

## TV and Film

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### Disturbing the Peace (Gabi)

Available on Netflix

This documentary offers a healthy dose of optimism. It traces the formation of Combatants for Peace, a grassroots organisation (and NIF grantee) founded on the belief that nonviolent, joint Israeli-Palestinian action is the only solution to a seemingly endless cycle of violence.

The group unites Israelis and Palestinians who have fought on either side of the conflict. Through personal interviews and group discussions, they tell their own stories, engage with other perspectives and co-organise peaceful but impactful actions. What is most powerful and uplifting is to see how the pain and anger which creates the enemy in one another also allows for common understanding and a shared desire for a better future.

The documentary doesn't focus on historical moments of conflict or recent political movements. Instead it explores the ways in which personal narratives can fundamentally shift, paving the way for new relationships and a transformed reality.

### Foxtrot (Tash)

<https://play.google.com/store/movies/details?id=J7ZQcCxowKI.P>

Watching this film was a very intense experience! Despite the sometimes excruciatingly slow pace, I couldn't help but trace every movement and my focus throughout was unbroken. The film depicts the grief of Michael and Dafna when they are told their son Jonathan, an IDF soldier, has died. There are many extended close-up tracking shots that force the audience into witnessing the parental anguish in a way that was both extremely uncomfortable and horribly fascinating. The father's emotions and inner turmoil are palpable and the film's absurdity and confusingly beautiful cinematography exacerbate this contrast. We witness Jonathan's unit at a remote checkpoint and the mundane normalised routine of their day-to-day interactions with occupation. Everything felt very cyclical, the pain and trauma of death and war carried from generation to generation, and the routinized way this is addressed felt sterile and detached.

### Transparent Season Four (Tash)

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Transparent-Season-4/dp/B0742NG21Z>

Transparent season four takes the LA-based Pfefferman family to Israel (Ally ventures to Palestine also) as Moira connects with her estranged father. The land influences them personally and collectively as realisations emerge and family secrets surface.

For me, the scene that standouts the most is the one in which Joshie shoots his very first gun and Shell reveals her trauma to the family. In the Israeli desert, the diaspora dwelling sex-obsessed Pfefferman family are triggered by a return to the land, finally break down and Shell's secret is ultimately revealed to the family. In the next episode, we see Joshie help Shell overcome her anxiety as he lowers her into the Dead Sea. The fractured mother-son relationship has begun to heal.

The show's creators parody and appropriate Zionist tropes throughout the series. They poke fun at the idea of Jewish masculinity reinvention through a return to Palestine while allowing the Holy Land to prompt and heal diaspora familial relationships.

While the bulk of the Pfefferman's embark on an a classic "Israel Tour", visiting Bedouin tents etc., Ally delves into Palestine, meeting activists and learning about the reality of occupation for Palestinians in the West Bank. She enters through a checkpoint and the show's viewers are given a glimpse of the claustrophobic, humiliating and unnecessary day-to-day reality of the occupation.

### **The Ancestral Sin (Tash)**

Not yet available in the UK outside film festivals. We'll put up a link when it is. In the meantime you can watch the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vA2q9yyLIX4>

The Ancestral Sin is a documentary that traces the policy surrounding Mizrahi immigration to Israel in the 1950s and the settlement of the immigrants into development towns, like Yerucham in the Negev.

David Deri interviews members of the first Yerucham residents, including his parents who came to Israel from Morocco, and also delves into achieves in a bid to understand why Mizrahi immigrants were settled in these towns, often against their wishes. The documentary reveals the discriminatory policy, full of orientalist perceptions of Mizrahi Jews, that would affect the Mizrahi population economically and socially for generations.

One of the most poignant scenes for me was the one in which Yerucham residents, overwhelmingly from the first settlement period, watched a film that explained the policy and revealed the language used by its implementers. The residents expressed hurt, anger and

disbelief and the betrayal they felt towards a state they love, support and helped to build was tangible.

### **Inside the Mossad (Zavi)**

Available on Netflix

Quite frankly, I found the first episode of this four part documentary terrifying. It looks at the Israeli secret service's reputation throughout the world as a powerful and ruthless force. Although I found the English speaking voices over the top of the original Hebrew words a little hard to distinguish from each other, it is a very well put together documentary, using a combination of interviews, footage, and photographs. Although not so closely connected to NIF's work, this documentary did raise important questions of the moral costs associated with Mossad's actions, and gave me some food for thought in terms of what is required by any country to keep its inhabitants secure.

### **The Gatekeepers (Anna)**

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Gatekeepers-Ami-Ayalon/dp/B00FZM1V4C/>

This 2012 documentary about the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security agency, remains as a relevant as ever. Since Israel took over the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, the Shin Bet's role has included those territories. In this documentary six former heads of the Shin Bet speak about their work there, in a way that is illuminating and fascinating. The documentary brought home to me that there is a strong security case, as well as a moral case, for ending the occupation.