says**

Do not be deceived by the kumbaya introduction to this book -- her goal is not really to show that Jews and Arabs can be friends, but in fact to disprove the simplistic notion that the only problem in Jewish-Arab relations is as superficial and hippie-dippie as misunderstanding. And co-existence supporters and those in favor of dialogue groups had better listen up; so long as there are vast resource inequalities and racist laws, holding hands will get us nowhere.

Susan Nathan's book is an excellent list of the reasons why I am an anti-Zionist, instead of simply a Jew who opposes the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is a readable combination of personal accounts as well as official records and statistics, which combine to give the clear picture that Israel was built on a racist framework that privileged immigrants at all costs against the indigenous people, and that to remain a "Jewish" state it retains these policies both subtly and overtly. Palestinian citizens of Israel, who make up 20% of the population, are routinely referred to in polite, educated company as a "demographic threat," and Israel's policies reflect a hysterical reaction to this threat.

I would recommend this book in conjunction with Jimmy Carter's book, Palestine: Peace not Apartheid, for new-comers to the issue. The failing with Jimmy Carter's stance -- that everything within Israel is peachy-keen -- is harshly exposed by Nathan's description of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians who remained within the state of Israel. I only wish a book written by a Palestinian citizen of Israel could receive as much press, and it didn't take a Jew to make this uncomfortable news palatable.

And tell all your friends NOT to "plant a tree for Israel"-- Nathan gives one of the best exposes of the Jewish National Fund's practices that I have ever read. I am sorry, Grandma Marion, that your commemoration tree marks a destroyed Palestinian village.

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### **Lawrence says**

Well, this was a remarkable book. Before I write about it, let me make a few disclaimers and comments. First, I am not Jewish although the family I married into has a Holocaust history and some connections with Israel, albeit dissipated over the years. Second, I am a Christian, but I am an Episcopalian and not of the fundamentalist persuasion that believes that the Bible requires support of Israel. Third, I do not believe that it is rational or justifiable to claim historical land now as the heirs of a nation that ceased to exist arguably

when the Romans conquered Palestine and certainly by 70 C.E. when the Romans destroyed the Second Temple and Jerusalem. Fourth, all we have to work with in this area are the facts on the ground, namely, that Israel exists as an entity with a large Jewish population and that Palestinians also exist within that nation (and outside it). Fifth, I believe that all people, Israelis and Palestinians included, generally have the same goals and aspirations, namely, the best for their families, economic security, and a sense that there are opportunities for equal participation in the wider society.

Having said all that, I must ask the basic question whether this book is truthful or not. The question arises because of the obscurity of the subject matter. That is, the issue of Israeli Arabs has never seen much light of day in the press or elsewhere -- certainly not in my consciousness. To be compared is the great light shed on the Israeli occupation and slow annexation of the so-called West Bank.

Nonetheless, because the West Bank population and the Israeli Arab population have the same roots in the same land and were the indigenous inhabitants of that land, it seems that the populations would share similar attitudes and be subject to similar Israeli attitudes. Additionally, one must give due regard to the self-identification of Israel as a Jewish democracy which, by definition, appears, at least in words, to exclude from the democracy persons who are not Jewish. In sum, then, even though the author, Ms. Nathan, seems at times strident or, better, angry, this layperson and non-scholar cannot see any reason to distrust her narrative and descriptions. I admit that I have read no other books on the topic although I now intend to do so.

I cannot go into all of the details of this book. I can say that it should be read. And I will say that, throughout, I was reminded of the American past in which native Americans were dispossessed and resettled in poor circumstances. I can vaguely grasp a past attitude by which some inhabitants of the American continent were regarded as savage or inhuman or of lesser humanity or of no consequence or even as not existing simply because of the nature of press coverage and propaganda. There seems to have been a similar lapse in the case of the Palestinian native inhabitants, a similar ignorance, a similar one-sidedness.

I am not going to condemn one-sidedness when it is the necessary result of ignorance. And I do not think that eruptions of a sense of grievance on either side should be tolerated forever because anger is like pissing: once it starts, you can't really stop it. All one can do is work with the present, the facts on the ground, and realize that a great amount of reconciliation needs to begin so that the people of this part of the world -- and we -- are not enslaved by the emotions and attitudes of the past. If we are a world with values of justice and equality, this task must start. Despair is always around the corner, but our own humanity requires our human regard for others. The end result will be a better world because I believe that peace-making is what builds up, not injustice or separation. Hitherto, the latter have not done us much good.

I think this book should be read.

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### **Yik says**

Jewish author Susan Nathan, a born-and-bred Zionist, moved from London to Tel Aviv in her 50s when she took up the Law of Return – a policy enabling Jews from around the world to relocate to, and make Israel their home. Soon after arriving, she discovered things were not the way she thought (or was taught) they'd be – there was more to Israel's wealth and power than meets the eye. Her subsequent decision to abandon the comforts of Tel Aviv to live with her new family in Tamra, an Arab town within Israel, allowed her to

experience first-hand the reality of living life as an Arab in Israel and paved the way to the writing of this book.

The Other is an account of Nathan's experiences, meetings and interviews with both Jews and Arabs. She asks her own people disturbing questions, challenges Jewish mindsets and breaks what is easily the ultimate taboo for a Jew by supporting the right of return for Palestinians. Her belief is that political ideologies should always come second to common humanity.

Nathan's book excels in the insight it provides on the politics of life in Israel and the occupied territories; for many of us, it is also a window into the Jewish mindset. A good read if you are interested in events in that part of the world; a must-read if you ever have to travel to Israel.

