## Extended essay cover

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Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: **History**

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: **To what extent was the Establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine in 1948, influenced by Theodor Herzl?**

### Candidate's declaration

*If this declaration is not signed by the candidate the extended essay will not be assessed.*

I confirm that this work is my own work and is the final version. I have acknowledged each use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

Candidate's signature: [Signature]

Date: **22/01/08**
To what extent was the Establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine, in 1948, influenced by Theodor Herzl?

IB Extended Essay in History

Candidate Name:
Candidate Number:

Examination Session: May 2008
Word Count: 3,977
Abstract:

The Jewish question was an issue for thousands of years but Zionist groups were only formed throughout Europe in the late 1800s. Theodor Herzl, a Zionist, made the issue public which made people aware that there was a problem that needed to be solved. With his short book *The Jewish State*, 1986, he explained the origins of this problem and gave solutions, including establishing a Jewish state. Although he was the one to come up with a solution, to what extent did he truly influence the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, after his death?

This essay will treat Zionism, Herzl’s actions and those done after his death, including the Jewish view of the 1948 War. It will not, however reflect much of the Arab point-of-view concerning the issue.

There were political and territorial issues but land was found; Palestine. After his death in 1904, the Zionists began to immigate in Palestine. Other Zionist leaders such as Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, inventor of Modern Hebrew, did what they could to make the establishment happen.

The British had to fight out the Ottoman Empire and the UN had given permission for the establishment to be done, but the Arabs in the surrounding countries objected to this resolution. Their refusal of the Israeli foundation in Palestine started the War of Independence, in 1947, which caused many deaths on both the Jewish and Arab sides. Ben-Gurion declared Independence on the May 14th 1948. Herzl’s portrait was hanging behind him that day and later on his body was buried in Israel. His concrete movements and ideas influenced other Zionists to follow his footsteps or to contradict him. Today he is still considered the founder of Israel and will always be the man who inspired all those who contributed to the development of the State.

*Word Count: 300*
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To what extent was the Establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine, in 1948, influenced by Theodor Herzl?

Introduction

The Hebrew (Jewish) population survived many battles throughout its existence, whether they were against the Romans or the Egyptians at around 2000 B.C., they always managed to survive, until the Independence of Israel in 1948. Just when things seemed less hectic between Jews and Non-Jews, problems began throughout Europe. Once again, they felt the hatred against them growing bigger and bigger. Throughout the early 20th Century, in countries such as Germany and Poland, the non-Jews would try to make them lose their businesses by shouting and putting signs saying “Do not buy from Jews!” This was possibly due to the fact that Jews were generally more successful financially in their respective countries. Some thought it came out of jealousy towards them because they were a strong population, or maybe it was simply because they had different beliefs, which led to them being closed off. Whatever it was the rest of Europe had against them, it began passively, but gradually became more and more dangerous; windows were broken, then houses were destroyed. At one point, in the early 1930s, people were taken from their homes and had their eyes ripped out of their heads, followed by horrifying actions that led to 49 deaths, until the police intervened. In Russia there was much manslaughter as well and they were said to be the most desperate to survive. This could not go on much longer, which is why the idea of a Jewish State came up, reviving nostalgia towards the Promised Land. The Zionist who thought of founding a State that would be exclusively for Jews was a Hungarian Jew called Theodor Herzl. Although he had the idea, was the Declaration of Independence of Israel in Palestine fully influenced by him?
1. Zionism and Theodor Herzl

To understand the notion of giving the Jews their own land, the word Zionism needs to be understood. It comes from the word Zion in Hebrew. It signifies the will to return to Israel, as written in the Torah. There is a difference between being Jewish and Zionist; a Zionist is usually a Jew who feels the desire to return to his Ancestors’ land, Israel. Not all Jews felt, or still feel today, the need to have a land of their own.\textsuperscript{4} That is because they said that Judaism is a religion, not a nationality, therefore there should not be a separate country just for them, when all the other countries are actually mixed. Those anti-Zionists felt they were more French than Jewish, for example, but the Zionists tend to feel more Jewish than from their country. Nowadays the Israeli Zionists are simply called patriotic.\textsuperscript{5}

There are many reasons why it was believed that the Jews needed a State of their own. The main reason though, was because they no longer felt at home in their own homes. They constantly felt rejected by their own. The uneasiness between citizens grew so big that it became a serious issue that could no longer be ignored. Slowly, Judaism began to disappear. There were many mixed marriages which resulted in Christian or Atheist children. This was dangerous for the religion and needed to be dealt with as well. There were also some new Zionists, such as Theodor Herzl who had ideas about a country for them and was willing to try very hard to get one, not necessarily Palestine, which is what most Zionists wanted, but any country that would enable them to feel safe and that they could govern.\textsuperscript{6} It was important to get the consent of the rest of the world which, they thought, would not be a problem because it seemed everyone wanted them to leave (see appendix, photo 1).

