



Forever Pure Discussion Guide

Director: Maya Zinshtein

Year: 2016

Time: 85 min

You might know this director from:

FOREVER PURE is Maya Zinshtein's first feature-length documentary film.

FILM SUMMARY

Beitar Jerusalem Football Club's fans have long proudly emblazoned themselves in yellow and black, waved banners adorned with the menorah (the team's official logo), and are well known for chanting disturbing songs like "Here we are, the most racist football team in the country" and "Forever Pure." Their ethnocentric outrage began to escalate during the 2012-2013 season after the team's new owner, Russian-born businessman and convicted arms dealer Arcadi Gaydamak, brought two Chechen Muslim players, Zaur Sadayev and Djibrail Kadiyev, onto the team. At that time, Beitar was the only team in Israel's Premier League to never before play an Arab-Israeli. As the news broke, Israeli journalist Maya Zinshtein was tasked with a four-day assignment to cover the players' arrival, but quickly found herself shoulders deep in production on her first feature-length documentary project, the miraculous FOREVER PURE, which delves headlong into how a football team can be a vessel for both good and evil.

For Beitar's ultra right-wing fan base, known publicly as La Familia, the club is everything, but it must first stand as an ethnocentric Jewish institution. On the other hand, for Gaydamak, Beitar is just a vehicle for political influence. In 2005, the business mogul bought the team as a stepping stone for his future campaign to run as mayor of Jerusalem, as had been done successfully by others in the past. But as the likelihood of his political success began to flounder, he decided to use his power to expose a vile culture of racism in Jerusalem.

Making full use of the incredible access she had been granted by Beitar, Maya Zinshtein takes us behind the scenes, inside locker rooms, hotel rooms, and beyond in an effort to understand how this bigotry continues to exist in a sport that has long prided itself on international inclusion. Revealing itself to be a heart-wrenchingly modern sports tragedy, FOREVER PURE mixes shifty politics with unthinkable human hypocrisy to grave success.

FILM THEMES

With astonishing access, Maya Zinshtein's *FOREVER PURE* takes a clear-eyed look at the sickening culture of racism, ethnocentrism, and questionable political ambition that has long been the supportive backbone of Beitar Jerusalem F.C.

A TRADITION OF HATE

Since 2005, the far-left Beitar Jerusalem fan organization La Familia, which primarily consists of Mizrahi Jewish descendants of the Jewish exodus from Arab and Muslim countries, has occupied the eastern sections of the club's Teddy Stadium. The group is notorious for its disparaging chants insulting Arab players, such as "Death to the Arabs," "Muhammad is a homosexual," and "Here we are, the most racist football team in the country." The majority of the Beitar's current players grew up cheering on the team from the eastern section, unabashedly embracing La Familia's ethnocentric ideology.

INCLUSIVENESS OF SPORT TARNISHED BY RACISM

Last year the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) honored India's Slum Soccer with the inaugural FIFA Diversity Award recognizing the organization for their outstanding work in promoting diversity and anti-discrimination in and through football. Beitar Jerusalem displays an opposing standpoint from this award, bringing fan-fueled racism into a sport that is working toward inclusiveness and a forward-thinking vision.

A GLOBETROTTING CRIMINAL WITH POLITICAL AMBITION

Russian-born businessman Arcadi Gaydamak announced the purchase of 55% of the ownership of Beitar Jerusalem in August of 2005, and two days later he announced the acquisition of full ownership. In October 2009, Gaydamak and French magnate Pierre Falcone were convicted by a French court of organizing arms trafficking in Angola during the civil war in 1993-1998 in the amount of \$790 million. While he continued to live and work in Israel, he was sentenced to six years in prison. Meanwhile, Gaydamak used Beitar as a platform to run for mayor of Jerusalem in November 2008, though his party won no seats on the city council.

