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Visitors speak on Palestine, Israel conflicts

Guests from Israel and Palestine participated in an on-campus colloquium April 6-8, during which they shared stories of their callings to "live in peace," despite the conflict in the Holy Land between their peoples.

Karim Ali, Genevieve Holmes and Holly Butcher

Staff Writers

On April 6-8 Guilford College hosted various discussions featuring distinguished Israelis and Palestinians who "describe(d) what it's like to have too much history and too little geography," said professor of philosophy Jonathan Malino.

The Lilly Grant sponsors the Guilford Initiative on Faith and Practice, which funded the Colloquium. "The Lilly Grant Foundation gives grant money to organizations to promote religious discussions in higher education settings," said senior and co-organizer Kat Spangler.

The Colloquium included Israeli philosophy professors Avishai Margalit, Yehuda Gellman, and Edna Ullmann-Margalit, as well as Palestinian producer and translator Raja Zeedani, and philosophy professors Sari Nusseibeh, Said Zeedani.

Malino organized the colloquium, which consisted of four public presentations, two small group discussions, and six focused sessions. It strove to stimulate discussion of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

"Since 1997, my wife Jane and I have led work study-trips to the Middle East and over the years have developed a pattern of working at the Ramallah Quaker School studying the conflict, making connections with Israelis and Palestinians involved in the search for peace," said Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter. "Over there, it's very difficult for

something like this (to happen) because Israelis are forbidden by law to go into the West Bank."

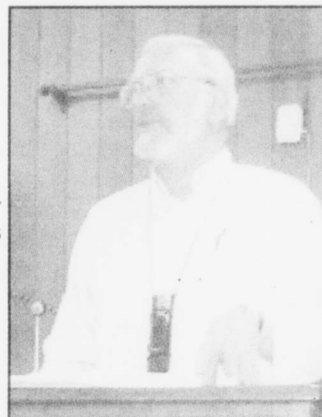
The conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Jews began around the turn of the twentieth century. Although these two groups have different religions, religious differences are not the cause of the conflict. It is a struggle over land.

Until 1948, the area that both groups claimed was known internationally as Palestine. But following the war of 1948-49, this land was divided into three parts: the state of Israel, the West Bank (of the Jordan River) and the Gaza Strip.

Jewish claims to this land are based on the biblical promise to Abraham and his descendants and on Jews' need for a haven from European anti-Semitism.

Palestinian Arabs' claims to the land are based on continuous residence in the country for hundreds of years and the fact that they represented the demographic majority. They do not believe that they should forfeit their land to compensate Jews for Europe's crimes against them.

Israel constructed a wall of separation in July 2003, the most drastic change to Jerusalem since 1967. Thousands of Palestinians had to flee the suburbs and towns for fear of losing access to work, schools and hospitals. Israel claims the obstruction is essential to prevent attacks. But from the Palestinian perspective, it



COURTESY OF EDNA ULLMANN-MARGALIT AND JONATHAN MALINO
Jerusalem resident Yehuda Gellman speaks during the colloquium

could potentially exile 90,000 Palestinians with Jerusalem identity cards. There is also fear that this might cause the Palestinians to be pushed out of Jerusalem forever.

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At 8:15 p.m. the Colloquium commenced with the speakers introducing themselves.

Raja Zeedani began by saying, "My head is an Israeli one. My heart is a Palestinian one." She described life as a

Palestinian living under Israeli sovereignty.

Mrs. Zeedani grew up in the West Bank and moved to Jerusalem in 1987. There, she worked at the Hyatt Regency Hotel alongside Jewish Mexicans. At the hotel she learned that it was possible to live together with Jews, an experience she was not familiar with.

"The moment you start working with people, you share," she said, referring to the difficulties of working alongside Israelis.

Jerusalem resident Yehuda Gellman came to Guilford to "speak of peace and attempt not to trade horror stories with horror stories." Gellman, the only Jew at the event wearing a yarmulke, embraced his faith openly and spoke of peace.

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COURTESY OF EDNA ULLMANN-MARGALIT AND JONATHAN MALINO

L to R: Jonathan Malino, Said Zeedani, Yehuda Gellman, Sari Nusseibah, and Avishai Margalit in Bryan Jr. auditorium



Gas prices soaring

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Student commencement speaker Terrell Elizabeth Balof-Bird
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Public transit woes

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