

Occupation 101: Voices of the Silenced Majority (90 minutes) (2007)

Watch *Occupation 101*. A copy of the DVD is included in the Teaching Trunk.

Alternatively, you can watch it on youtube with your students:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_jvXnPG9Xc (full movie) www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rSd9HuPZYU (first of ten segments)

Warn students that they will see some shooting, beating, and blood; however, no one is killed on film.

Teacher warning: At about minute 44, the fundamentalist Christian community in America is linked to support for Israel. You may need to debrief this section with your students if some of them belong to this community.

This is a very visual film, covering most aspects of the conflict, and students should watch it carefully and not take notes unless they want to. You can either have them watch the entire film and discuss at the end, or you can do so by sections. Section notes and discussion questions are provided below.

Alternatively, this film could support other lessons. Look through the notes on each section to find what you need to provide visuals and commentary for other lessons. For instance, there is a section on Rachel Corrie which could be shown on its own. And there is a section on US support for Israel. Etc.

Watch *Occupation 101* with the following questions in mind. Be prepared to discuss them at the end:

1. The film says that any violence by a large number of people is a warning that something is wrong. How is this borne out in the film?
2. What is occupation?
3. What are settlements & what impact do settlers have on Palestinians?
4. How have Palestinians reacted to occupation?
5. What is the root cause of the violence in Israel/Palestine?
6. What is the main myth about the conflict?
7. What is the American role in the occupation?
8. What can or should we do about the occupation?
9. Challenge: select three persons from the film; identify and evaluate the point of view of each, their reasoning, use of evidence, and rhetoric.

Teacher Notes and Discussion Questions on Each Film Section

Introduction to Occupation and Settlements

Minute 1-16 occupation, settlements

Discussion: What have you heard about the conflict prior to this class? What seems to be the problem in Israel/Palestine according to this film? Does this differ from anything you have heard before?

Zionism/Early History

Minute 16- 26: root cause of the violence, myth of eternal conflict, Zionism by European Jews, Palestinians already there, population changes, immigration, Balfour and McMahon agreements, British complicity, first clashes, effects of Nazi Holocaust in Europe, UN Partition Plan, superior Zionist military preparation, systematic expulsion of Palestinians, Deir Yassin, flight, Arab armies intervene after May 15, more Israeli soldiers than Arab soldiers, truce, refugees, 400/500 villages erased, UN affirms right to return of refugees v. Law of Return for Jews.

Discussion: Why did some European Jews (Zionists) want to establish a country in Palestine? How did the Palestinians feel about this? What happened?

1967 Occupation & Failure of “Peace Process”

Minute 26- 36 : 1967 war: tensions, more refugees (1/2 were 1948 refugees), Palestinians (Pal.) lived as second class citizens, occupied, UN & Arab countries champion them verbally but take no actions, 1st Intifada = Uprising, break the bones strategy, detention, torture, 1993 “peace process”, Pal. lives deteriorating in health, jobs; settlements expand, Palestinian Authority (PA) governed with no power over shrinking areas of land with permission by Israeli authority, not liberated but surrounded by an army, Palestinian officials hide the truth/police Palestinians/waste money, Hamas wins election in 2006, more demolitions, more settlements.

Discussion: What happened in 1967 (this would be a good time to refer to a map and clarify what is Israel and what is the Occupied Territories of West Bank & Gaza)? What was the Intifada? What was wrong with the “peace process”? What kind of power does the PA actually have? Why was Hamas democratically elected?

Settlements

Minute 37- 41: Take land, bypass roads are Israeli-only, Pal. day to day life very difficult, settler violence, attacks on nonviolent international observers, laws applied leniently to settlers, push Palestinians to leave country, ideological/religious settlers & majority economic settlers, government-subsidized housing.

Discussion: What are the two kinds of settlers? What impact do settlers and settlement building have on Palestinians?

Apartheid & US Support

Minute 41- 52: similar to S. African apartheid, Nelson Mandela, US is sole supporter of Israel, Congress does not debate Mid East policy with regard to Israel, AIPAC lobby, fundamentalist Christian community, American media omits information to manipulate news, all leads to bias and lack of free speech, US Aid to Israel -- the numbers, Israel

violates international law/Geneva Conventions & Security Council Resolutions, US funds Israel disproportionately, US wants to control oil-producing region.

Discussion: What are the factors that lead the US to support Israel?

Israel's Disproportionate Power & Palestinian Uprising & Economic Difficulties

Minute 52 - 1:04: why Pal. rejected an offer of about 50% of the Occupied Territories, lack of control or power, Sept. 2000 Second Intifada/Uprising, resistance to occupation, excessive Israeli force, shootings, rubber-coated metal bullets, suicide bombings, shootings at settler cars, context of brutal Israeli occupation, Israeli 5th largest nuclear power in the world, a regional superpower, not equal forces, most victims are unarmed Palestinian civilians, checkpoints, unemployment, poverty, educational closures, college students fear shootings and tanks in going to school, medical issues, lack of freedom of movement

Discussion: Why did Palestinians rise up a second time? What other impacts of occupation are there besides not being citizens of anywhere? What challenges do Palestinian schoolchildren face that are different from your own challenges? Why do some people say that Israel uses disproportionate force on Palestinians?

Gaza -- settler withdrawal but still occupied

Minute 1:04 -- 1:11: refugees, Gaza problems, 1.3 mil. Palestinians and 8000 Israeli settlers, settlers relocated and paid, Israel retains control of water, borders, electricity, airspace, over 4 mill. refugees in camps today throughout region, neighborhood demolitions, military attacks on civilian neighborhoods, traumatized children, Palestinians want international observers but Israel refuses.

Discussion: What are the problems that people in Gaza face?

International Solidarity Movement & Rachel Corrie

Minute 1:11 --1:16: International Solidarity Movement (ISM) of Palestinian/Israeli/ international human rights activists provide nonviolent international presence, Rachel Corrie - American ISMer killed by US-made Caterpillar bulldozer driven by Israeli soldier as she tried to protect a doctor's home from house demolition, footage of Rachel talking in 5th grade & interview with her parents.

Discussion: What is the ISM trying to do? What do you think of Rachel's ideas and actions? What are causes that you would work hard for?

The Wall & 2- State Problem & Resistance to Occupation

Minute 1:16 -- 1:26: The Separation Wall & its impacts, for settlement not security, problems with 2-state solution, will it be 2 prisons for Palestinians plus Israel?, Israelis who are anti-occupation, occupation causes terrorism, Rabbis for Human Rights, Yesh Gvul (Israeli soldiers who won't serve in occupied territories), resistance to violence is legitimate, debate on whether to use violence to resist, criticizing Israel is not anti-semitic, links to American War of Independence resisting British occupation, Israeli peace activists, .. during the credits, there are concluding ideas from the major speakers about what Americans can or should do to end the occupation.

Discussion: What is the problem with the Wall? How do some Israelis work to end the occupation? What do you think of Palestinian (violent/nonviolent) resistance to

occupation and what do you think of American colonial resistance to British rule?
What can or should Americans do about the occupation?

Extensions

1. Research one of these other instances of mass movements shown in the opening moments of the film:

- Irish struggles against British occupation/colonization
- Algerian struggle against French occupation/colonization
- Indian struggle against British occupation/colonization
- American Civil Rights Movement for equal rights for African-Americans/Blacks
- South African struggle against White rule/Apartheid

2. Research an aspect of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict mentioned in this film.

Note to Teachers

If students want to hear the Israeli government perspective on the occupation, please refer to the Causes of Conflict CBA which offers opposing viewpoints on all the major aspects of the occupation.