LA FAMILIA REMAINS FOREVER PURE

Arcadi Gaydamak brought the Chechen Muslim players, Zaur Sadayev and Djibrail Kadiyev, onto Beitar's lineup not to make the team more competitive, but to make a political statement about its fans' racism. In response, the Beitar fan group La Familia successfully organized a boycott of the club's remaining games that season. At the conclusion of the season, Sadayev and Kadiyev were let go; the team's tolerant goalkeeping captain Ariel Harush was replaced by midfielder Ofir Kriaf, who went against the club's management and publicly supported La Familia's tirades against hiring Arab players, winning him wide support from the team's right-wing fan base; and several key coaching staff members were fired.

"We are the most racist team in Israel."

La Familia

"As an immigrant myself, who came to Israel from Russia, the issue of being a stranger and being accepted in a new place has been part of my life for a long time."

Maya Zinshtein

FILM FACTS:

- After its world premiere on July 12, 2016 at the Jerusalem Film Festival, Maya Zinshtein's FOREVER PURE went on to screen at the Toronto International Film Festival, Zurich Film Festival, DOC NYC, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam, and more, before finally arriving in theaters in March of 2017 and online the following May.
- Maya Zinshtein is an Israeli filmmaker and journalist originally from Russia. When she took on a four-day assignment to cover the arrival of two foreign players to a local soccer club, she did not anticipate it would turn into the year-long feature film project that it became.
- Though FOREVER PURE began as a journalistic assignment, the project was truly the result of a successful [Kickstarter campaign](#). The campaign came to a close on December 22, 2015, successfully raising £21,316 (approximately \$28,558 USD) via 158 backers to cover the costs of editing the film, color correction, music and sound, and licensing archival material.
- Situated in Jerusalem, a city of three religions, Beitar was the only soccer club in the Israeli Premier League that had never signed an Arab player, until 2012-2013 when the club signed two Chechen Muslim players, Zaur Sadayev and Djibrail Kadiyev, enraging Beitar's right-wing fan base.
- During the 2012-2013 season, after Beitar's then-owner Arcadi Gaydamak brought Zaur Sadayev and Djibrail Kadiyev to the team, members of La Familia (a far-right, football supporters' group of Beitar Jerusalem, primarily consisting of Mizrahi Jewish descendents of the Jewish exodus from Arab and Muslim countries) burned down the team's clubhouse in Jerusalem, destroying the team's unreplaceable trophies and memorabilia in the process.
- Investigators had alleged that Gaydamak was one of the masterminds behind a network trafficking Soviet-made weapons to Angola during its civil war in the 1990s, but "A French appeals court...acquitted Russian-Israeli businessman Arcadi Gaydamak of most charges in the arms-trafficking case dubbed 'Angola-gate,'" [reported](#) Haaretz in May of 2011.
- In March of 2017, Beitar's new owner Eli Tabib [announced](#) a "no-tolerance" policy for racist chants and singing. If it happens again, the players will be pulled from the field and the team will forfeit the game. This decision came in the wake of Beitar being deducted points for the racist behavior of its supporters during the State Cup quarterfinal tie against Ironi Kiryat Shmona.

WAYS TO INFLUENCE

1. **Support** the [Union of European Football Associations \(UEFA\)](#) and the [Fédération Internationale de Football Association \(FIFA\)](#)'s campaigns to eliminate racism, discrimination, and intolerance from the sport of soccer.
2. **Report** racism in sports. Organizations like [Kick It Out](#) have a number of reporting methods available to anybody who has seen, heard, or been on the receiving end of discriminatory abuse in a soccer environment.
3. **Keep up** with [Get Inclusive in the Game](#), an organization that promotes "voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion, equal opportunities and awareness of the importance of health-enhancing physical activity through increased participation in, and equal access to, sport for all."
4. **Coach** youth soccer teams. Teach them that racism and discrimination is unacceptable. Use resources from [Show Racism The Red Card](#) to help take action against racism.

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In a world of sound-bites, documentaries provide an opportunity to think, understand, share, and connect with the world.

They are controversial, divisive, fascinating, unexpected, and surprising. They can be thrillers, dramas, comedies, romance, tear-jerkers, and horror films.

Documentaries provide the perfect topic for meaningful conversations. If you want to talk about the things that matter with people that matter then pick a film, invite your friends, and watch & discuss together. It's as easy as that.

Influence Film Club – We are the conversation after the film.