Theodor Herzl was born in 1860 to Jewish parents. He led a very Jewish life. After going to Jewish schools in Budapest and studying law in the University of Vienna. He then became a writer in Paris. Anti-Semitism became evident to him in University after being rejected as a student fraternity member (Verbindung) because he was Jewish. The Dreyfus case\textsuperscript{7} helped him really see that Anti-Semitism was becoming a worldwide issue and that something needed to be done about it. He believed the “Jewish Question” needed an answer.\textsuperscript{8}
Unlike some may think, he was not the first Zionist. He followed the example of his grandfather’s old friend, Rabbi Yehudah Alkalai. He was also inspired by the Torah, where it is written that the Promised Land is waiting and Jerusalem is the home of all Jews. The idea of getting a Jewish State was not Herzl’s but he was the one to pursue it and take action. This followed the growing discrimination against Jews in Europe. He believed that they could use their intelligence, success and their talent to build a State that was just for them where they would not feel any suffering or the need to constantly fight for their survival. This is why he wrote his ‘pamphlet’ as he called it, “the Jewish State” (Judenstaat), in 1896. In this book he wrote a very detailed plan on how to get started with the land, how the government would function and how society would work (communication, technology, etc).

In 1896, at the age of 36, Herzl wrote a book concerning the “Jewish Question”. This book is called The Jewish State. In it he brought up the problems that Jews came across in Europe including discrimination and the feeling of rejection. After trying to find explanations to the situation of the Jews around the world throughout over 2,000 years he made it clear that there was no way for them to stay in Europe, they obviously needed to find their own land somewhere and make it their country, with new rules, new government, and a new, purer life.

At the end of the 19th Century, Palestine had been taken over by the Ottoman Empire. Herzl requested to get the land to make it a State. His demands were rejected so he turned to the British. “England, the mighty and the free. England who rules the seven seas, she will surely understand us and our aspirations.” Those were Herzl’s words as he was on his way to London. Unfortunately the British said they could not do much about it due to the fact that they did not own the land. What they were able to do, though, was give them another country. Salomea Levite, a delegate of the 6th Zionist Congress, remembered the day Herzl declared to the Jews, after much tension in the air, the news about the gift that was given to them by the British... it was Uganda. The King was giving it them so they could build a new home for themselves and begin a new life.

The opinions on this given land were split. Surprisingly, the ones who did not want Uganda were the Russians. They were in the worst state compared to all the other
Jews of Europe during those years but they rebelled against this decision, saying “We are Zionists; we want to return to our ancestral home!” His confused Herzl who did not necessarily want Palestine. He could have done well with Uganda, truly thought it was possible and did not think that the Russian Jews, who had no rights in their country, would reject the idea of a life with security. Haim Weitzman, a delegate of the Zionist movement believed that England could do better: “If the British Nation is what I think it is, it will offer us a better proposition.” Expectations concerning England were high, therefore they needed to try harder and find something better for the Jewish people.

Herzl died 10 months after the rejection, on July 3rd 1904. Some say it was out of heart break, others say he just could not take the pressure any longer. His death devastated all the Zionists and people who knew him. They considered him a great leader and friend. He left his wife and four children with almost no money. It was a very difficult situation for them to handle and they had to look up to many expectations because of their father and husband. He was buried in Vienna in the Jewish cemetery, but was then moved to Israel to be buried in what is now called “Har Herzl”, almost 50 years later. (Mountain of Herzl). The day of his first burial, there was a lot of crying and shouting. All that grief showed the fact that most of them realized what an important man Herzl was and the impact he had on the future of the Jews. With one idea he managed to transform many people’s lives into devotion towards the Promised Land. Everything he had foreseen in his book, *The Jewish State*, seemed to begin to come true after the declaration of independence, although the Jewish population of Europe had to go through much horror and depression to get to, what they thought would be freedom.

