Land and Religion Wars

Religions, land, war, peace, and pogroms. These are all some of the things that caused the Palestinian and Israeli Conflict. Hundreds of innocent civilians have died, or lost loved ones in this conflict. Others have lost more, such as rights, respect, beliefs, and hope. Some people are living their lives in constant embarrassment or poverty. The conflict first began in the 1880s, which was when Zionist migration began to move towards Palestine (a piece of land in the Middle East that is now Israel).The Zionists were Jews and were determined to find the right place to establish a new Jewish homeland after centuries of pogroms and persecution of Jews in Europe.

One of the reasons I chose Israel and the Palestinian and Israeli Conflict was because it has affected the lives of thousands of people and because I think it is a conflict that has been going on for too long for us to ignore or not solve. I also think not enough people are thoroughly informed about such a large conflict. Everybody should be an informed citizen of the world. Also, if this conflict could be solved, it would be a good step towards world peace. You can't have world peace when there are two nations firing rockets, sending in suicide bombers and doing terrorist attacks on each other. This conflict also caused many innocent people to live in constant humiliation and poverty, and to be treated as second-class citizens, which I think is unacceptable. Everybody is equal. It would be ridiculous if I was superior to you just because I was taller, or smarter, etc.

When the Zionists finally reached Palestine, their bad luck continued. Arabs were already living in Palestine and had begun calling themselves Palestinians. In future years of the conflict the Jews would point out that the Arabs only started calling themselves Palestinians after the Zionist arrived. Without world support the Zionists were not able to build a nation yet. Finally in 1917, the British made the Balfour Declaration, the first world power in support of the Jews/Zionists. By the end of the Holocaust world sympathy and support laid with the Jews and the Zionists finally had the support they needed to

build their nation. Bit by bit, the Jews moved into Palestine and took Palestinian land. And bit by bit, tension began to build…

In 1948 war erupted. To the Israelis the war would be known as the War of Independence, to the Palestinians, the Great Catastrophe. In the end, the Israelis won and many Palestinian refugees immediately fled to neighboring Arab countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and more. Soon, the Israelis controlled all of what used to be Palestine except for two occupied territories, West Bank and Gaza, which were filled with Palestinian refugees. In 1968, Israel began building settlements in the two occupied territories, violating three UN laws. Surprising, nobody really bothered to stop them. The Palestinians were powerless in trying to stop the Israelis seeing as they had practically no organization or money. Even worse, the Israelis began treating the Palestinians as second-class citizens. However, later the Palestinians managed to form the PLO, a group of representatives for the Palestinian people. The PLO came close to succeeding peace with the Israelis, but the treaties were always broken. Eventually some of the Palestinian refugees in Gaza and West Bank became so desperate and depressed that they thought their lives weren't even worth living and became suicide bombers. Terrorist attacks continued causing the Israelis to build a 20 foot high concrete security wall that goes around the borders of the occupied territories. The wall is still there today.

This conflict has been going on for too long. Proper and responsible citizens of the world cannot just ignore this conflict and leave thousands of people to live their lives in constant fear or poverty. Some Palestinian neighborhoods in the occupied territories live with a net above their roofs and heads. Each day, Israelis can causally walk or drive by and throw garbage onto the nets. Imagine the Palestinians humiliation, shame, and anger. How could anybody live in conditions like this? Many people don't even have a place to call home! Israelis are also influenced in negative ways. Suicide bombers have become a children's' worst nightmares, even adults live in fear, not knowing if anywhere is safe. This conflict has

caused misery on both "sides". Imagine just how much we could do by ending a single conflict like this one! To quote, "there is no good war, and there is no bad peace".

I also think it is vital that people properly understand this conflict. It's not as simple as all Israelis are evil or all Palestinians are terrorists. Both "sides" are suffering and have done wrong. The past is the past. Each day, Jewish kids get on the bus to go to school in constant fear, not knowing if the man reading the newspaper across from them was a suicide bomber, or if the old lady in the back had a gun prepared to use on innocent Jews. Each day, Palestinians are starving to death in refugee camps and makeshift homes, not knowing when their next meal and drink would be if they even lived long enough to get the food. Imagine if you were one of those people. Imagine how much we could achieve by ending this conflict. I say it's time to solve this conflict once and for all. If I ever meet a single news reporter I would tell them one thing, go to Israel.

Resources:

Frank Mitch. Understanding the Holy Land. 2005. Text. Answers questions about the Palestinian and Israeli Conflict from many perspectives.

Goldberg, B.Z. Promises. 2004. Video. Perspectives of many children in the Palestinian and Israeli Conflict.

Mr. Alaa Badr. Current. Primary Source. Personal perspective as an Egyptian Arab on the Palestinian and Israeli Conflict.

Mr. Schwartz. Current. Primary Source. Personal perspective as an Israeli on the Palestinian and Israeli Conflict.