

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

what you'll find inside!

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Bullfrog Community Screening & Discussion Guide

Roll out the red carpet! Use your film screening of BETWEEN TWO WORLDS as a tool to build community. Spark discussion and action to address about Jewish American identity and politics. This guide offers some background information plus helpful tips and discussion questions for a stirring, informative, and rewarding screening. **Good Luck!**

For additional resources, visit betweentwoworlds.bullfrogcommunities.com/btwo_resources

About BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Who speaks for a divided community at the crossroads? BETWEEN TWO WORLDS is a groundbreaking personal exploration of the community and family divisions that are redefining American Jewish identity and politics. The filmmakers' own families are battlegrounds over loyalty to Israel, interpretations of the Holocaust, intermarriage and conversion, liberal and leftwing politics, and a secret communist past. The film aims to reframe the terms of debate and provide a vehicle for open conversations about difficult issues.



About the Directors

Directors Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman are award-winning documentary filmmakers whose works include "Blacks and Jews," "Secrets of Silicon Valley," and "Thirst." Their films have been featured at the Sundance, Jerusalem, and many Jewish film festivals, and aired on public television's acclaimed "P.O.V." and "Independent Lens" series. Their films have been used by activists and opinion leaders around the world and have been translated into over fifteen languages and broadcast internationally.

ready to watch!

Here are some ideas and best practices to help make your community screening of **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS** a success!

- 1. Publicize Your Event!** This is the most important step. Not only can you tell the world about your screening, but you can also let the Bullfrog Community team know about your plans so we can help you publicize your event. Visit betweentwoworlds.bullfrogcommunities.com/btwo_screenings to register your screening of **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**.
- 2. Visualize Your Goal!** What do you hope to achieve with your screening of **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**? Your goal could be to generate a lively post-film discussion with your audience about our criminal justice system, political protest, and threats to civil liberties. Or, you can simply provide an opportunity for families to watch and learn together.
- 3. Where To Host?** Consider which locations in your area would be ideal for accommodating a community film screening of the size you anticipate: churches, town halls, private homes and even high schools have been venues for many successful community screenings.
- 4. Find A Partner!** Give some thought to who is already working on this issue in your community. Can they help sponsor the event? Spread the word? Speak on a panel discussion after the screening? Some potential partners include: academic departments at colleges, universities, and high schools, faith-based organizations and institutions, and organizations concerned with threats to civil liberties. Links to some of these organizations are available at betweentwoworlds.bullfrogcommunities.com/btwo_resources.
- 5. Invite A Guest Speaker!** Guest speakers and panels are a great way to encourage discussion and debate after a community screening. When people are engaged and thinking about the issues they will stay engaged long after the screening has passed. Contact local non-profit representatives, teachers, professionals, or government officials who have expertise or insight into the issues raised by the film, and invite them to attend and participate in a discussion or Q&A session. The filmmakers are available to appear in person or via Skype for a Q&A. [Contact Bullfrog Communities](#) if you are interested.
- 6. Engage Your Audience!** Included in this handout is a section called Ready to Act! which is meant to be a hand-out at your screening. It will help your audience know what they can do to educate themselves about key issues brought up in the film.
- 7. Spread The Word!** Think about the best methods available to you for publicizing the film screening to people in your community. Sending emails, creating event notifications on Facebook or Meetup, using Twitter, and placing screening announcements in local newspapers and newsletters is a good start. Find the **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS** screening poster, discussion guide (includes handout), and press photos on betweentwoworlds.bullfrogcommunities.com/btwo_resources to help publicize your event around town.
- 8. Tell Us How It Went!** Visit betweentwoworlds.bullfrogcommunities.com/btwo_discussion to tell us about your event. Where it was held? Who attended? What went well, and what was challenging? Your feedback will help others in organizing their own successful events and will energize the Bullfrog Economic Justice Community as a whole.

ready to talk!

Here are some questions that will help get people talking about the issues after watching BETWEEN TWO WORLDS!

Section 1 – Controversy at the Jewish Film Festival -- DVD Chapters 1- 4

1. Protestors outside the San Francisco Film Festival called the screening of “Rachel” anti-Israel and anti-Semitic and some thought the Festival shouldn’t screen it. The filmmaker asks one of the protestors, “Who defines what is anti-Israel? Who decides what is anti-Semitic?” What is the difference? How would you answer her questions?
2. What is permissible for Jews to say in public about Israel? Do non-Jews have the right to speak critically about Israel? What is your experience?
3. When a community is divided on important issues, who has authority and who is entitled to speak for the community? What examples come to mind from other religious and ethnic groups?
4. Why is it important to be able to talk publicly about debates and disagreements inside an ethnic community? What are the dangers of doing so? Where do the ideas of democracy and transparency come into play?