2. Beginning to Establish a Jewish State

As Jews were beginning to emigrate from the different countries of Europe, Herzl made it clear that he did not find it necessary to have Hebrew as a common language in the future Israel. However, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda believed that returning to Palestine was not the only thing that would prevent discrimination and extinction of the Jews. They also needed the Hebrew language, which at the time, was only written in the Torah. As an experiment, he raised his children speaking Hebrew. He taught them how to use feminine and masculine depending on who they were talking to or about. To do so he brought
home a male dog and a female cat so that they could speak to them due to the fact that they did not have any friends because none of them spoke their language. They were the first children to have Hebrew as their mother tongue in 2,000 years. As Hebrew was a language from the Torah, common and modern words such as train ticket, store, etc did not exist. Ben Yehuda, therefore, invented those new words that are now used everyday and are still developing.

Another issue that had risen at the time was the problem of the flag. Herzl wanted a flag with a white background and seven golden stars (see appendix, drawing 1). The white would represent the purity of their new life and the golden stars would represent the seven hours of work each day for all the Jews. This was to symbolize the fact that they began immigrating to a land that needed much hard work and patience before becoming a real country. The flag ended up with a white background and a blue Star of David that has two blue stripes at the top and bottom. The white is there for the same reason that Herzl suggested, the Star of David is there to represent the Jewish State and the blue stripes come from the Talit that men wear during their morning prayer and in the synagogue.

3. War of Independence

The United Nations made a resolution to make Palestine a Jewish State. This caused bursts of joy amongst the Jewish communities all over Europe and Palestine. There was dancing in the streets and happiness was spread everywhere. Golda Meir declared that they had waited for it for over 2,000 years and now it finally came, their feelings were beyond expression. Nimer Al-Hawari, an Arab commander, remembered watching all the Jews in Palestine “celebrate, dance and sing at the beach.” He also recalled Arabs walking in the streets shouting “The Jews are rejoicing, and the English betrayed us!”

The Arabs were furious at the news and held manifestations in Baghdad and other Arab cities. In the Southern Arabian Peninsula there were 82 murders of Jews in 3 days. Hundreds of homes were destroyed and four synagogues were burnt. In Palestine the Arabs were very hostile trying to reverse the decision that the UN made by setting shops on fire. Many Jews felt the need to leave their homes to go and live in more calm
neighborhoods. Some thought all of that was just a series of riots; others believed it was
the beginning of a war... which it was. Many Arabs left to neighboring Arab countries.  

On the road that led to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, Jews would pass in convoys
while the Arabs would hide behind concrete walls and houses attacking them. Whoever
lost there, lost the war because this was the main road that was extremely important to
both sides and that they were sentimental about. A Jewish convoy driver described how
he felt every time he drove on that road. He would have to "bite his lips and pray" that
he would survive with all his passengers while watching the convoy in front of him hit a
mine and blow up.

At the beginning the Arabs won, they destroyed cities and settlements. Jerusalem
was the most hurt, every convoy that arrived there would have wounded or even dead.
Funerals would take place almost every day although there were Haganah (defense)
officers there to make sure they were not hurt. It was a dreadful task that was very
difficult for them to carry out.

During the winter of 1947-1948, there was another attack and 50 Jews were found
dead and their bodies pulled out of the debris. Despite what the Jews first thought of that
specific attack, it was not the Arabs who did it; it was a group of pro-Arab British
people. This caused some confusion about which side the British were on. This
confusion was spread on both sides and meant that the Jews were on their own in this
war.

The British government decided to stop supporting the Jews due to the fact that it
seemed the Arabs were winning and they did not want to get more of their men killed in
between. The Arabs really looked like they were winning, even towards the end of the
war, in March 1948. The most secure place in the whole of Jewish Jerusalem, the Jewish
Agency building, was bombed down by them. They managed to enter a car with a bomb
inside it. 13 were murdered in this attack and 70 were wounded. There were complaints
by the British and the Americans that the Jewish Army was not strong enough to support
the Jews. The Secretary of the United States, George Marshall declared that accepting for
there to be a Jewish State in Palestine was a mistake. Pro-Arab Americans pressured
President Truman to prevent the establishment of the State. It was almost sure the Jews
were losing this war because there were 45 million Arabs surrounding them and only 350,000 Jews in Palestine. They were going to be pushed into the sea with no problem.\textsuperscript{37}

Dr Weitzman, who was now the leader of the Zionist group insisted on speaking with President Truman to convince him that being on the side of the Jews would not be a mistake. After all, the president did promise him to keep supporting the Jewish Independence.

