

Why might many Palestinian youths of your own age want to join terrorist organisations such as Hamas or Islamic Jihad, despite the danger of capture, retaliation and assassination? What choices would these youths have to consider in deciding to join such an organisation?

The conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis has lasted since before 100BC. The conflict is over which people really should own the state of Israel. Should it be split 50% 50% or should the Palestinians be made to leave. Israel is the link between the different continents of Europe, Africa and Asia. Without this connection trade may not take place as easily. The country gets most of its money comes from the oil trade. Oil is one of the world's most important resources and so, Israel is needed to keep many other countries running. This means that Europeans Africans and Asians will always be there. Israel is also in various different industries such as cars, wines, farming and the chemical industry.

Over the next few hundred years, the Jewish race emigrated throughout the world. They were a dispersed race who no longer could claim to have a homeland of their own. However, many remained resolute as to the fact that they were Jewish and were proud of it. The Jews, nonetheless, experienced a great deal of persecution over the years, throughout the world. After this, it was decided that the Jews should have their own homeland. It was proclaimed that the Jews now had one long-term aspiration. This was to return to their homeland of Israel. They were adamant on returning to this homeland as can be seen in their final prayer which is used to conclude the annual Jewish festival, the 'Day of Atonement'. The prayer reads "Next year in Jerusalem". This proved their aspirations of a return to their homeland.

However, the Jews were faced with a very demanding problem. When the final trace of Roman control in Israel collapsed in Byzantium during the 7th century, the Arabic race claimed control of the country and renamed it Palestine. They proclaimed the new Palestine as their own homeland. They worked to spread their Islamic ideas throughout the middle-east and the Asian world.

An Austrian Jew known as Theodor Herzl was witness to such tragic pogroms as the 'Dreyfus affair' in France. It was his knowledge of such incidents as these that persuaded him that the western world were never going to accept this persecuted Jewish race. It was this belief that started his project to form the first Zionist movement. The aim of his new movement was to establish a mass Jewish settlement in Palestine. However, he was to fail to meet this requirement. He became the president of this new world congress of Zionists. His work was mainly based on persuading the likes of Turkey and Britain to support his cause.

Theodor Herzl was successful in gaining the trust of the Turks who eventually sided with the Germans against the Arabs in World War One. However, the British preferred to support the Arabs, who wanted to reduce the support for the countries opposing them. However, the British soon became liable to persuasion. This was due to the money the Jewish race, particularly based in America at the time, had to offer. They had inherited this from previous generations. This would have been of great benefit to the British because the American-based Jews could have persuaded the Americans into the war. As a result of these issues, three agreements were made.

The McMahon agreement- this promised the support of Lawrence of Arabia in helping the Arabs to revolt against and overthrow the Turks. As a result, they would be given their own, undisputed homeland.

The Sykes Picot agreement- this was a secret agreement that was written up between Britain and France in which it was agreed that they would share the land gained when they overthrew the Turkish army.

Balfour Declaration- this promised the Jews that their 'promised land' of Israel would be returned to them on two conditions. These were that they persuaded America to join the war and that they maintained the support of Russia as an ally.

It wasn't long before these agreements began to cause some major problems.

Following World War One, the League of Nations were handed the responsibility of controlling the land of Palestine. Pressure was put upon the League of Nations by both the Arabs and the Jewish to give control of the land to them. The Jewish population of the world saw their chance to return to their homeland of Palestine, which they preferred to call Israel. Many Jews from around the world began to emigrate back to Palestine. This emigration of the Jewish population continued steadily over the next few years.

The United Nations suggested a solution to the long-term dispute over the land of Palestine after the Second World War. In 1947, they put forward a proposal to divide the land into three parts. Two of them would be equal and would divide Palestine into an Israeli and Arabic section. However, the capital of Jerusalem would be left as a neutral city. It was proposed that this city would be controlled by the UN and could therefore be used for important matters of country welfare and economy. This city could be used as an international trade centre for the export of oil. This treaty was suggested to settle the disagreement that was beginning to reach its climax. The Jewish accepted this proposal only to find that the Arabs would reject it.