Section 2 – Identity and Continuity -- DVD Chapters 5 - 6

5. The filmmaker asks, “Who gets to decide what being Jewish is, and isn’t?” Jews regularly argue about the definition of a Jew. Do you have an idea of what being Jewish means? How is it changing in the 21st Century?
6. “I had a dearly beloved professor say to my class of young rabbinical students that we should all go out and have babies, have at least 3, and do it sooner than later,” relates Rabbi Dorothy Richman of Berkeley Hillel. How did you react? Do you believe that US Jews are assimilating so rapidly they are in danger of disappearing? How can minorities maintain their identity in a mass consumer culture?
7. What is to be gained – and what is in danger of being lost - by opening the doors of group identity to outside influences like modernity, hybridity, intermarriage, and feminism?
8. Birthright Israel sends thousands of young Jewish adults to Israel to strengthen their Jewish identity. The film implies that Birthright came about as a tool to stem the tide of assimilation and intermarriage. How do you feel about the following statements? “Whoever you marry should be Jewish” and “It’s your duty to raise your children Jewish.”

Section 3 – The Memory of the Holocaust -- DVD Chapters 7 - 9

9. How much do you think the memory of the Holocaust contributes to individual Jewish identity today?
10. People coming from all points of view regularly invoke the Holocaust to support their views, but scholars say the Holocaust was unique in history. Does this strike you as a contradiction? Do you see the Holocaust or other instances of victimization being used politically by different groups or individuals?
11. Rabbi Irwin Kula of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership states, “The most dangerous things about holocausts... is that you are going to look at others as if they are an enemy” How does past victimization shape a group’s consciousness? How does it shape their ability to take risks for values other than survival?

12. Gershon Baskin of the Israel-Palestine Center for Research says that building of the Museum of Tolerance on a Muslim Cemetery “destroys all hope that Jerusalem can ever be a city of peace.” The Museum of Tolerance’s website states, “If cities were not allowed to be built on the relics of previous civilizations, there would be no modern-day Rome, Jerusalem, or Cairo” How do you react to these claims? Should the building continue?

Section 4 – Jews and the Left--Hidden History and Impact Today -- DVD Chapters 10 - 13

13. The narrator in the film asks if we are traitors to the tribe by emphasizing universal values of equality, rights of the poor, and freedom for the oppressed rather than the particularist values of security and success for our own group? What is your answer?

14. Do you think the purge of communists in the McCarthy era is the same as the censorship that goes on today against people with controversial views? What is the same? What is different?

15. What happens when our idealistic faith in a political idea, candidate, or party turns out to be misguided, even disastrous? Have you ever experienced disillusionment?

16. Does every movement for change produce its own extremists? What can be done to prevent that? Are you seeing that trend today?

17. Do you have black sheep in your family? Are there hidden stories that people in your family tend to avoid talking about?

Section 5 – American Jews and Israel -- DVD Chapters 14 - 16

18. This segment shows three models of activism: The New Israel Fund is a philanthropy that supports social activists and human rights in Israel. J Street is a political lobby group pressing the American government to work for a two-state solution. Jewish Voice for Peace is a grass-roots group supporting nonviolent direct action against Israel’s occupation. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?

19. What is the role of the university in fostering inquiry and debate? Does discomfort undermine the learning experience or is it part of the learning process? When does being challenged in debate cross a line into intimidation and bullying?

Conclusion -- DVD Chapter 17

20. What personal family stories can you tell that demonstrate that Jewish or tribal connections evolve over time and as people grow and change?

21. What might be different if another BETWEEN TWO WORLDS was made in 10 years? What might have changed if the documentary had been made 10 years ago?

ready to learn!

Interested in learning more about the issues raised in **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS?** The filmmakers recommend the following articles for your consideration:

Section 1 – What is legitimate speech? Who has the right to speak?