The future Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion was convinced that Jerusalem had become a siege State. So he believed everything possible should be done to break this siege before anything else. The Jews were not armed very well compared to the Arabs who were fighting against them. They had illegal weapons that had to be stored and hidden according to the British. The Jews tried to get arms from anywhere as long as they had something to fight with because they needed to start acting offensively, and not just defensively. Czechoslovakia sent in some weapons for the Jews and helped them break the Arab siege in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{38}

The day the situation was changed in favor of the Jews was the day the Arab commander, Abdel Khaddar Husseini, was killed by a young Hagana fighter in March 1948. Jewish Jerusalem was saved.\textsuperscript{39} The Jews were now taking over the city. They warned the Arabs they would attack because they did not want to kill women or children; it was about territory, not about executing the Arabs. Many Arabs left and the refugee problem began. This led to the British rejection of their support of the establishment of the State. They left Palestine after 30 years, allowing the Arabs to take over their bases. As soon as they left, the Jews were ready to declare independence. Both men and women fought very hard to become independent. Women also became part of the army and helped with the watching of the different cities around the country, some even fought and knew how to use weapons.\textsuperscript{40}

As things seemed calmer, all the Arab states around Palestine brought their armies to fight against the Jews. There were 50 million Arabs from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia declaring a Holy War against 600,000 Jews. Each commander of his own army ordered his soldiers to come in from different areas of Palestine. They were convinced it would not be a war; it would be a game, a short parade across Palestine.\textsuperscript{41} They would be in Tel Aviv within two weeks.\textsuperscript{42} They would also threaten the American
government to give up their support. So the Americans found themselves with the obligation to tell the Jews that if they did not postpone their declaration of independence they would stop all fundraising for the new State. American Jews had manifestations around the White House saying they wanted a partition and not a trusteeship in Palestine. They did everything to put pressure on the President to change his decisions.43

Two days before the declaration the nine important people of the Jewish government got together and Ben Gurion asked them if they accepted to declare independence in the next two days. They were aware that there was a chance they would be facing another war if they ever did so.44 This statement comes from a source that, although written by Israelis, is quite objective, as they are critical thinkers who judge negatively the actions of the Jews since 1948 concerning the State. New Essays on Zionism45 was written in 2006 meaning they had a good enough perspective over the facts after almost 60 years. Although they are Israelis and are expected to be pro-Israeli they have a pro-Zionist but anti-Israeli view. This is an advantage as to how reliable the facts and analyses are because they cannot be accused of being against the Jews as Judaism is their religion. However, they do seem to have some prejudice against modern Israelis which makes the essays they have written become more prominent and accusatory.

Ben Gurion was convinced that they would manage to do it, and, two days later on May 14th 1948, declared independence (see appendix, photo 2). 5th Iyar 5708 (Hebrew date), he did so at the Tel Aviv Museum Building. He had led his entire life towards the day the Jews would finally be able to say that they have a State for them only that they would be safe in and could call Israel.


David Ben Gurion, May 14th 194846

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The joy and tears on people’s faces were unforgettable as these words were spoken. Happiness spread across faces of the young as well as the old. It was the rebirth of their nation. At the end of the ceremony, the Jewish National Anthem was to be played for the first time by an orchestra. This anthem is about freedom for the Jewish people in their own land. Finally they had it, it all became real.47

Unfortunately, the next day was not a very happy one; May 15th was the day the Arab countries (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan) attacked. There were ceasefires often for over a year and Arab leaders were murdered until the end of 1951. They still refused to recognise Israel, but the UN still did and allowed it to continue as a State like all others, developing slowly but surely.48

4. After Independence

Herzl and the other Jews of Europe were certain they were the only Jewish people in the world apart from the ones already living in Palestine (now Israel). They thought they only existed in countries like Russia, France, Germany, Austria, etc. In fact, there were also many Jews in North Africa, in Morocco and Tunisia for example, but also from countries like Yemen and Iran. Towards the end of the Second World War North Africa was being attacked by the Nazis but was saved in time by the British and Americans. A few years after the declaration of independence of Israel they began immigrating there, some married couples with children and others who wished to start a new family in the Holy Land. As well as attracting Jews from North Africa, Israel also brought in Jews from Yemen and Persia who also felt discriminated by the Arabs of their respective countries.49 All this information about Israelis in Israel is mostly from a DVD50 which talks about and shows many facts about the Independence of Israel. The fact that it is Israeli means that it mostly gives information about the Israeli side and less videos from the Arabic side of the time. It shows many videos directly from the War of Independence and UN meetings but does not show many interviews of Arabic leaders of the time, but mostly those of Israeli leaders such as Ben-Gurion.

