

# Delve Deeper into A World Not Ours

A film by **Mahdi Fleifel**

**This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Brandy Sanchez of Daniel Boone Regional Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *A World Not Ours*.**

***A World Not Ours* is a passionate, bittersweet account of one family's multi-generational experience living as permanent refugees. Now a Danish resident, director Mahdi Fleifel grew up in the Ain el-Helweh refugee camp in southern Lebanon, established in 1948 as a temporary refuge for exiled Palestinians. Today, the camp houses 70,000 people and is the hometown of generations of Palestinians. The filmmaker's childhood memories are surprisingly warm and humorous, a testament to the resilience of the community. Yet his yearly visits reveal the increasing desperation of family and friends who remain trapped in psychological as well as political limbo.**

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## ADULT NONFICTION

**Adwan, Sami. *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine*. New York, NY: New Press, 2012.** Struck by how different the standard Israeli and Palestinian textbook histories of the same events were from one another, a group of Palestinian and Israeli teachers began to explore how to "disarm" the teaching of the history of the Middle East in Israeli and Palestinian classrooms. The result is a riveting "dual narrative" of Israeli and Palestinian history.

**Drummond, Dorothy Weitz. *Holy Land, Whose Land? Modern Dilemma, Ancient Roots*. Terre Haute, IN: Fairhurst Press, 2004.** Islam, Judaism, and Christianity all trace their sacred roots to the Middle East. Drummond examines the history and influence that faith has had on this region and how it continues

to impact international politics thousands of years later.

**Holliday, Laurel. *Children of Israel, Children of Palestine: Our Own True Stories*. New York: Pocket Books, 1998.** In this title, Holliday compiles the coming-of-age stories of thirty-six Israelis and Palestinians who grew up in an environment of war and violence. Bringing a human element to this ever-present conflict, this book reveals the effects of this war on the individual.

**Laquer, Walter and Rubin, Barry. *The Israel-Arab History of the Middle East Conflict*. New York: Facts on File, 2008.** Hailed as an objective history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this book provides a detailed and up-to-date portrait of the past century of strife in the Middle East.

**Marlowe, Jennifer and Sami al-Jundi. *In The Hour of Sunlight: One Palestinian's Journey From Prisoner to Peacemaker*. New York: Nation Books, 2011.** Marked by honesty and compassion for Palestinians and Israelis alike, *The Hour of Sunlight* illuminates the Palestinian experience through the story of one man's struggle for peace.

**Morris, Benny. *One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.** As a historian, Morris provides an in-depth study into the Palestinian national movement and the Zionist movement. He then samples from each of these political camps to propose how compromise could be reached to either create one single state, or two separate states. The book also discusses the current setbacks in achieving peace in this region.

**Morris, Benny. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.** Morris' earlier work exposed the realities of how

700,000 Palestinians became refugees during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. While the focus of this edition remains the war and exodus, new archival material considers what happened in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa, and how these events led to the collapse of urban Palestine. Revealing battles and atrocities that contributed to the disintegration of rural communities, the story is harrowing. The refugees now number four million and their cause remains a major obstacle to regional peace.

**Tolan, Sandy. *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishers, 2006.** This true story of an unlikely friendship between an Israeli and a Palestinian began in 1967 when Bashir Al-Khayri, a Palestinian, journeys to Israel in hopes of seeing the house from which his family had fled nineteen years earlier and the beloved lemon tree that grew behind it. Upon his arrival, he meets Dalia Ashkenazi Landau, the house's current resident. In this book, Tolan provides a history of the conflict alongside the history of this unique friendship.

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## ADULT FICTION

**Goldscheider, Barbara. *Al-Naqba (The Catastrophe)*. Berkeley, CA: Frog, Ltd, 2005.** *Al-Naqba, The Catastrophe*, relays the stories of two Middle Eastern natives who are on opposite sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one an elite Palestinian Arab and the other an officer of the Israeli Defense Forces. Based on Goldscheider's own experiences and observations, this novel realistically reflects the real-life conflict that serves as a backdrop to her fictional characters.

**Khalifeh, Sahar. *The End of Spring*. Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2008.** In 2002, there was a long,



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unsettling siege on Yassar Arafat's compound. Khalifeh writes from the perspective of the Palestinian resistance fighters charged with protecting his headquarters. She delves into their inner dialogue to give depth to each characters' personal struggle.

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### NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Barakat, Ibtisam. *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.** In this moving memoir, Barakat relays the memories of her childhood as a Palestinian refugee during the time of the Six-Day War. *Tasting the Sky* goes beyond the bare facts by providing a rare look of the Middle Eastern conflict through a child's eyes.

**Ellis, Deborah. *Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak*. Toronto: Greenwood Books, 2004.** In *Three Wishes*, we hear the stories of children caught on either side of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in their own words. Passages range from the predictable childhood complaints about vegetables to their jarring experiences witnessing violence and destruction. *Three Wishes* not only puts a human face on the Middle Eastern conflict, it also makes learning about the conflict more accessible to young readers all over the world.

**Marx, Trish. *Sharing Our Homeland: Palestinian and Jewish Children at Summer Peace Camp*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2010.** This accessible photo essay shares the story Israeli and Palestinian children coming to experience the fun and joy of summer camp. Marx frequently segues into the history of turmoil in this region of the world, providing young readers with a context for the continuing conflict.

**Sha'ban, Mervet Akram, Fink, Galit and Boudalika, Litsa. *If You Could Be My***

***Friend: Letters of Mervet Akram Sha'ban and Galit Fink*. New York: Orchard Books, 1998.** When 12 year-olds Mervet, a Palestinian, and Galit, an Israeli, begin corresponding, they are initially enthusiastic about sharing their interests and becoming friends. However, when political developments bring to light the differences between their families, it seems as though their friendship is not meant to be.

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### FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Rattah-Abdel, Randa. *Where the Street had a Name*. New York: Scholastic, 2010.** Thirteen-year-old Hayaat and her friend Samy set out from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to gather dirt from the homeland of Hayaat's dying grandmother. Throughout their journey, readers learn of the everyday heartache faced by all living in a society torn apart by violence.

**Sutcliffe, William. *The Wall*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Press, 2013.** *The Wall* is a novel about a boy who undertakes a short journey to another world, to a place where everything he knows about loyalty, identity and justice is turned upside down. It is also a political fable that powerfully evokes the realities of life on the West Bank, telling the story of a Settler child who finds there are two sides to every story.

**Zenatti, Valérie and Hunter, Adraina. *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2008.** When seventeen-year-old Tal Levine, a native of Jerusalem, witnesses a terrorist bombing, she is shaken to her core. She had always hoped that peace would come to the Middle East, but her hope begins to fade with this latest event. Moved to action, she pens a letter, puts it in a bottle, and throws it into the Gaza Sea. Much to her surprise, a Palestinian boy finds her letter and responds.

