

A history of the israeli-palestinian conflict

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Peace is a fundamental aspect in any country and its existence provides an enabling environment for the economy to thrive and for the development of socio-cultural and political spheres. Although this is the case, sometimes peace can become rare and its brokering can be very difficult especially where the groups involved are not ready to cease grounds.

Well, this is the case in some of the Middle East countries. One of the notable conflicts that have persisted for so long and which have been of global concern rather than a country's issue is the conflict between Israel and Palestine (Finkelstein, 2002). The key issues that instigated the conflict include the borders, water rights, mutual recognition and control of the city of Jerusalem. These issues have, however, been blown out of proportion by socio-cultural feelings and reservations regarding Israelis' settlements and other legalities that have arisen concerning the fate of the refugees who are mostly Palestinians (Shah, 2006). The violence resulting from the conflict has often prompted international actions and pressure. Commentators note that there are many security and human rights concerns that have arisen from the conflict and whose impacts can be felt both within and on the international platform.

The conflicts have come with its equal measure of shortcomings that far much surpass the advantages if any (Charlotte Ku, 2001). These states, though full of historic sites and other religious sites that attract the interest of many people, have not been able to reap to their full capacity from the very lucrative tourism industry (Halevi, 2010). Theses Statement This paper will look at this conflict from the socio-cultural perspective and explore how it has impacted on the growth and character of the people and their cultures in

these two states and its effects on a dynamic global arena. One question that cannot be overlooked is; what shall be the culture of the generation which was born and have grown in an environment full of hostility, violence and rampant poverty? Rationale In this paper, the Israeli-Palestinians Conflict and its impacts on the Socio-cultural growth and character of the two regions shall be handled explicitly. This conflict has persisted for a very long time and undoubtedly, it have had a lot of impacts on the general public's life. Noting that this conflict is yet to be totally settled, it presents a lot of issues that needs to be revisited afresh to identify the impacts it have had on the socio-cultural lives of both the Palestinians and the Israelis and the consequences of such impacts in future.

This conflict is culturally biased, as it will be seen later, the two parties involved have been very unaccommodating to the cultural diversities. Most of the research works done on this area have largely been inclined on political and economic spheres with little being done on the socio-cultural arena. This topic, if inclined on the socio-cultural perspective, is pertinent in coming up with measures to avert such conflicts and methods of resolution, if such happens. Undoubtedly, there have been a lot of cultural changes as a result of this conflict. The Israeli-Palestinians Conflict The Israeli-Palestinians conflict refers to the open hostility and political tensions between the Jewish Israelis and the Arabic Palestinian people that have lasted for over a century. This bad blood between the two groups is often traced from the massive settlement of the Jews in Palestine thus it is commonly viewed as a nationalistic and political conflict arising from territorial ambitions competition (Tessler, 1994).

As the intricate periodic conflicts in the Middle East continues, there is need to look for an equitable solution which must be arrived at with moderation taking into consideration the cause of the conflict. Every party has had its own side of the story. Israel has often argued that Palestinians are irrational and are only interested in perpetuating terrorism. The Palestinians, however, hold that they have real grievances that the Israel tries to ignore. The grievances which feature prominently are aligned to the fact that Palestinians' land was taken without their consent and rather by force during creation of the state of Israel. It is from this original injustice that the subsequent crimes from both sides have inevitably followed (Jews for Justice, 2007).

For any solution to be found in this region, the moral solution, therefore, should be borrowed from the history of both states. What is the history of these states? Concise history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict The Israel-Palestinian conflict is both simple to understand, yet deeply intricate. It presents a situation of two parallel believes, that is, at the heart of this situation is a basic idea that bot sides believe. Interestingly, the Palestine's hold that they are the owners of the land they now call Palestine while Israel hold a similar, though totally parallel believe; that they are entitled to the land, which they now call Israel. Unfortunately, the two antagonistic groups claim possession to the same land which they simply refer to by different names. Even more intricate is the staunch religious believes that the two groups hold.

Palestinians who are Muslim believe that they were given the land by Allah while the Jewish Israelites believe that their God known as Jehovah have

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them the land (Lee, 2009). Due to these strong religious beliefs, each group argues that leaving the land to the other claimants would mean an insult to God and thus a sin. Although the history of this conflict surpasses that simplified explanation, the socio-cultural and religious differences are very core in addressing this conflict. Historically, the ancient Jews also called the Hebrews, from the Biblical times called their land Israel, Canaan, Samaria and other ancient names. Some of them held that this land was a gift to them from God.

About 2000 Yrs ago, this land was ruled by the Roman Empire who at one time , killed large numbers of Jews, destroyed their Temple in the city of Jerusalem, and forced many Hebrews to vacate their homeland in an Exodus which is referred to as ' The Diaspora'. However, some Jews remained on the land though a large number of them did not return until the early 20th Century and after the World War II and the holocaust (Lee, 2009). It is at this time that trouble begun between the Jews who now called themselves " Israelis" and the ancient Arab population of the area who were now known as ' Palestinians' (Charlotte Ku, 2001). In the 1930s, there was a revolt, The Great Arab Revolt, in this land against the British who had been ruling Palestine since 1918. This revolt was directed to both the British rule and the growing Jewish population (Lee, 2009). Well, the revolt was successfully suppressed by the British with who were helped by the Jewish militias but the hostility and fighting between the Arabs and Jews didn't cease.

