

Salt of This Sea

From beginning to end, the film "Salt of this Sea" (2008) promotes standard anti-Israel propaganda. Reviewers from NPR to the *New York Times* criticized the film as "an op ed that walks,"¹ filled with "polemic"² and "slogans,"³ and described the heroine as "little more than a mouthpiece for history lessons on the injustices perpetrated on the Palestinian people."⁴

The film falsifies facts to portray Israel as racist.

- It suggests Arabs are legally barred from buying land in Israel. In reality, 93% of Israeli land is owned by the state and no one can buy it. However, any Israeli citizen can lease it, regardless of their identity.
- One character says the Israeli police arrest Palestinians simply for being Palestinian, in reference to situations where people are detained for entering Israel illegally.

The film dehumanizes Israeli Jews and paints a distorted picture of Israeli society.

- Almost every Jew on screen is a soldier, police officer, or guard who harasses, humiliates, and discriminates against Palestinians. The only two friendly Jews are unwilling to accept, or are ignorant of, the main character's extremist interpretation of history and Palestinian rights. The message is that most Israelis are brutal and racist, and the rest are clueless.
- The film intentionally ignores or distorts the fact that Arab citizens of Israel have equal rights under the law and that Arabs and Jews live and work together in many communities across the country. While there is racism and discrimination in Israeli society like in all liberal democracies, that is far from the whole story.

The film distorts history.

- There are frequent references to Palestinians being "robbed" of their land in 1948. Palestinians are portrayed as a friendly, harmless, downtrodden people who have suffered from arbitrary Israeli aggression, racism, and the corruption of Israeli puppets in the Palestinian Authority.
- There is no mention of five Arab states invading the newly declared state of Israel in 1948, with the intention of ethnically cleansing the Jews and taking their property. Subsequent violence by Arab and Palestinian forces is ignored as well. This aggression against Israel had tragic consequences for Palestinians and Israelis alike, including hundreds of thousands of people from both communities becoming refugees.
- Israeli Jews are portrayed as complete foreigners, ignoring the continuous, 3000 year old Jewish connection to the land of Israel, the millions of Jews who came to Israel from across the Middle East, and the generations of Israeli Jews who were born in Israel and have no other home.

The film strips away all context for Israeli policies.

- Checkpoints and other Israeli security measures are presented as arbitrary and racist, ignoring the brutal attacks by Palestinian terrorist groups which led directly to such policies.

The film ignores or harshly criticizes the idea of Palestinians making peace with Israel.

- The message is that the only way for West Bank Palestinians to live in dignity and freedom is to emigrate, pretend to be Jewish, or break the law.

- The main character implies that Palestinians should be able to decide whether Israeli Jews can continue living in Israel or not.
- The film ignores Israel's repeated efforts to make territorial compromises that would lead to peace—in 1937, 1947, 1968, 2000, and 2008.
- The film essentially discredits a proposed two-state solution that would allow both the Jewish and Palestinian people to have self-determination.

¹ James Rocchi, "Cannes Review: Salt of This Sea," *Moviefone Blog*, May 21, 2008 at <http://blog.moviefone.com/2008/05/21/cannes-review-salt-of-this-sea/>

² Ian Buckwalter, "Movie Review: In 'This Sea,' Salt Of Conflict Is Strong On The Tongue," *NPR*, Aug. 12, 2010 at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129082782>

³ James Rocchi, "Cannes Review: Salt of This Sea," *Moviefone Blog*, May 21, 2008 at <http://blog.moviefone.com/2008/05/21/cannes-review-salt-of-this-sea/>

⁴ Ian Buckwalter, "Movie Review: In 'This Sea,' Salt Of Conflict Is Strong On The Tongue," *NPR*, Aug. 12, 2010 at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129082782>