

Israel vs. Israel

2010

Distributed by Choices, Inc., 3740 Overland Ave., Ste. F, Los Angeles CA 90034; (310) 839-1500

Produced by Edema en Production

Directed by Terje Carlsson

DVD, color, 59 min.

College - General Adult

Ethics, Middle Eastern Studies

Reviewed by Michael J. Coffta, Business Librarian, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania

 Highly Recommended

Date Entered: 1/26/2012

Israel vs. Israel is a stirring and profound film about four Jewish peace activists who have taken action against the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The film depicts Israelis playing the political Samaritans by helping Palestinians despite Israel's efforts to maintain and protect its over 500 checkpoints and settlements. Ex-Israeli soldiers talk about "small stories that make the big picture." That is, the film offers numerous accounts, as well as firsthand footage, of Israelis persecuting and abusing Palestinians during protests, everyday life, and yes, violent clashes. The film persistently reinforces that Israel's occupation is not simply political, but cultural. For example, there is disturbing footage of an Israeli toddler heaving a rock at Palestinians, and footage of protected Israelis in Hebron harassing Palestinians. This imagery is not at all out of place, as this is a portrayal of the common occurrences in occupied Palestine. This work simply does not hold back.

While noteworthy director Terje Carlsson frames the issues of this documentary as "struggles for democracy amongst a conflict between nationalism and religion," the former Israeli soldiers continually refer to this as a "war." These contrite commentators offer other lucid insights including, "People without horns have done terrible things," and "No one has clean hands."

This work is a brutally revealing. Frequently, there is no narration, just camera work of arrests, clashes between Israelis and protestors, and commotion at checkpoints. While viewers should be prepared for vulgarity and violence, this film should be applauded as a courageous, defiant, and grossly edifying production.