

# Occupied Minds: A Journey Through the Israeli Psyche

Arthur Neslen (2006)

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### **Back cover**

Israel's founders sought to create a nation of new Jews who would never again go meekly to the death camps. Yet Israel's strength has become synonymous with an oppression of the Palestinians that provokes anger throughout the Muslim world and beyond. How are Israelis able to see themselves as victims while victimising others? What does Israeli Jewish identity mean today?

Arthur Neslen explores the dynamics, distortions and incredible diversity of Israeli society. From the mouths of soldiers, settlers, sex workers and the victims of suicide attacks. *Occupied Minds* is the story of a national psyche that has become scarred by mental security barriers, emotional checkpoints and displaced outposts of self-righteousness and aggression.

From vignettes to in-depth interviews, more than fifty Israelis offer their accounts. What they reveal is in turn powerful, haunting, subtle and disturbing. Illustrated throughout with photographs, this unique book offers an unrivalled insight into Israeli consciousness, private and public.

It charts the evolution of a communal self-image based on cultural and religious values towards one formed around a single militaristic imperative: national security

ARTHUR NESLEN was until recently the London correspondent for Aljazeera.net and the website's only Jewish journalist. For five years he was *Red Pepper* magazine's international editor and between 2001 and 2004 he worked as a broadcast journalist at the BBC. He has also written for publications including the *Guardian*, the *Independent* and *Private Eye*.

'Arthur Neslen's sharp insight into the Israeli Jewish mentality is a must-read for anyone wishing to understand that society beyond simplistic and reductionist descriptions'

ILAN PAPPE, author of *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*

"This book is a fascinating journey through the Israeli Jewish psyche in its multiple manifestations. It invites us to understand the Israeli predicament through Israeli eyes.'

GHADA KARMI, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter

'Brutal and searingly honest accounts.... A compelling book.'

YVONNE RIDLEY, Political editor of the Islam Channel

### **Amazon reviews**

'A simple but profound exploration of the complexities and contradictions of Israel.'

HILARY WAINWRIGHT, Editor of *Red Pepper* magazine

*Occupied Minds* is meticulously and rigorously researched and referenced, with detailed footnotes. It is an excellent book for the serious general reader on the Israeli-Palestine/Arab conflict, giving a broad, comprehensive spectrum of people, a confluence of ideas and ideologies. For people who already have a certain depth of background understanding, clear of myths and misapprehensions, and to experts in this tragic conflict, it fills in the minutiae. (Jewish Socialist )

[This book] is an important key to understanding the realities beyond the headlines. (Internet Bookwatch )

*Red Pepper* is worth the price just for Arthur Neslen's investigative reports. (Greg Palast )

This is a simple but profound exploration of the complexities and contradictions of Israel. Dissidence, anger and the desire for reform as well as the more familiar bigotry and hatred come through in the words (and silences) of a fascinating cross-section of Israeli Jews. Listening and responding to these voices is essential to the struggle for a just peace in the Middle East. Through his own efforts to understand, Neslen has produced an unequalled insight for all of us into this troubled and troubling society. (Hilary Wainwright, Editor of *Red Pepper* )

Fascinating insight into Israeli society

The stories & experience of secular and religious Jewish people from left to the right of Israeli society challenge the notion that Israel is an ideal society & haven for all Jews. It will be an invaluable oral history record for historians. People speak for themselves, leaving the reader to make up their own mind, whilst footnotes provide well researched historical context which reinstates aspects of Jewish history absent from the pro-zionist tradition. There are first hand accounts of racism towards non-Western Jews, housing policies which encouraged naive Russian migrants to go live in settler enclaves in the occupied territories, as well as a fascinating interview with a retired security chief about Machiavellian manipulations. This thought provoking book should be read by all diaspora Jews, whether the majority who continue to feel they must give whatever Israel does unconditional support, or an increasing minority who do not.

Occupied Minds: A Journey Through the Israeli Psyche[1] was published by Pluto Press in 2006 and In Your Eyes A Sandstorm: Ways of Being Palestinian[2] was published by University of California Press in October, 2011. He is also the author of the booklet Gaza: Dignity Under Siege[3] which was published by CIDSE (International Co-operation for Development and Solidarity) in 2009. All three are collections of interviews and photographs. Neslen began his career at the City Limits magazine and worked as the international editor of for Red Pepper and as a broadcast journalist for the BBC. 'A fascinating journey through the Israeli Jewish psyche in its multiple manifestations. It invites us to understand the Israeli predicament through Israeli eyes' Ghada Karmi, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter. About the Author.Â For the first time I find a book that covers the Israeli society from all angles. Mr. Nelson takes you into the Israeli society through 50 interviews with Israelis from all social, racial and political background. For example, he interviewed Mizrah Jews, Ashkenazim, Sabras, DJs, Sex Workers, Black Jews (not Falashas), Yamin, Morracan, Iraqi Jews, settlers, Russian emigrants, anti-Zionist, people from the political right, lawyers who help Zionists around the world, people who live in Kibutz ...etc.