

HAMSIN (HOT DESERT WIND)

HAMSIN

Directed by Daniel Wachsmann

Israel

1983

35mm color

90 minutes

Hebrew, w/Eng. subtitles

In a Galilee village, Gedalia, a Jewish farmer, seeks to purchase the farm of his Arab neighbor when it becomes known that the government is about to expropriate it. Is he buying the land simply to expand his property, or to protect his neighbor from the confiscation? Tensions between Jews and local Arabs rise. The situation reaches a tragic end when Gedalia discovers his sister is having an affair with his most trusted Arab worker. Best Israeli Film 1983, Israel Film Board; Best Foreign Film nominee, 1983 Academy Awards.

Distributed by:

Ergo Media

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Screened in the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, 1984

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What were the Israeli government's policies regarding Palestinian Arab lands in the Galilee? Why was Gedalia so concerned?
2. What was the nature of the relationship between Israeli Jewish ranchers and their Palestinian neighbors?
3. This was one of the first Israeli films to address the issue of land confiscation – where the Israeli general public aware of these policies in the early 1980's?

BEYOND THE WALLS

Directed by Uri Barabash

Israel

1984

35mm color

103 minutes

Hebrew, Arabic, w/Eng. subtitles

Israel's acclaimed Academy Award nominee for Best Foreign Film about contemporary relations between Arabs and Jews in an Israeli prison. This gritty, humanistic film draws a provocative parallel between a maximum security block and Israeli society. It presents the daring notion that an Arab and Jew can find friendship, and envisions a dignity and freedom that can be found through solidarity. International Critics Prize, 1984 Venice Film Festival; Best Picture, 1984 Israeli Academy Awards.

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Screened in the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival and
Venice Film Festival in 1985

BEYOND THE WALLS also screened during the 1988 SFJFF.

1. This is one of the first Israeli films to directly address the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. How are Israeli Mizrahi and Ashkenazi prisoners portrayed. How are the Palestinian's portrayed? Can you tell the difference.
2. This was one of the best received Israeli films by an Israeli audience – why did was this film so successful?

WEDDING IN GALILEE

Directed by Michel Khleifi

Belgium

1987

35mm color

113 minutes

Hebrew, Arabic, w/Eng. subtitles

This first-ever feature about Palestinians by a Palestinian is a beautiful and haunting tale about a village in the Galilee. The village patriarch wants his son's wedding celebrated traditionally, in violation of the curfew. He makes a compromise with the Israeli military authorities and alienates his fellow villagers. Between young Palestinian hotheads and hair-trigger Israeli commandos stand the women, with their solidarity, sensuality, and strength. Overriding the political tension is the dazzling light and wondrous landscape. WEDDING IN GALILEE was filmed on location with government approval by Khleifi, who was born and raised in Nazareth. Richly detailed with great music and an excellent cast.

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Screened in the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, 1988
San Francisco International, New Directors, New Film (MoMA), London Film Festival

1. How are the inter-generational relationships between the Palestinian Arab's portrayed?
2. How are Israelis perceived in this Palestinian Arab village?
3. What does this say about the next generation of Palestinian Arabs?

HOUSE

Amos Gitai
1981, Israel, black and white, 50 minutes
Hebrew with English subtitles

An extremely simple yet utterly profound film, HOUSE explores the history of a house in East Jerusalem as a microcosm for the Israeli-Palestinians conflict. An Israeli professor has purchased the house from an aging Algerian Jewish couple. An Israeli contractor rehabs the house with Palestinians laborers. Produced then censored by Israeli television, HOUSE was saved from the dustbin of history by its director Amos Gitai. Gitai has since gone on to become Israel's most famous filmmaker with his infamy stemming in part from his early coverage of the occupied territories.

Distribution:

Ray Privett
Facets Video
800-331-6197
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STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Displacement is the theme of this film, discuss the displacement of Jews in Arab countries. When and why did it happen?
2. Discuss the attitude of the Palestinian workers in the rebuilding of the house.

INSIDE GOD'S BUNKER

Directed by Micha X. Peled
France, England
1994
Video
40 minutes
English, Hebrew, w/Eng. subtitles

Director Micha Peled's portrait of Hebron's militant Israeli settlers presages the violence of February 26, 1994, when American-born settler Dr. Baruch Goldstein opened fire on worshippers in the mosque at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, holy for both Muslims and Jews. Peled's unusual access to this volatile community reveals, through jarringly candid interviews, the racism and hatred of the settlers towards their Palestinian neighbors.