This incensed the Jewish who felt it was considerate enough of them to be accept a proposal to give up some of their land to a race who were never promised it by God in the first place. The Jews believed that it was extremely arrogant of the Arabs to reject this treaty. Tension increased between the races whilst Jews continued to flock to the area. This angered the Arabs who believed that the Jews were attempting to abuse their 'privilege' by allowing more of their race into the disputed country.

The Arabs, in their increasing discontent with the Israelites, came together from far and wide. They mainly came from such Arabic nations as Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Jordan and Iraq. They began to fight with the Jews over certain areas of land. This, along with other factors contributed to the two races having four wars in the space of 25 years. Unfortunately for the Arabs, this was a very big mistake because The Israelis' wealth meant that they could afford the cutting-edge war technology. They were able to afford the use of tanks and bombs. This money also meant that they could train new soldiers for the next war. Factors such as these gave the Jews the edge in the wars between the races. The Jews came out on top, they were victorious in all four wars. This gave the Israelis a greater extent of control over Palestine. The Jews shortly re-named the country of Palestine, Israel. As their control increased because of these wars, started by the Arabs, they forced the Palestinian inhabitants into refugee camps. This is a very real problem that still faces the Palestinians of today.

After the wars, a mutual bitter hatred developed between the Palestinians and Israelis over who held the strongest claim to the land. This is a very long-term and real argument that continues to this modern age. The overwhelming power and military force available to the Jews means that the Palestinians are unable to match them. The Palestinians feel that they have been unjustly forced out from their own land. They hope to one day, have the power to overthrow the Jews and return to

the 'very soil of Palestine' that is sacred to them and was to their ancestors thousands of years beforehand.

This hatred was fuelled further by the fact that the Jews forced them to hold a 'second class citizenship' which restricted their freedom as a citizen of the disputed land of Israel. This was a major concern for the Palestinians who were extremely humiliated by the fact that they were unable to stop the Jews from taking their land. The Palestinians were forced to live off of UNWRA rations. The conditions in the refugee camps are abysmal and diseases are quick to spread. This incensed the Palestinians.

They felt that the western world was turning a blind and that they would have to take matters into their own hands. The Palestinians concluded that the UN was failing to control world issues to a sufficient extent. They believed that the UN were only too quick to become involved with the punishment of Iraq for their problems in dealing with their neighbouring country, Kuwait. The Palestinians found this to be very unfair and increased speculation among the Arab world that they had to deal with their desperate issue individually. This is why the Arab world resorted to terrorism, because it proved a point and raised awareness as to the problems that the Arabs were facing in Israel. When the Arabs disregarded the Oslo agreement, this increased the tension between the Arabs and Jews who had agreed to settle the dispute rationally.

As a result, a large number of Palestinian youths of around 14 years of age would have wanted to join such terrorist groups as the world famous Hamas. Consequentially to the wars, the two races had fought, they were forced out of their homes into refugee camps where many still live today. Many of these refugee camps have poor living conditions and disease can spread easily. Families will have lived in these refugee camps for long periods of time. This will have been long enough to bring up a child. The Palestinian youths will have been taught the general Arab attitudes towards the Jewish race from a very young age. For example, their parents would have explained to them how their livelihood, property, land and wealth was seized by the Israelis during the war. This might have encouraged the youth to fight so that the four wars with their Jewish counterparts were not lost in vain. Their parents will have installed their own perspectives and opinions into their children. The likelihood is that these attitudes were of a very severe anti-Semitic origin with extreme views. This would have sparked and developed the childrens' own perspectives as to how horrid the Jews were, i.e. an attitude of hatred towards the Israelis. The youth may have thought that, seeing that the world seemed reluctant to help their cause, they should take the future of Israel into their own hands. Teenagers might have felt isolated and 'left out' if they didn't join up to a terrorist organisation. For example, I am sure that peers as well as parents encouraged the youth to sign up to such an organisation as Hamas or Alaxa. Many of the youths may have been brought up to mistrust the peace talks of their Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. Many families might have chosen to bring up their children in this way because they feel that peace would not solve anything, mainly because of the losses of the Palestinians in past years. They might feel that peace is not enough revenge on the Israelis who killed many significant Palestinian figures such as Deir Yassin, Sabra and Shaha. Many Arabs also feel as if they are commonly treated as scapegoats and are made to pay for such massacres as the holocaust and the Dreyfus affair in France. The excitement of representing their race may also have appealed to a youth. All of these factors mean that a youth is lead to believe that they have no alternative but to lead their race into the world picture. They see themselves as freedom fighters,

