

# The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Lesson in Perspective



**Created by: MaryLynne Fillmon**  
**Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar Abroad: Egypt and Israel**  
**Summer 2007**  
**Designed for use in a one-year World History Classroom**

**Note to Users: Additional information for Teachers and Students located on the "Notes Page" for each slide.**

# One House, Two Stories: Dalia



“Growing up, Dalia would frequently ask her parents and teachers: “What are these houses we are living in?”

“These are Arab houses,” she was told.

“What are these Arab houses that everyone talks about?” she would reply. Dalia’s school was in an Arab house, and there she would learn Israel’s history.

She learned about the creation of the state of Israel as a safe haven for the Jews. She studied the War of Independence as the story of the few against the many. The Arabs had invaded, Dalia would read, in order to destroy the new state and throw the Jews into the sea. Most nations confronted with such hostilities would have been paralyzed, but tiny Israel had withstood five Arab armies. Little David had defeated Goliath. As for the Arabs, Dalia’s textbooks would report that they ran away, deserting their lands and abandoning their homes, fleeing before the conquering Israeli army. The Arabs, one textbook of the day declared, “Preferred to leave” once the Jews had taken their towns. Dalia accepted the history she was taught. Still, she was confused. Why, she wondered, would anyone leave so willingly?”

# One House, Two Stories: Bashir



“We were exiled by force of arms. We were exiled on foot. We were exiled to take the earth as our bed. And the sky as a cover. And to be fed from the crumbs of those among the governments and international organizations who imparted their charity. We were exiled but we left our souls, our hopes and our childhood in Palestine. We left our joys and sorrows. We left them in every corner, and on every grain of sand in Palestine. We left them with each lemon fruit, with each olive. We left them in the roses and flowers. We left them in the flowering tree that stands with pride at the entrance of our house in al-Ramla. We left them in the remains of our fathers and ancestors. We left them as witnesses and history. We left them, hoping to return.”

--Excerpt from: *The Lemon Tree* by Sandy Tolan, page 217

# Historical Background



- Pre-WWI: Area of Palestine under Ottoman Empire
- After WWI: Area of Palestine under control of British (British Mandate) until it became independent
- Balfour Declaration: 1917: Britain supports idea of a Jewish homeland w/ rights of non-Jews protected
- Zionist: Supporter of a homeland for the Jews in the area of Palestine. Movement began late 1800s.
- Many Jews began to immigrate to Palestine in the late 1800s.

# Claims to the Land



## Israelis

- Ancestors lived in area nearly 2000 years ago
- Jerusalem home to most important Jewish site—Western Wall

## Palestinians

- Ancestors have been living in area nearly 2000 years
- Jerusalem home to 3rd most important Muslim site-Dome of the Rock/Al-Aqsa Mosque

# Reflection #1



- Write 3-5 sentences about BOTH of the following questions.
  - If you were Israeli, why might you think you should live on the land that is now Israel?
  - If you were Palestinian, why might you think you should live on the land that is now Israel?

# UN Plan for Palestine (1947)



- Partition (separate) the area into 2 countries
- Israel (Jewish State) and Palestine (Arab State)
- 55% of land goes to the Jews
- 45% of land goes to the Arabs
- Total Population: 1.8 million
  - 1.2 million Arabs living in area
    - 600,000 Jews living in area
- Jerusalem: “international city” controlled by UN
- Accepted by Jews
- Rejected by Arabs
- No Arab on committee

# 1948 War

- May 14, 1948: Israel is officially formed
- May 15, 1948: Israel attacked by six Arab nations
- Approx. 750,000 Palestinians fled or were forced to leave
- Over approx. 800,000 Jews in Arab countries also fled or were forced to leave for Israel
- Israel After War: Jordan controls West Bank and Egypt controls Gaza Strip
- Israel takes much of Palestine and western part of Jerusalem—eastern part including religious sites taken by Jordan



# Perspectives on Partition and 1948 War



## Israeli

- Creates state of Israel
- War of Independence
- Holocaust and other periods of violence against Jews throughout the past centuries might not have happened if there was a Jewish Homeland

## Palestinian

- They had no input
- Nabka: “Catastrophe”
- Land set aside for Palestinians now under control of Arab countries or Israel

# Reflection #2



- Write 3-5 sentences about BOTH of the following questions.
  - If you were Israeli, how might you feel about the creation of the state of Israel and the war that began the next day?
  - If you were Palestinian, how might you feel about the creation of the state of Israel and the war that began the next day?

# 1956 Suez Canal Crisis



- Egypt nationalizes the Suez Canal in 1956 and closed the Straits of Tiran to Israel, which blocked Israeli access to the Red Sea.
- Israel attacks Egypt with later reinforcements from France and the United Kingdom
- Ceasefire agreement and withdrawal of Israeli troops
- United Nations Peacekeepers sent to maintain peace in the area

# 1967 War



- **Israel believes neighbors are preparing for war**
  - Egypt requests withdrawal of UN in May 1967 and denies Israel access to the Red Sea by closing Straits of Tiran
  - Jordan and Egypt sign mutual defense agreement
  - Continued terrorist attacks from Syria's Golan Heights region
- **Israeli surprise attack against Egypt on June 5, 1967**
  - Also attacks Syria, Jordan
  - Within six days Israel defeats Egypt, Syria, Jordan
    - Takes control of West Bank , Gaza Strip
    - Control of all of Jerusalem
    - Control of Sinai (from Egypt)
    - Control of Golan Heights (from Syria)

# Perspectives on and Aftermath of 1967 War



## Israeli

- Land gained is a buffer zone to deter future attacks
  - Begin to build settlements in West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights
- Unified Jerusalem under Israeli control

## Palestinian and Arab Nations

- West Bank and Gaza Strip become known as “Occupied Territories”
- Some will accept Israel at pre-1967 War borders.
- Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) later begins to use terrorism to attract attention to its cause of an independent state.