Distributed by:

Transit Media
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1. Who are the settlers in Hebron?
2. What is their role in the city of Hebron?
3. Why are they staying?

CUP FINAL

Directed by Eran Riklis
Israel
1991

35mm color
107 minutes
English, Hebrew, Arabic

Boutique owner Cohen is scheduled to attend the World Cup soccer games in Spain but ends up on a battlefield in June 1982 as Israel invades Lebanon. There he is captured by an eight-man PLO unit on its way to Beirut. While the Israeli army moves in around them, Cohen and his captors develop an extraordinary friendship. Equal parts suspense story, war drama, and sharp comedy, this award-winning and critically acclaimed film is certainly a break-through for Israeli cinema. Comic actor Moshe Ivgy is brilliant as an Israeli Everyman, and Muhammed Bakri (BEYOND THE WALLS) is first-rate as Ziad, the PLO commander. Director Riklis expertly avoids sentimentality and instead creates a funny, humane and courageous statement on the tragedy of war and the comedy of life.

Distributed by:

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STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the prevailing message of this film?
2. How can co-existence occur within Israel?
3. What does the ending of the Israeli army's occupation of Southern Lebanon teach us?

THE INNER TOUR

Directed by Ra'anan Alexandrowicz
Israel
2001
Beta SP color
94 minutes
Hebrew, Arabic, w/Eng. Subs

There's no question that the Israel-Palestinian conflict is both volatile and intransigent. But media coverage of the region, which overwhelmingly dwells on violent extremism, rarely breaks down the wall that keeps one side from truly understanding the other. The documentary INNER TOUR innovatively probes the human side of the crisis, bringing to light, with unparalleled grace and sensitivity, stories of loss and displacement told from the Palestinian perspective. Together with his Palestinian-Israeli production team, director Ra'anan

Alexandrowicz follows a diverse group of Palestinians on a three-day sightseeing tour of Israel, once considered home by many of the passengers. With the visitors' eyes riveted on the prosperous Israeli towns rushing by, the tour almost immediately takes on disturbing and heart-wrenching overtones. Small moments speak volumes about the complexity of the situation. The encounter with Israel prompts each passenger to reflect on the harsh realities of the present and to recollect a vanished past. As they look outside, we in turn are given a precious window into the soul of Palestinian society. Alexandrowicz has fashioned a luminous, indelible vérité poem that moves us to profound insight and subtle catharsis. Sundance 2002, SF Jewish Film Festival, 2002

Distribution: Bel Films, Tel Aviv

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is it that Jews are unable to hear the Palestinian story?
2. Can there be a peace settlement that respects the needs of both sides?
3. Does this film change your opinion of the Palestinian right of return?

LOOKOUT

Directed by Dina Zvi-Riklis
Israel
1990
16mm color
28 minutes
Hebrew, w/Eng. subtitles

Set in Israeli-occupied Gaza, a soldier observes the daily life of a Palestinian village from his lookout post. With binoculars firmly in place, he is both distanced and empathic towards a family he seems to enjoy watching. Perched at his post day after day, he is presented as a naive voyeur unaware that he is violating the family's privacy. Yet the soldier's presence suggests the power and domination he has over their daily lives. Inevitably, he cannot avoid becoming a part of a family - and by extension, national tragedy. Filmmaker Dina Zvi Riklis, an Iraqi-born Israeli, offers a portrait of life under occupation using no dialogue, only the ironic news commentary of an Israeli radio station. The effect is shattering.

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STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What do you learn about the Arab family in Gaza?
2. How is the Israeli soldier viewed by the Arab population?

TESTIMONIES

Directed by Ido Sela
Israel
1993
Video
53 minutes
Hebrew, w/Eng. subtitles

For three years, prior to and during the first Palestinian uprising (Intifada), director Ido Sela and camera operator Eitan Harris worked on television crews in the West Bank and Gaza for United States networks. Confronted daily with the Israeli military's suppression of the uprising, they became acutely aware of the ways in which Israeli television limited its coverage of the Intifada. In response, they decided to record the personal testimonies of 14 Israeli soldiers from varied backgrounds and a variety of ranks. Among them was a psychologist, a student, a settler from the West Bank and an ex-kibbutznic. Their words reveal the emotional impact their actions have had upon their lives. They respond to graphic and disturbing news footage of Israeli soldiers beating Palestinians with remarkable frankness.