To protect the new State the Israelis had a military force that was, and still is, very well trained, thanks to a British officer named Charles Orde Wingate. They also got inspired by the Swiss army, as they realized that the Swiss had good training skills and
the soldiers are highly disciplined. They used it as a model at the beginning and still do today.\textsuperscript{51}
Conclusion

Herzl, as a Zionist, believed that Palestine was the Promised Land, but as it got more difficult to obtain it, he accepted to use Uganda as the future Jewish State, but most Zionists did not agree. We can say the foundation of Israel was influenced by him; he wanted a Jewish State, but not necessarily Palestine which gave the Zionists more determination to fight harder to get the piece of land they really desired.\(^\text{52}\) It is good there were people to develop Herzl’s ideas and opinions. Without their contribution, such as inventing a common language, the State would not have survived until today. His initial ideas of a flag also inspired today’s model. The War of Independence was after Herzl’s death. Some could say that Palestine was fought over as Ben-Gurion and the Zionists wanted to follow Herzl and keep his beliefs alive by fighting for his honor. Others thought they were following their own instincts as Zionists because Herzl did not want Palestine; he just wanted what was available. Nevertheless, he is still considered as the most important Zionist leader today and is respected by the majority of the Israeli population as much nowadays as a century ago. Many Israeli leaders and members of the Zionist Congress were influenced or inspired by him, such as Eliezer Ben-Yehuda who developed his ideas or Ben-Gurion who fought to win the War of Independence. He then had Herzl’s Portrait hanging behind him on the Day of Independence, May 14\(^\text{th}\), 1948. Others contributed to the survival of the State after its establishment; Orde Wingate, for example. Those important people have monuments, centers, buildings and road junctions named after them (Ben-Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv, the Wingate (Physical Education) Institute). Herzl was not the only creator of Israel but was the first one to take action and helped all the others gain enough confidence to reach their goals. To a certain extent, the Independence of Israel would not have existed, as far as we know, if he hadn’t initiated it, but how long will it survive? And how can we be sure that Palestine was truly the best choice for the Jews, or is there another piece of land somewhere, which is idyllic for them?

Word Count: 3,977
Appendix

Drawing 1: Herzl's first idea for the design of a flag for the State of Israel.\textsuperscript{53}

Photo 1: Herzl with his family. He was determined to make a Jewish State and spent days in his study to write his Pamphlet; The Jewish State.\textsuperscript{54}

Herzl with his children in his study

Photo 2: 14\textsuperscript{th} May 1948: Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel made by David Ben-Gurion at Tel Aviv Museum. Herzl's portrait is hanging between two Israeli flags behind the new Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{55}


The Dreyfus Affair was one of the first and most scandalous anti-Semitic affairs of the 19th century and early 20th century. An officer of the French Army, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, was falsely convicted for treason for the only reason that he was Jewish, in October 1894. He was accused of passing secrets of the Army to the Germans. After being judged guilty, he was put in an island in French Guiana until July 1906, when he was pardoned by the French President, Emile Loubet. After the embarrassment he endured, he was named Knight of the Légion d'Honneur, but decided to retire in 1907. This case was published all over Europe and made clear that Dreyfus was convicted simply for being Jewish.


8 Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai was a Sephardic Jew born in 1798 in Bosnia. He was the man who raised the issues of the Jews and suggested the idea of settlements in Palestine following his Jewish Religious studies in Jerusalem. He believed that the year 1940 (5600 Hebrew year) would be the Messianic year, the year when the Jews would undergo redemption. He also foresaw the fact that Jews would have to dedicate their lives to Zion as they were going to suffer much in the future and needed to prepare for their return to Jerusalem.


21 Eliezer Ben-Yehuda was born in Lithuania in 1858. He emigrated to Palestine in 1881 and realized that the Jews from all over the world did not have a common language to communicate, apart from Yiddish which was a means of communication between European Jews only. Thanks to him, by the beginning of the 20th century, Hebrew was well spoken by most Jews living in Israel. He died of Tuberculosis in 1922.


27 The Balfour Declaration came out by the United Nations in 1917. It stated that the British government supported the Zionists in their decision to make a Jewish State in Palestine. The only condition was that they could not compromise lives of already existing communities in the area. This document is now kept in the British Library, the national library of the United Kingdom.


Bibliography

Book Sources


DVD Sources


Internet Sources


