

Modern World Study: The Arab-Israeli Conflict

How did the village Dier Yassin come to be fought over in 1948 and why do sources A and B differ on who was to blame for the Arab flight from the village and other parts of Palestine at that time?

The problems in Palestine really started prior to the conflict in 1948. In 1947, the United Nations formed a Partition Plan. They voted to divide Palestine into two States, an Arab State and a Jewish State. There were many Jews in Palestine at this time, because of the Holocaust. The Germans had caused all of the Jews to flee from their homes into Palestine as well as neighbouring countries.

The Arabs in Palestine did not want to give up their land; they felt that the Western powers should find homes for the Jews. Eventually, the United Nations forced the Palestinian Arabs to give up part of their land, to accommodate the Jews. This seemed like a good idea at the time, but neither the Jews nor the Arabs were happy with the arrangement. The Arabs were angry because they had to give up their land, achieving nothing in return, and the Jews were angry because Jerusalem was in the Arab State. The Jews' argument was that Jerusalem was the Holy City of the Jews, and it should be in their own State. The conflict between the two states reached epic proportions, and the fighting hastily worsened. Civilians on both sides were being massacred, and nobody was safe. Syria and Iraq were the Arabs back up. They came into Palestine because they believed that the Palestinians were being poorly treated. The Haganah (A Jewish terrorist group) organised Jewish defence forces. They resorted to violent methods and the Arabs fled their homes in fear for their lives.

April 10th 1948: The Arabs began to flee from their homes. Another Jewish terrorist group called the Irguns attack the village of Dier Yassin. Although it was the Arabs' territory, the Jews sabotaged the village and killed all the inhabitants.

May 14th 1948: The British Army had a mandate to control Palestine and prepare it for independence, but in May 1948, they withdrew from the territory because the situation was becoming out of control. They handed the mandate over to the United Nations.

NB Neither party is willing to accept responsibility for the exodus or the conditions in which the Jews were living and the human rights situation. – they all die and no-one thought it was right. Israelis did not want Arabs in the country. Apparently, the Arab state has more resources, similar background/religion/language, so there was no need for the Palestinians to live in “appalling conditions in refugee camps” Israelis want “A Jewish State like the French have a French State”