Something different happened thereafter where the two groups formed militias groups and in preparation for a fight amongst between once the British left (Tessler, 1994). Notably, the Jewish population had now become

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robust after a movement called “ Zionism”, which had begun in the late 1800s, influenced many Jews who had been scattered in different parts of the world to move back to Palestine to reclaim what they referred as their ancient land. They bought land from the native Palestinians although this alarmed the Palestinian Arab leaders (Finkelstein, 2002). In 1948 when the British left, the Jews who were now in Palestine declared the state of Israel independent. This attracted the wrath of the neighboring Arab nations such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iraqi who invaded Israel to aid the Palestinian Arab who were fighting to reclaim their land from the now independent Israelis (Lee, 2009). The Arabs lost the war to the Jews and the Palestinian Diaspora begun which saw numerous Palestinians flee the new nation of Israel to the neighboring Arab countries where they lived as refugees (Tessler, 1994).

Interestingly, two sections of the old Palestine, a crowded coastal area of Gaza Strip and the land on the west banks of River Jordan, did not become part of the new Israel state. After the end of the war in 1949, Gaza strip was taken by Egypt while West Bank was seized by Jordan. These two areas were thereafter often versatile and were scenes of violent warfare due attacks of the Palestinians cross-border raids that saw Israel military counter react. The Israeli-Palestinians conflict took a new swift yet delicately complex dimension in December 31, 1964 when al-Fatah, a political and military group formed to retake land from Israel in late 1950, invaded Israel. This group was led by Yasser Arafat which later joined the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 (Finkelstein, 2002).

The interval of the 1967 to 1973 was the most active period of the armed conflict approach by the Palestinians. However, despite being exceedingly publicized, the movement was unsuccessful. During this period, the PLO expressed a delicate procedure of acquiring and converting the Jewish Israel state to a secular state inclusive and free for all Muslims, Christians and Jews as opposed to the Israel state which was restricted to the Jews only (Finkelstein, 2002). Due to the 1967 downfall, the elusive Arab masses were dissatisfied with the down fall thus mandated the PLO with the purpose of setting policies, formulating strategies and endowing the people with guidance for a continued resistance. This impulsive handing over of the liberation to the PLO was mostly due to its impressive tide of popular support but mostt of the Palestinians (Finkelstein, 2002). The PLO therefore wheedled out from the League of Arab states acknowledgement that it was the solitary lawful envoy of the Palestinian populace prompting all local and global societies to follow suit.

This allowed the PLO to have a quite favorable international image and enjoyed tolerability that however didn't correspond to its status and standing within the Arab structure (Finkelstein, 2002). PLO was often linked with terrorism which it later called off in 1992 and became more focused to spearhead the establishment of the Palestinian country. Socio-cultural stratification of the people, character and Growth of the Region The effects of the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the consequences have rippled through times and generations, most of them having a negative aftermath that is so detrimental. Emergence of Classes and Castes The conflict has affected the

social life of both the Palestinians and the Israelites in parallel ways. It has created diverse classes between the two groups.

In a research by Robert H. Griffin on the Palestine, Gaza and the West Bank, He noted that the Israeli's settlements in the West Bank are totally separated from the Palestinian communities. That not being enough, he further observed that the Israelis have access to the best roads, jobs, shopping facilities and other important services since they are readily available in their area of settlement as opposed to the living conditions of the Palestinians (GRIFFIN, 2006). Griffin notes that there are even more frustrations within the Palestinian community where the entrenchment of the classes narrow further down. The recent distinct cultures within the Palestinians' communities are; where at one extreme, there are Palestinians who were educated in good schools and lived in the United States or Europe.

These educated Palestinians later returned back to their homeland and got the best jobs. The other extreme is the majority Palestinian community who has lived in Palestine and who languish in abject poverty, mostly doing menial chores. Social Problems and Control Due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinians have experienced numerous problems which spilt to the 21st century. The biggest problem was the right to self-determination and the ongoing struggle for a homeland in Palestine. Unemployment and Poverty The lives of many youths who constitute the highest number of Palestinian population in the Gaza and West Bank areas have been shaped by conflict and characterized by violent.

Most of them have never experienced life outside the refugee camps unlike the earlier named affluent Palestinian minority group. The majority youth group experience rampant unemployment as noted by the economy watch (Economy Watch, 2011). (iv) Other socio-cultural impacts The conflict has affected the structure and basis of the governments, the productivity of both economies. There has been emergence of heinous terrorism acts with the civilians having the blunt consequences. Introduction of strict laws and policies in both countries for security measures and high poverty index (Halevi, 2010) especially in the Palestinian country where poverty index is very high (Economy Watch, 2011) have also been in the limelight as some of the effects of the conflict. Others include environmental pollution, Degradation and Land overuse especially on the highly populated Gaza and West Cost areas (Fida Obeidi, 2010).

The conflict have also had impacts on the character of the Israelis and Palestinians such as hostility and animosity between the two groups, emergence of terrorism, high levels of suicide bombing and humanity issues arising from refugees who left Israel during the Palestinian Diaspora (Charlotte Ku, 2001). Conclusion Long term peace between the two parallel countries will need new strategies to handle their volatile situation (Adams). The Muslim countries will be needed to play an important role and virtually fundamental in the building of a new Palestine without the heinous acts of terrorism. As for the Israelis who most often had to mobilize for war, a new strategy should be implemented to insure Israel's security concerns (Adams). Similarly, since water has been an issue of much weight during this conflict, an unbiased peace negotiator should determine how water rights between

the two countries are fairly allocated as a long time conflict mitigation measure.

Without proper measures to block all volatile loopholes in resources allocation, water wars are likely to erupt even when the land borders have been settled peacefully (Adams).