# Reflection #3



- Write 3-5 sentences about BOTH of the following questions.
  - If you were Israeli, how might you feel about the 1967 war and its outcome?
  - If you were Palestinian, how might you feel about the 1967 war and its outcome?

# The Camp David Accords



- 1977: Egypt (led by Anwar Sadat) engages Israel in peace efforts
- 1978: Camp David Accords
  - U.S. President Carter invites Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin to Camp David
  - Egypt recognizes Israel as a country
  - Israel gives Sinai peninsula back to Egypt
  - First agreement between Israel and an Arab nation

# Perspectives on Camp David Accords



## Israeli

- Shows that the country is willing to trade land it has conquered for peace

## Palestinian and Arab Nations

- Egypt recognizes that Israel is a country and exists.
- Sadat assassinated in 1981 by Muslim extremists
- Jordan signs peace agreement with Israel in 1994.



# Reflection #4



- Write 3-5 sentences about BOTH of the following questions.
  - If you were Israeli, how might you feel about the Camp David Accords?
  - If you were Palestinian or a resident of an Arab country, how might you feel about the Camp David Accords?

# The Intifada



- Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, living conditions, and to demand independence that begins in 1987.
  - Includes Palestinian demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, rock throwing and gasoline bombs.
- Israeli military response
- Over approx. 400 Israelis Killed
- Over approx. 1500 Palestinians Killed

# Peace Efforts Continued



- During the 1990s several advances towards peace were made with several meetings taking place in places such as Egypt, Spain, the United States, and Norway.
  - 1993 Oslo Accords: Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat and Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin met to begin to work out a peace deal that included each side recognizing the right of the other to exist.
- Rabin assassinated by Jewish extremist in November of 1995

# Second Intifada



- By 2000, peace process has faded.
- In 2000, Israeli political figure Ariel Sharon visits Temple Mount (Western Wall area and Al Aqsa Mosque area) in Jerusalem
- Palestinian violence erupts beginning the Second Intifada
- Buses, discos, hotels, fast food restaurants, etc in Israel blown up by Palestinian suicide bombers
- Israel responds militarily
- From 2000-June 2008
  - Over 4500 Palestinians killed
  - Over 1000 Israelis killed

# Reflection #5



- Write 3-5 sentences about BOTH of the following questions.
  - If you were Israeli, how might you feel about the Intifadas and peace efforts during the 1990s?
  - If you were Palestinian, how might you feel about the Intifadas and peace efforts during the 1990s?

# The Gaza Strip



- In 2005, Israel removed its settlements from the Gaza Strip and gave much control of the area to the Palestinian government (with exceptions such as the border, airspace, coastline)
- Gaza later comes under the control of Hamas, a group considered by Israel and other countries to be a terrorist organization.
- As of June 2008, Hamas and Israel have entered into a cease fire agreement.

# Current Issue : Two-State Solution



- Palestinian and Israeli leaders backed by US and other countries working toward the existence of Israel and of Palestine. But the following issues remain...

# Current Issue: Jerusalem



## Israeli Perspective

- Sees united Jerusalem as its capitol

## Palestinian Perspective

- Sees East Jerusalem as its capitol



# Current Issue: Settlements



## Israeli Perspective

- For religious, political, and security reasons a large number Israeli settlements exist in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
  - 270,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank

## Palestinian Perspective

- Israeli settlements go against the idea of a future Palestinian state.

# Current Issue: Security Barrier



## Israeli Perspective

- Israel is building a barrier between it and the West Bank. Israel sees this as a way to prevent further suicide bombings.

## Palestinian Perspective

- The barrier goes beyond the border between the West Bank and Israel.
  - The barrier route is 449 miles, while the “Green Line”—the “border” between the West Bank and Israel is 199 miles.

# Current Issue: Movement



## Israeli Perspective

- Palestinians need permission to leave West Bank. Israelis see this as needed security to prevent terrorism.

## Palestinian Perspective

- The restriction on movement limits jobs, health care, education, etc. contributing to standard of living in West Bank being significantly less than that of Israel.

# Current Issue: Security and Terrorism



## Israeli Perspective

- Terrorist organizations like Hamas (which controls the Gaza Strip) and Hezbollah (based in Lebanon and who was at war with Israel in the summer of 2006) continue to fire rockets into Israel. Individuals also continue to commit other acts of terror.

## Palestinian Perspective

- Can't stereotype all Palestinians as terrorists as the majority are not terrorists.
- Palestinian government denounced terrorism.

# Current Issue: Right of Return



## Israeli Perspective

- If Palestinians living in Arab nations or in the Occupied Territories return to Israel to reclaim land, it can mean the end of Israel as a Jewish state.

## Palestinian Perspective

- As refugees, Palestinians believe they should be able to return to their or their families land in Israel.

# Reflection #6



- Write 3-5 sentences about BOTH of the following questions.
  - If you were Israeli, how might you feel about the Two State Solution and the current issues in the Israel-Palestinian Conflict?
  - If you were Palestinian, how might you feel about the Two State Solution and the current issues in the Israel-Palestinian Conflict?