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1. What is the range of responses of Israeli soldiers to their experience during the first intifada?
2. How can these testimonies educate Jews world-wide?

IN OUR OWN HANDS: THE HIDDEN STORY

Directed by Chuck Olin
United States
1996

16mm color
84 minutes
English, Hebrew, w/Eng. subtitles

Lively interviews and rare archival footage tell the story of a rag-tag group of Jewish volunteers from Palestine who battled to become a fighting unit in the British army. Many of them had narrowly escaped Hitler, leaving friends and family behind. In 1945, they entered combat against the Germans in Northern Italy, but that is where the story begins. Now in their seventies and eighties, brigade veterans vividly recall unsanctioned clandestine operations to find Jewish survivors and spirit them away to southern Italy, where ships to Palestine awaited. These "ordinary Jewish boys" stole trucks, weapons and ammunition out of British war depots, smuggled arms to Palestine and organized a covert operation to hunt down former Gestapo and SS officers. The film reveals the intricate political maneuvering of Zionist leaders who were able to convince British authorities first to agree to a Jewish fighting unit and secondly to allow it to fly the Israeli flag. The brigade formed the nucleus of an army that would later defeat the British to create the state of Israel.

Distributed by:

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STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What role did the Jewish refugees from Europe play in the founding of Israel?
2. How are Arabs portrayed in this film?
3. Would this film promote dialogue with Palestinian Arabs about the Jewish attachment to Israel?

PROMISES

Directed by Justine Shapiro, B.Z. Goldberg, Carlos Bolado
United States
2001
35mm color
106 minutes
English, Hebrew, Arabic, w/Eng. subtitles

Seven Israeli and Palestinian children living in and around Jerusalem provide deeply humane insight into the complexities of the conflict in the Middle East. Shot during the period between the Oslo peace accords and the current turmoil, these highly articulate and endearingly honest

children tell of their efforts to come to grips with the religious and national conflicts that have shaped their daily lives. The children, aged between 11 and 13 during the initial interview, live within a 20-minute radius of one another but have little direct knowledge of the other's lives. Filmmaker Goldberg, who speaks Hebrew and Arabic, serves as an onscreen intermediary between them. The children tell stories of growing up amid the conflict with matter-of-factness and show frequent glimpses of a more hardened, adult nature than we might imagine given their tender years. The story veers in a surprising direction when several Jewish and Arab children come together; it is in this poignant segment that the film truly lives up to its title. 2001 Rotterdam Film Festival, Audience Award; 2001 San Francisco International Film Festival Golden Gate Award, Best Bay Area Documentary and Audience Award Best Documentary.

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Screened in the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, 2001
www.promisesproject.org/

1. What did you learn about the Palestinian Arab experience in Dohaisha?
2. What are the Israeli Jewish positions presented in the film?

SHATTERED DREAMS
Directed by Victor Schonfeld
England
1987
16mm color
170 minutes
English, Hebrew, Arabic, w/Eng. subtitles

A timely and well-made documentary examining Israeli history and the conflicts that may have turned the dream of a democratic Jewish state into a nightmare of confusion and imminent civil war. As it shifts rapidly between interviews and archival footage, between idealistic pioneers and racist demagogues, rock musicians and actors in satiric theatre, SHATTERED DREAMS will tear your heart.

Distributed by:

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Screened in the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, 1988

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What were the range of positions presented on the Israeli side of the argument?
2. Have your own opinions altered from viewing this film?

URI AVNERY: WARRIOR FOR PEACE

75 MIN, 2002 VIDEO
Hebrew with English subtitles

Journalist and peace activist Uri Avnery is a man who Israelis have loved to hate for over 50 years. Avnery, the founder of Gush Shalom, has devoted his life to promoting the idea of two states for two nations. For this he paid a price: The head of the General Security Services proclaimed him "Public Enemy number 1", the offices of his newspaper were burned down and several attempts were made at his life. Despite his significant contribution to shaping the State of Israel, Avnery lives on the fringe of Israeli public opinion and is a living example of the saying "one cannot be a prophet in ones own city." His life encompasses the spirit of a period and the history of the nation, one of the last of a generation from whom ideology, political fervor and belief that it is possible to change the world. The film combines interviews with archival footage to recount Avnery's incredible life story.

