

DVD seeks to answer question: Does Anti-Semitism still exist?

Written by DVD Review by Kam Williams



Defamation
(Hashmatsa)

Being a Jew raised in Israel, Yoav Shamir had never personally experienced any anti-Semitism. Although his people were decimated by Hitler during the Holocaust, he nonetheless wondered whether the allegations he often heard of the persistence of discrimination against his people were even warranted.

The upshot of his inquiry is *Defamation*, as controversial and as thought-provoking a piece of investigative journalism on the subject as you're ever likely to find. For Mr. Shamir masks his true motivations with an innocuous, nebbishy persona, in order to ingratiate himself with his subjects, mostly fellow Jews, who have no idea he is very suspicious of their claims of mistreatment on account of their religion.

For example, Abe Forman, Chairman of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), cooperated with the project, ostensibly giving the agent provocateur full access to the organization's NYC headquarters. Little did honest Abe or his employees know that they would be accused of flaring up as much anti-Semitism as they eradicate.

Shamir also talked to Israeli teens who are uniformly presented as totally paranoid. One says, "Everybody knows that Jews are hated. We were raised that way." Another asserts, "What makes us special is that no one can stand us. But we are proud of it." Then, there's the girl on a high school outing to Auschwitz, who comes off as callous when she says she feels nothing while standing at the spot where more Jews are buried than anyplace on Earth.

Director Shamir undoubtedly gets some of his chutzpah from his shrewish mother, a shrill character who never minces her words while shouting some ugly stereotypes such as "Jews are

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crooks!” and “Jews love money!” She tries to rationalize her self-hatred with, “I am the real Jew! Money does not blind me” and by explaining that good Jews return to Israel rather than live elsewhere and wait for another Hitler instead of the Messiah.

Her chip off the old block son succinctly summarizes, “I think putting so much emphasis on the past, as horrific as it has been, is holding us back. Maybe it is time to live in the present and look to the future.” An incendiary documentary likely to generate quite spirited conversations about whether Jews remain victims of ongoing persecution or if right-wing Zionists are simply circulating rumors in order to leverage sympathy for the nation of Israel.

Borat hunts for neo-Nazis!

Excellent (4 stars)

Unrated

In English and Hebrew with subtitles.

Running time: 91 minutes

Studio: First Run Features

DVD Extras: Filmmaker statement and biography.

To order a copy of *Defamation* on DVD, visit:

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0037BBKOY?ie=UTF8&tag=thslfofire-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0037BBKOY>

To see a trailer for *Defamation*, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5jsiLWXGYQ>