

The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Readings And Documents

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

**Student Worksheet 1:
Israel And Palestinian Claims To Land**

Directions: The serious conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has made almost impossible any statement about which both groups can agree. Read the following descriptions about the claim each has to the land Israelis call Israel and Palestinians Palestine. Then, based on what you have read, answer questions A-D below.

1. The history of the Jewish people and of its roots in the land of Israel spans some 35 centuries. In this land, its cultural, national, and religious identity was formed; here, its physical presence has been maintained unbroken throughout the centuries, even after the majority was forced into exile. With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, Jewish independence, lost 2000 years earlier, was renewed.
—American Jewish Committee

2. The Palestinians' claim is predicated on the right of ownership evidenced by uninterrupted possession and occupation since the dawn of recorded history. They lived in the country when the Hebrews (of whom the Jews claim descent) came and lived there for a comparatively short period. They continued to live there during the Hebrew (and Jewish) occupation. They remained there after the last Hebrew or Jew left the country nearly two thousand years ago....The people today called Palestinians...are largely the descendants of the Canaanites, the Edomites, and the Philistines who lived in Palestine when it was invaded by the Hebrews. In ancient times, but the Hebrews finally left or were driven out two thousand years ago.
—Frank S. Salvan, *Palestine Still a Dilemma*

3. There was no such thing as Palestinians. When was there an independent Palestinian people with a Palestinian state?... It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and drove them out and took their country from them. They did not exist.
—Golfsi Alak, *Israeli prime minister, New York Times*

4. According to Genesis, this was the land that God gave to Abraham and his seed....Those Jews who rely on the biblical deed to the land take their history from the ancient period of 4,000 years or so ago. Skipping easily over the centuries of Muslim rule that followed, those Arabs who regard history as their ally tend to begin with the Muslim conquests in the seventh century A.D., blithely ignoring the Jewish kingdoms that existed here 2,000 years before Muhammad made his appearance.
—David K. Shipler, *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*

Questions:
Please respond to the questions below by marking either J (Jews), P (Palestinians) or I (Impossible to determine).
A. Which people have lived in the land longer?
B. Which people have ruled over the land longer?
C. Whose historical claim to the land is stronger?
D. Which people have been present in the land as far back as records go?

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