1. Discuss the founding Zionist ideology in relationship to Palestinian Arabs.
2. What did you learn that was new in shaping your opinion about Israel today?

AL-NAKBA: THE PALESTINIAN CATASTROPHE OF 1948

Directed by Alexandra Jansse, Benny Brunner
Israel, Netherlands
1998
Video
60 minutes
English, Hebrew, Arabic, w/Eng. subtitles

AL-NAKBA takes the most hotly contested and misunderstood moment of Israeli-Palestinian history and makes it come alive with intellectual clarity and emotional impact. Based on the book *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, by noted historian Benny Morris, AL-NAKBA is the first documentary to examine the tragedy that accompanied the birth of the state of Israel in 1948 - the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians. Dramatic location shooting is combined with riveting testimony of Arab and Israeli eyewitnesses, Palestinian poetry and new revelations about the evacuations of Haifa, Jaffa and villages surrounding Jerusalem. Through multiple voices, we learn that many Palestinians fled massively in the chaos and panic of Israel's War of Independence, that many were rounded up and forcibly expelled by the emergent Israeli army, and still others died at the hands of Israeli soldiers on the road toward Jordan (the West Bank since the 1967 war). Filmmakers Brunner and Jansse bring authority and sensitivity to a subject too long in the domain of propagandists on both sides of the divide.

Distributed by:

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1. How do these testimonies compare with your understanding of the Israeli war for independence?
2. Why are these stories important for us?
3. How have your opinions changed?

BETWEEN THE LINES
Amira Hass in Ramallah, 2001

Directed by Yifat Kedar
Israel
2001
Beta SP color
58 minutes
Hebrew, Arabic, w/Eng. subtitles

A voyage into Amira Hass's unique world, where she is a reporter in the Palestinian Territories for the respected Israeli newspaper, Ha'aretz. Hass is the only Israeli journalist to live in

Ramallah, just 30 miles north of Jerusalem. From her rented apartment there, she is a unique source of information for her readers in Israel and around the world. What is revealed is a journalist obsessed with the truth, a single woman in a traditionally male dominated society, and the only child of a mother who survived the Holocaust. The film follows Amira for two years, beginning in 1999, when there was a period of optimism and euphoria in Israel. The worsening political situation, accurately predicted by Amira, affects her daily life. As tanks go by under her window and bombing disturbs her sleep during the nights, she sticks to her mission and stays to live among the Palestinians and continue to report from the inside.

Screened in the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, 2002

Jerusalem Film Festival

www.highlight.co.il/

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How are both sides of the conflict represented in this film?
2. Why is Amira so effective as a journalist?
3. What did you learn that was new for you?

500 DUNAM ON THE MOON

Directed by Rachel Leah Jones

France, United States

2002

Beta SP color

47 minutes

Hebrew, Arabic, w/Eng. subtitles

Parallel narratives have never been so ironically portrayed than in the story of the popular Israeli artists' colony Ein Hod, known to the Palestinians displaced from that village as Ayn Hawd. Upon discovering the depopulated Arab village of Ayn Hawd, Romanian architect Marcel Janco decided to preserve what was left—transforming it into a Dadaist artists retreat. The displaced Arabs tell of their ancient olive orchards and what happened when the Ministry of Interior drafted plans to build the Carmel National Park nearby. In the microcosm of this one geographic area, the film presents how the clash of two cultures, East and West, Jewish and Arab, has led to the current ongoing and tragic violence.

Screened in the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, 2002

1. What did you learn that was new for you about the Israeli arts colony?
2. What did you learn that was new about Palestinians from the region?

CLOSE, CLOSED, CLOSURE

France, 2002, Beta SP, 53 min., Hebrew/Arabic/w/Eng.subtitles

Director: Ram Loevy

This film was shot in and around the Gaza Strip, before and after the outbreak of the Al Aksa Intifada in the fall of 2000. Veteran Israeli director, Ram Loevy portrays the daily life of Gaza residents, including border crossings, border closings and the violence and tension that infuse the daily life there. Outside the electric fence that borders Gaza, Israeli peace demonstrators are confronted by settlers who oppose their presence. Daring, timely and poignant.

Distribution:

First Run Icarus

New York, New York

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn about life for Palestinians in Gaza?
2. What were the positions presented on the Israeli side?