not terrorists and so are not reluctant to join. They also believe that they have nothing to lose seeing as they are fighting to reclaim land that has already been lost and that nations such as America and Britain provide the financial support for such activities.

Before a youth decides to join a terrorist organisation, they must consider their options and their consequences. They must make choices. For example the first main question to which they must choose an answer to is "to which group do I sign up to?". This is a very important question because, if they ever decide to leave, many organisations will decline this request because they hold so much information. If you would still want to quit then that organisation would probably assassinate you because they feel they can no longer trust you outside the community. This would be because of their, "You are either with us or against us campaign". Another consequence of joining a group like these would be that the person would lose their freedom because it would be dangerous for them to walk out on the streets. They would have to disguise themselves.

Although there are six main Arabic terrorist groups, they all share the same common aim. This is to cause terror in order to make a point. The point is to make the world aware of their problems in Israel and to make the world's inhabitants think about why such groups go to such desperate measures. The six groups are Hamas, Alaxa, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Islamic Jihad and the Abu Nidal Organisation. They have different styles of causing terror throughout the world, but work together and, as a result, have killed hundreds of innocent people worldwide, not to mention the Jewish deaths in the conflict. Israel has an extremely advanced secret service and can quite easily find out who is a member of such an organisation.

Alternatively, a Palestinian youth could always take the political route through the conflict. Such groups as the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) led by Yasser Arafat are always open to the youths of Palestine. These groups believe in peace that should be achieved by negotiations and discussion. This method is preferred by the western world because of its loss of threat. Members are not at as much risk as those in terrorist organisations like the ones that I have mentioned. This method has proved to be a lot more productive than using terrorism because more has been achieved. This has all been done by frowning on violence and the discussion of issues that trouble Palestine.

Another way for a youngster to demonstrate their desire for peace would be to sign their name on the Progressive List for Peace in the Middle East. This aims to achieve co-operation between the Arabs and Israelis in sorting out their differences and reaching some kind of resolution over the disputed state of Israel. Families and friends, however, might attempt to dissuade a youth from joining such a campaign because it is not enough 'revenge' and they would be considered to be traitors because they would be working with the enemy.

The final option for a Palestinian youth would be to leave these problems behind and emigrate from Israel. However, this would certainly not be of any long term benefits because it is not resolving the problem and encouraging the dispute to prolong. However, this could be seen by some youths as a way out because they are not at risk in the neighbouring Arab countries such as Jordan and Egypt. From here, they could support the Arab cause without risk of losing their lives. The youth could also benefit from a better education and general style of life in such countries. Many Palestinian youths are faced with such a demanding question which asks for so much commitment to their race. If they are brought up under the pressure of

their parents and peers to hate the Jews, it is hardly surprising that many turn to terrorism. They have a wide range of choices, but as this coursework shows, non of them are easy. They are all very complicated indeed. In order to solve this conflict, there must be discussion in the future. The Palestinian and Israeli youths are the future. This puts an increased amount of pressure on the youths who must wisely.