**Joan Deming says**

## An important and rarely heard perspective

Raised an ardent Zionist in the UK, Susan Nathan made Aliyah and settled in Israel in her early 50's. But meeting Palestinian citizens of Israel changed her thinking on Aaeverything. Nathan's perspective and analysis are true and deserve a wide audience. Although ten years have passed since she wrote it, the history is spot on, and the situations she describes are only more dire. My only regret is that her fascinating interviews with Jews and Muslims are not enriched by similar ones with Palestinian Christians. Their story is equally deserving of attention and would make the overall picture more complete.

**Steph (loves water) says**

Fantastic. Everyone should read this book. EVERYONE.

## Rafeek Umbachy says

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## Omzi says

This book is one-sided! Duh! Of course it is! It is titled “the Other Side of Israel”, it’s supposed to be shedding the light on “a” side of Israel that is not really spoken of.

But for many Arab readers, this might be the only side of Israel ever known.

Yet, the book was useful in the sense of giving faces to voices. The voices we’ve heard while we were growing up telling us about the cause, the stolen land in the 1948 Nakba, the discrimination practised by the State of Israel even against certain Jews, the apartheid state, the horrors committed by the Israeli army. This book provides us with the faces for these voices; cases where the author, a Jewish Israeli citizen, came in touch with, in person, when she decided to move to Tamra, an Arab town in Israel.

A person supporting the Palestinian side of the conflict might be too surprised by the author’s criticism of the State of Israel to the extent of questioning the author’s intentions behind writing this book. This would be a result of the history of distrust towards not only Israelis, but towards Jews in general.

I would find this similar to the reaction faced by the author when she was asked if she hates Jews. This again would be a result of the history of feeling that Jewish people are the only sufferers in history and no other human suffering could be compared to what they have been through and that any sort of criticism is treated as anti-Semitic.

Whatever are the author’s intentions from this book or her feelings towards Jews, what matters is the credibility of the content of the book, and as a matter of fact I’m happy it was written. It is very informative, especially that it sheds the light on the lives of Arab Israeli citizens, known to us as the 1948 Arabs at the

time when all our media is being focused on Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank throwing stones at Israeli tanks. I don't mean to belittle the struggle of the Palestinians under occupation, but this book tells us that there are others who are suffering on the hands of the State of Israel.

And while the book tells us about what the Arab Israelis are going through, one gets to know more about the State of Israel itself.

It also talks about the Israeli left and the attempts done to show that co-existence with Arabs in Israel is possible, although many times the author criticizes these attempts as being not enough and hypocritical.

I felt double standards in the author's views when she was talking about Bar, the Israeli girl wanting to serve in the army, the occupation army, to show the Palestinians that there are good Israelis.

The author wrote, "It appeared that she [Bar] did not understand that she was already not behaving decently, that just by participating in the occupation she was compromised."

Hmmm this was a bit double standard to me, after all, the author, having British and South African passports, actually went to Israel in the early 1990s under the Law of Return which gives the right to any Jewish person in the world to go to Israel and claim citizenship. Since the author in the book recognized that the whole conflict goes back to 1948 and that this land originally belongs to the Arabs known as Palestinians, then she herself is participating in the occupation by merely being an Israeli citizen.

Bar, after all, was a girl, born on that land, struggling with a conscience that makes her want to show that not all Jewish Israelis want to kill or humiliate the Palestinians. She was trying to do something good from her perspective just like the author herself was trying to do something good from her perspective.

Another thing in the book is the use of the word Arab versus the word Jewish.

I'm really curious about what the word Arab means to the author and to many people around the world, because according to my understand of the word, there are Arabs who are actually Jewish.

I felt relieved that there are survivors of the holocaust mentioned in the book who believe that the practices of the state of Israel shame the memory of the holocaust victims.

And to know that there are people like Daphna Golan, a law lecturer at Hebrew University in Jerusalem who acknowledges the Palestinians' equal rights to remember their history and share of sufferings,

"We are people who, because of our history, have attached so much importance to memory and the act of remembering, and yet we refuse to allow another people, the Palestinians, their own memory and their own feelings about the past."

And to know about Eitan Bronsten, "the founder of a small pioneering organization called Zochrot (Remembering), one of the organisers of a right of return conference in Haifa in 2004 which addressed the rights of some five million Palestinian refugees to return to Israel."

The author quoted Paul Eisner, director of Deir Yassin Remembered, "If only each side would hear the other's story a solution would surely be found. But it is not true that neither has heard the other's story. Palestinians have heard the Zionist story ad nauseam, and they have certainly heard enough about Jewish suffering. It is not, then, both sides that need to listen: it is Israelis and Jews who need to listen."

Even though the writer isn't Palestinian, this book is an attempt to tell the story from the Palestinian side and exposes Israel as an apartheid state, demolishing its image as the only democracy in the Middle East.

Using the author's words, "Israel is a democracy-made-to-measure: the majority will decide, but only after we have first made sure that Jews are the majority."

It even questions Israel's intentions towards the creation of a Palestinian state,

"The reason Israel appears so reluctant to create a viable Palestinian state is precisely because it will open up the question of what constitutes justice for these other two long-overlooked groups [Palestinians who are citizens of Israel and the Palestinians living in exile as refugees]. It will reopen the debate about what really

happened in 1948, a history that has long been overshadowed by what has happened following Israel's conquest of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. It will bring the war crimes of 1948 back into the spotlight, and that is what really frightens ordinary Israelis ..... Israelis also have to face the tough moral questions raised by the way Israel was founded in 1948, the wholesale destruction of hundreds of Palestinian villages and the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes."

Overall, I find this book worth reading.

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