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Photo by: (Courtesy of Gloria Greenfield)

Behind 'Unmasked,' there is hope

By HANNAH BROWN
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Director Greenfield sits with 'The Jerusalem Post' to discuss latest documentary examining the global political assault against Jews.

Gloria Z. Greenfield, the director of the film *Unmasked: Judeophobia*, a new documentary that was just shown in the recently concluded Jerusalem Jewish Film Festival at the Jerusalem Cinematheque – and will be screened again at the Jerusalem Cinematheque on February 16 – has no trouble finding a table even at the most crowded café at Mamilla Mall during holiday week.

That's no surprise: Documentary filmmakers have to be resourceful, especially ones who choose such controversial and difficult subjects as Greenfield. But as we sit down to talk, she uses her resourcefulness in another way, to try to illuminate a subject many Israelis find difficult to deal with for all kinds of reasons.

"I decided to examine the resurgence of anti-Semitism from a global perspective," she says, and to that end, she interviewed over 70 experts. The result of the interviews, some of which had to be cut, is a serious and sometimes terrifying analysis of how anti-Semitism, often masked as anti-Zionism (hence the title) has permeated modern life and discourse worldwide.

The line-up of interviewees in the final film is impressive. They include author and lawyer Alan Dershowitz, MK Natan Sharansky, author Robert Wistrich, Nobel Prize laureate Elie Wiesel, *Wall Street Journal* writer and former *Jerusalem Post* editor Bret Stephens, British Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Canadian MP Irwin Cotler, *Jerusalem Post* columnist Caroline Glick and many others.

Wiesel sets the tone for the film and outlines its subject in a clip from a recent speech in which he says, "Since 1945, I was not so afraid as I am now. I am afraid because anti-Semitism, which I had thought belonged to the past, has somehow survived. I was convinced in '45 that anti-Semitism had died with its Jewish victims at Auschwitz and Treblinka, but I see, no, the Jews perished, but anti-Semitism in some parts of the world is flourishing."

Says Greenfield: "The United States is a piece of cake compared to what's going on in Europe. ...In the US, it's largely happening on campus, and it's real... but in Europe it's much more pervasive in all walks of life.... Being in Europe was transformational for my analysis."

She notes several infamous and appalling incidents of violence against French Jews, or people who were perceived by their attackers as Jewish but turned out not to be.

"The kidnapping, torture and killing of Ilan Halimi [in a Paris apartment] in 2006 by a gang who called his

parents and read from the Koran while he was being tortured was horrific and really scared the Jewish community there,” she says. But, as she points out, this attack was “clearly motivated by anti-Semitism but had nothing to do with Israel.” While this case was extreme, Greenfield says that it’s part of a pattern of violence and hate against Jews.

IRWIN COTLER of the Canadian Parliament offered an analysis of this resurgence that Greenfield finds illuminating: “He said, ‘What we’re witnessing is an ascribing to Israel of the two great evils of the 20th century, Apartheid and Nazism.’”

“The world loves memorializing dead Jews, but Israel represents the vitality and life of the Jewish people,” she says. “So when Israel is demonized, Jews are demonized.”

While Greenfield has no problem with Israelis criticizing their own government – “That’s part of being a democracy” – she finds it troubling that “not enough Jews understand what’s going on... Some Jews side with people who don’t believe Israel has a right to exist.”

The film covers statements by the Iranian President Ahmadinejad saying that Israel must be wiped off the map, and reactions to his comments worldwide. On this issue, Greenfield cites a comment from the film by Alvin H. Rosenfeld, the director of the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism in Indiana, who says, “One of the lessons of the Holocaust is that we have to be literalists. When we hear somebody say, ‘Kill the Jews,’ we have to realize, they probably mean it.”

Asked about the Arab Spring and what that could hold, Greenfield is guarded.

“Let’s see what happens,” she says, but worries about recent arrests and beatings in Egypt of women demonstrators, as well as violence against women in other Arab countries. “Anti-Semitism often goes in hand-in-hand with other human rights abuses,” she says.

Greenfield came to filmmaking relatively late in life. She left a successful career in high-tech in the Boston area to work in a field “that was meaningful to me.” She went back for a Master’s Degree in Jewish Studies and began running adult education programs in the Jewish community and making short films. She then made a longer film, *The Case for Israel*. As she made it, she became more aware of a resurgence of anti-Semitism throughout the world, and that led to her decision to make *Unmasked*.

While the picture she paints is alarming, Greenfield emphasizes that all is not lost: “I hope my film inspires all decent people to garner the strength to face reality and acknowledge what’s happening. We won’t have the strength and conviction to fight unless we believe our cause is just.”



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