

Key Terms and Concepts in the Film

Adapted from the Middle East Research and Information Project²

1948: Israeli Statehood

On May 15, 1948, after the end of World War II, Jewish forces proclaimed statehood, and Israel was recognized by the United Nations in 1949. Jewish people, many of whom immigrated to what was previously known as 'Palestine' to escape anti-Semitic persecution in Europe beginning in the 1860s, claimed the land was theirs by right of religion and tradition. The Arabic-speaking people, who had resided there under Ottoman and then British control, claimed the land as theirs by right of long-term residency, as well as by religion and tradition. Though some of the land was bought and traded legally to new Jewish residents, other portions of it were fought over violently, and thousands of Palestinian people were displaced by war and conflict. The exact number of people displaced, as opposed to those who left by choice, remains disputed.

1967: The Six Day War

Conflict between Israelis and the surrounding countries was a nearly constant threat after 1948. In 1967, Egypt's military amassed at Israel's southern border in the Sinai, acting on false Russian intelligence that Israel was mobilizing against Syria in the north. Israeli forces preemptively attacked Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, winning a decisive victory within six days. As a result, Israel annexed East Jerusalem, and claimed the city of Jerusalem as its capital. Jerusalem, also known as "the Old City", had previously been partitioned between Israel and Jordan. Israel also expanded its borders north into the Golan Heights, and south into Sinai, and to the West Bank of the Jordan river. In 1978, Israel signed a treaty with Egypt ceding back the Sinai peninsula. The 1967 annexation of East Jerusalem, and in particular the Old City section containing the Wailing Wall or Western Wall (one of the holiest sites in Judaism), was an important symbolic and spiritual victory for Israel.

Holocaust

During World-War II, the Third Reich of Germany, led by Adolph Hitler, committed a genocide killing six million European Jewish people, alongside six million others, including Romani, LGBTQ people, disabled people, Communists, labor union organizers, and others the regime deemed inferior and in opposition to their ideology. After 1945, with few options, many Jewish survivors fled ravaged Europe to what was then Palestine to start a

² Beinun, Joel and Lisa Hajjar, "Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Primer." (Washington, DC: Middle East Research and Information Project, 2014). Accessed July 1, 2020 from <https://merip.org/palestine-israel-primer/>

new life in what they perceived and hoped to be a safe haven for Jewish people.

Israeli

The term “Israeli” is used to describe people who are citizens of Israel and live inside the borders of Israel that were established during the 1967 war. As of 2020, about 75 percent of the Israeli population is Jewish and 20 percent identify as Palestinian (both Christian and Muslim). Other ethnic populations include Baha’i, Druze and Bedouin people.³

Mazpen

Mazpen is the radical socialist political group that Lea Tsemel joined as a college student. The party was active until the 1980s and was known as anti-Zionist, and it critiqued the Zionist movement that established the state of Israel as colonialist, oppressive to Palestinians, and backed by US interests.⁴

Moshe Dayan

In Clip 2, Lea Tsemel recalls children in East Jerusalem chanting for Moshe Dayan. He was a member of the Knesset (the Israeli governing body) and leader of the Israeli Defense Forces during and after the war in 1967. Later in his life, he founded a political party that advocated for Palestinian self-determination in the occupied territories, and was an architect of the Camp David Peace Accords of 1978 that created peace between Israel and Egypt.

The Occupation/Occupied Territories

At the 1948 establishment of the state of Israel, the territory of the Gaza Strip was controlled by Egypt, and the West Bank was part of Jordan. Israel occupied both territories during the 1967 war, establishing a military administration to govern the Palestinian people who lived there. In 1994, as part of the Oslo Peace Process, the Palestinian Authority was formed to govern both territories in anticipation of the West Bank and Gaza becoming an independent Palestinian state. Ongoing conflict, especially with regard to Jewish settlement of occupied territories, the right of Palestinian refugees to return, and over control of East Jerusalem, derailed the Oslo Peace plan. Today, those who still hope for an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel (what is known as the two-state solution), refer to the

³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Israel/People>

⁴ Silberstein, L. *The Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture*. Routledge, 2013. Accessed July 1, 2020 at <https://books.google.com/books?id=FSqOAAQBAJ&pg=PT74&lpg=PT74&dq=mazpen&source=bl&ots=glcHXlIXwh&sig=ACfU3U1eXNmvn1V37DO5agmdBSvbRga4qw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi0mvjs9qzqAhUaVc0KHeXiATQQ6AEwAnoECA8QAQ#v=onepage&q=mazpen&f=false>

Occupied Territories as “Palestine.” In 1995, Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip, which is currently governed by the Palestinian party Hamas. Hamas is not officially recognized by Israel or the United States because of their “terrorist” or “freedom fighting” use of violence against Israeli citizens.

Palestinian

The word “Palestinian” is commonly used to refer to Arabic speaking people who lived on the lands now known as Israel and the Occupied Territories prior to 1948. Palestinians are religiously and ethnically diverse. Those who remained within the 1948 borders of Israel are Israeli citizens who have the right to vote, but many perceive them to be second-class citizens because they receive fewer governmental resources. Many Palestinians who lived in East Jerusalem in 1967 refused the offer of Israeli citizenship. Most Palestinians who live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are not considered citizens of any nation.

Terrorist

“Terrorism” refers to violent acts against civilian populations. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is often used to refer to Palestinians who resist Israeli occupation through violent means. In the film, Lea Tsemel points out that others perceive those protesters to be “freedom fighters.”

Wailing Wall

In Clip 2, Lea Tsemel recalls being the first Israeli woman to reach the Wailing Wall in the Old City of East Jerusalem. The Wailing Wall is what remains of the Western Wall of the Second Jewish Temple, which housed the ancient Jewish priesthood in the time of Herod (70 BCE). It is among the holiest religious sites for Jewish people.

Zionism

A political movement founded in the late 19th century by Theodore Herzl, Zionism is a Jewish nationalist movement that believes in the establishment of a Jewish state in the locations referred to in the Bible in order to reunite the Jewish diaspora after hundreds of years of prosecution in Europe, Russia, and the Middle East.