1. Read up on Gershom Gorenberg’s take on the issue

Gershom Gorenberg is an American-born Israeli historian and journalist specializing in Middle Eastern politics and the interaction of religion and politics. For an example of his thought-provoking writing, take a look at his “Why Are They So Angry” article in The American Prospect at <http://prospect.org/article/why-are-they-so-angry>

2. An Op-Ed by one of the filmmakers on the power of film and threats of censorship

Read more about “Filmmakers, Festivals under attack” in SFGate at:
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/08/23/INAQI9AH9I.DTL>

3. Ancient Judaism and the Tea Party’s all or nothing tactics

Shmarya Rosenberg writes how “Strident Splits in Early Judaism Only Led to Extremism and Strife” in The Jewish Daily Forward at <http://www.forward.com/articles/142712/#ixzz1bH1RSM42>

Section 2 – Identity, Continuity, Intermarriage and Birthright

1. The Myth of Authenticity has got to go

Jay Michaelson writes a moving argument for broader inclusion in the Jewish community in The Jewish Daily Forward at <http://www.forward.com/articles/121663/>

2. When you’re with Taglit, this is just how you roll: in a Birthright bubble

Nathan Ehrlich’s experience with Taglit-Birthright Israel in ZEEK: A Jewish Journal of thought and Culture at <http://zeek.forward.com/articles/117418/>

Section 3 – The Memory of the Holocaust

1. A Passover Reflection

Rabbi Irwin Kula comments on how victims can become victimizers in Spirit and Story, an online publication by CLAL- The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. <http://www.clal.org/ss35.html>

2. Archaeologists Worldwide Urge Halt to “Museum of Tolerance”

Leading Archaeologists appeal to Simon Wiesenthal Center Board, Mayor of Jerusalem, and Head of Israeli Antiquities Au-

-thority to stop the destruction of The Mamilla Cemetary (article from Common Dreams)
<http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2011/10/20-2>

3. Special Report on the building of the Museum of Tolerance

Haaretz.com publishes a series of articles on the controversy surrounding the building of the museum on top of a cemetery in Jerusalem at <http://www.haaretz.com/meta/Tag/Museum%20of%20Tolerance%20special%20report>

Section 4 – The Hidden History of the American Left, and its Impact Today

1. Dreamers and Fighters: The New York City Teacher Purges

This documentary project explores the impact of McCarthyism on leftwing New York City teachers who were blacklisted by New York's Board of Education. Ultimately some 1,100 teachers were investigated, and more than 400 were forced out of their jobs as unfit to teach the city's children. <http://dreamersandfighters.com/>

2. New Republic Literary Editor Leon Wieseltier reviews neo-conservative Norman Podhoretz book **Why Are Jews Liberal?**

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/books/review/Wieseltier-t.html?sq=leon%20wieseltier%20Podhoretz&st=cse&scp=1&pagewanted=all>

3. The history of Jews in the Left, including the American Communist Party, is told in many excellent history books covering different periods:

- General: Michael Kazin- [American Dreamers: How the Left Changed a Nation](#)
- 19th to early 20th century migrations: Yuri Slezkine - [The Jewish Century](#)
- Early 20th c.entury: Tony Michaels - [A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York](#)
- Depression to 1950s: Clarence Taylor - [Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union](#)
- World War Two: Maurice Isserman - [Which Side Were You On?: The American Communist Party During the Second World War](#)
- 1960's through 1980's: Michael Staub - [Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America](#)

Section 5 – American Jews and Israel

1. The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment

Peter Beinart gives a penetrating criticism of why young Jews are alienated from Zionism from the New York Review of Books at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/jun/10/failure-american-jewish-establishment/>

2. Standing up and Speaking Out

Rabbi John Rosove writes “Why I Declined to be on the Host Committee for American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Los Angeles” on his blog at :

<http://rabbijohnrosove.wordpress.com/2011/11/18/why-i-declined-to-be-on-the-host-committee-for-aipac-in-los-angeles/>

3. Peoplehood Vs Israel: The Split at the Heart of Jewish Identity

Jay Michaelson writes on two different, valid and competing values: inclusion on the one hand, support for Israel on the other in The Jewish Daily Forward at <http://www.forward.com/articles/129089/>

4. Why Jewish-American liberals should not give up on Israel

Gershom Gorenberg: Letter from Jerusalem: To a Progressive American Jewish Friend

<http://www.hadassahmagazine.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=twl6LmN7IzF&b=6725377&ct=11520059¬oc=1>