

***Peace, Propaganda & the Promised Land:
US Media & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict***
by the Media Education Foundation (approx. 80 min.)

Information Literacy: This documentary discusses how American foreign policy and Israeli public relations influence news reporting. If you are discussing media literacy, propaganda, or if students want to know why our mainstream media mainly show only one side of the conflict, this is a film to show them. The Study Questions are divided into three pages, each covering about 30 minutes of the movie. Save some time at the end of each class to go over notes/answers. Use the last day to discuss answers to the last third of the movie, and save time to go over the discussions questions listed after Part III.

1-30 minutes: If you show the first 30 minutes of the film, you will get through the introductory analysis and the specific discussion of settlements and house demolitions. Look at the student study questions to get a sense of what is covered.

30-60 minutes: The second 30 minutes covers how the media present violence and deaths, the myth of American neutrality, and American support for Israel.

60-80 minutes: The third section covers the year 2000 peace talks, the Palestinian uprising (2nd Intifada), Israeli opposition to occupation -- interviews and footage with many Israeli groups --, anti-semitism, whether peace is possible.

Teacher warning: contains scenes of graphic violence & dead bodies.

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Name: _____

Take notes on the film.

Part I

1. What's the situation in the Occupied Territories?
2. Describe Israel's public relation campaign to maintain a positive public image.
3. What institutional filters are there on American news coverage?
4. Describe American news coverage of the conflict. What's omitted? What's included?
5. How do the American media refer to illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories? Why?
6. How do the American media refer to house demolition of Palestinians?

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Part II

1. How do the American media portray violent Palestinian resistance to occupation?

2. How do the American media portray the deaths of Palestinian and Israeli civilians?

3. What is the myth of American neutrality? What are some reasons for American support of Israel?

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Part III

1. How did the Israel public relations campaign, American media, and government portray the 2000 peace talks (called the “generous offer” or “Camp David”) and the subsequent Palestinian uprising?

2. How are the Israeli peace movement (many Israeli anti-occupation groups) and anti-occupation American Jews marginalized in the American media?

3. Is peace possible?

Discussion Questions after you’ve watched the movie:

1. How can we get accurate information about the occupation and the conflict?

2. What questions does this documentary raise for you about the information you get from the media?

3. Think of one international issue that you don’t know much about. Write down what you think causes the problem. Then research the issue using a number of news sources from different countries and perspectives, using mainstream and alternative media sources both electronic and print. Now can you identify more detailed causes of the issue? Can you identify biases in some of the media? Your teacher can help you identify more mainstream sources such as cnn.com, nbc.com, and foxnews.com and alternative media sources, such as democracynow.org and thenation.com. Try comparing coverage among Canada (cbc.ca), England (bbc.co.uk), and Qatar (aljazeera.com).