

1917 - 2017

100 Years of Balfour

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The realisation of Zionist aspirations



David Ben-Gurion declaring independence beneath a large portrait of Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism.

On the 14th May 1948, almost 31 years after the Balfour Declaration was delivered to Lord Rothschild, David Ben-Gurion, the Executive Head of the World Zionist Organization and chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, stood and read out the Declaration of Independence, formally proclaiming the establishment of the State of Israel. Some six months earlier, following decades of unrest in the region, the United Nations General Assembly had voted to partition the remaining 23% of Mandatory Palestine into a state for the Arabs and a state for the Jews. The result was 33 to 13 in favour of the resolution, with 10 abstentions. Whilst the Arabs rejected the vote, the Jews accepted it and declared their independence. On the 15th May 1948, the armies of Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq declared a war of annihilation on the nascent state of Israel. Against all odds, Israel managed to survive and despite the ongoing conflict, has flourished beyond all expectations, becoming a country of remarkable innovation, sharing its advances in technology, medicine, science and agriculture with the world.