

The Promised Land

Director: Avi Hemi
Producer: Idan Regev

Cinema Israel

"We see Israel as Jacob Blaustein, the former director of the American Jewish Committee, who once debated the first Israeli president, David Ben Gurion, about the relationship between Jews in Israel and Jews in America, once did: as a Jewish home, rather than the Jewish home."
Caryn Aviv and David Schneer, from New Jews



מסרתי

Avrum Burg is former Speaker of the Knesset, and former Head of the Jewish Agency. Ari Shavit is a leading columnist in Haaretz newspaper.

Avrum Burg: The Jew is the first postmodernist, the Jew is the first globalist.

Ari Shavit: You really are a globalist now... You have taken a French passport, and as a French citizen you voted in the French presidential elections.

AB: I have already declared: I am a citizen of the world. This is my hierarchy of identities: citizen of the world, afterward Jew and only after that Israeli. I feel a weighty responsibility for the peace of the world. And Sarkozy is in my eyes a threat to world peace. That is why I went to vote against him.

AR: Are you French?

AB: In many senses I am European. And from my point of view, Israel is part of Europe.

AR: But it isn't. Not yet. And you are an Israeli public figure who is taking part in the French presidential elections as a Frenchman. That is a far-reaching act. A pre-Zionist Jewish act. Something that neither an Englishman or a Dutchman would do.

AB: True. It is completely Jewish. I am moving forward to the Jewish condition.

AR: Do you recommend that every Israeli take out a foreign passport?

AB: Whoever can.

AR: But in this, in this too, you are dismantling the Israeli mutual surety. You are playing with your multiple passports and your multiple identities, which is a course not available to many others. You are dismantling something very basic.

AB: Those are your fears, Ari. I suggest that you not be afraid... I propose that we stop being afraid.

...Who is more "Jewish": those who long for exilic-spiritual survival, or those who long for political-physical survival? Who is right: those who want a foreign passport, or those who for whom an Israeli passport constitutes the basis of their Jewish identity?

Two thousand years of exile, filled with marvelous Jewish creativity, tempt us toward the spiritual pole of Judaism. What are 60 years of political sovereignty, rife with difficulties and disappointments, when compared to the profundity and the eternal nature of the Jewish bookshelf? What is the value of barren hills on the shores of the Mediterranean when compared to the global Jewish mission of tikkun olam? ...On the other hand, the astonishing success of the Zionist revolution in straightening the bent Jewish back into an independent nation that is responsible for its own destiny tempts us to see sovereign independence as the quintessential Jewish creation of the modern era.

Both of these dichotomous possibilities are fundamentally flawed... **Earthly existence without spiritual content has little significance. Spiritual content without earthly existence has little actuality.**

By Avi Sagi and Yedidia Stern - from their article in Haaretz newspaper in response to the Burg/Shavit dialogue.



Do you share the narrator's frustration and incomprehension?



"The dead, like history itself, don't belong only to the past" To what extent does our collective memory strengthen, obligate, or limit us?



is Israel's role in the world only to serve as a safe haven? While the Israelis in the film may see a European passport as their escape route, do you see Israel as yours?



Is your own passport nothing more than a piece of paper, or does it symbolize more?

