

History Extended Essay

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the history, Jews had to immigrate to Palestine for many reasons. For several reasons they were forced to leave their lands. For instance, the discrimination and violence that they suffered in Europe and in Russia, the attacks committed against them, their properties, their religious beliefs such as attacking synagogues, the limited work opportunities in Europe forced them to immigrate. On the other hand their own traditional beliefs also had an impact on their immigration. Because they thought that Jerusalem is the holy land especially old Jews wanted to die in and be buried at the holy land. The first significant migrations began in 1882 following the assassination of Russian tsar Alexander because violence against Jews increased and they had to migrate to Palestine. The following migration waves followed this again mostly as a result of violence, aggression and hatred that they suffered. Nevertheless, in the third and fourth wave of immigrations their desire to resettling in their holly city, Jerusalem and leaving their lands for economic reasons had an impact on their immigration. During WWII Jews suffered a lot especially because of Adolf Hitler. Accordingly, legislation against Jews in Nazi Germany, the event known as Kristallnacht and the holocaust were the most striking reasons for which Jews had to immigrate. When all the reasons of the immigrations are elaborated it can be concluded that some of the reasons stemmed from the special political and economic circumstances of the time as well as the religious and national aims of the Jewish people and these reasons cannot be taken as totally valid reasons for the immigrations. However, the terrific events of World War II are totally just and valid reasoned for the immigration of Jews, mainly to Palestine.

I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. AN OVERVIEW OF THE JEWISH IMMIGRATIONS	4
A. The Reasons of Preferring Palestine to Immigrate	4
B. The Causes of Jewish Immigrations	5
i. Discrimination and Violence against Jews in Europe	5
ii. Systematic Massacres in Russia	6
iii. Attacks to Synagogues	8
B. Jewish Immigrations to Palestine Throughout the History	Error! Bookmark not defined.
i. The First and the Second Wave of Immigrations (1882 – 1903, 1904 -1914)	9
ii. The Third Wave of Immigrations (1919 – 1923)	9
iii. The Fourth Wave of Immigrations (1923 - 1932)	10
iv. The Fifth Wave of Immigrations (1933 – 1939)	10
III. THE CAUSES FOR JEWISH IMMIGRATIONS DURING WWII	11
i. Legislation Against the Jews in Nazi Germany	11
ii. Kristallnacht	12
iii. The Holocaust	15
IV. CONCLUSION	14
REFERENCES	15

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history, Jewish community and people have played important roles in various fields and they have also experienced several difficulties since some nations have excluded and ignored them because of several reasons. Considering this fact, this paper will examine both the reasons for preferring to immigrate to Palestine and the causes for the immigration of Jews to Palestine in a detailed way with a special focus on the causes of the immigrations during World War II and will seek answers whether Jews had valid reasons to immigrate or some of the reasons were exaggerated. For this purpose, this study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter of the study includes the introduction of paper. To make an introduction to the study, the defined order of headings is provided with the rationale for the topic chosen and the methodology of study. In the second chapter, an overview of the Jewish immigrations will be covered. To do this, the causes for the immigrations such as discrimination and violence against Jews in Europe, systematic massacres in Russia and attacks to synagogues will be explained thoroughly. In the next section, Jewish immigrations to Palestine throughout the history will be addressed. In the third chapter, the causes for Jewish immigrations during World War II will be examined. To examine this issue, this chapter will be divided into three sections; namely the legislation against Jews in Nazi Germany; the Kristallnacht; and the Holocaust. In the fourth chapter, the conclusion of the study will be given with the personal comments of the author.

II. AN OVERVIEW OF THE JEWISH IMMIGRATIONS

A. The Reasons of Preferring Palestine to Immigrate

Towards the late 19th century, the violence Jewish people were subjected to in Europe started to increase. Therefore, the leading Jewish people put forth the idea of establishing a Jewish state on the holy lands in Palestine. In 1896, a journalist named Theodor Herzl wrote a book entitled the Jewish State. This book presenting the idea of founding a Jewish State in Palestine or Argentina created a tremendous impression (Mulhall 68).

However, some leaders insisted on that this place for the Jewish state had to be Palestine. Herzl, on the other hand, argued that this place be a more remote area due to the European pressures and German be the official language in this Jewish state; however, he failed to make others accept this argument. Old Jewish people also desired for passing away and being buried on the holy lands, i.e. Palestine the Jewish belief in Messiah to come to the holy lands (Mulhall 70).

The first Zionist Congress was held in Basel city of Switzerland in 1897 and Theodor Herzl was elected as the chairman. In this congress, despite the objection of some men of religion, the idea of founding a Jewish state in Palestine was adopted. The congress had a profound effect and created great excitement among Jewish people. Herzl did not approve of the new immigration wave on grounds of illegality; in the meanwhile, the congresses of similar kind were held regularly every year. Herzl tried to get support of the statesmen through negotiations (Peretz 47).

While the British, on one hand, was conveying the idea of establishing an autonomous Jewish area in Kenya; Russia, on the other hand, declared its support for the Jewish migrations to the Palestinian land but stood against the Zionist organizations in Russia (Adams 76).

In the sixth Zionist Congress, Herzl announced the British had suggested Uganda as an autonomous area for Jewish people. However, this suggestion put forth in the congress received negative reactions. Despite these reactions, an investigation team was sent to Uganda to explore the area. Upon the negative report received from the group, this suggestion for the place of the Jewish state had to be shelved. The death of Theodor Herzl in 1904 caused deep

sorrow among Jewish people. After his death, the seventh congress was held in Basel in 1905 and David Wolffsohn was elected as the chairman (Avneri 48).

After Wolffsohn, Arthur Ruppin became the chairman of the congress and he started to change the current policies. Later, he opened an office in Haifa in Palestine and became the head of this office as he was disapproving of the policies followed. His ideas were gradually put into practice and they started to purchase lands in Palestine. The International Association of Jewish people had already established 17 agricultural colonies in Palestine from 1870 to 1896. In these settlements, the efforts for creating the peasantry were paid; thus, the dependency on the need for external aids was aimed to be reduced. The Jewish National Bank and Jewish National Fund were established by the rich Jews in Europe and it aimed to fund these efforts (Beaumont 61).

At the end of the World War I, the Ottoman Empire entered in the process of dissolution and started to lose the majority of its lands. The victorious countries, France and Britain, already shared the Middle East lands between each other. France was going to have a mandate government in Syria and Lebanon; however, Britain declared the Balfour Declaration on 2 December in 1917 while the World War I was going on. Through this declaration, a possibility of founding a Jewish state in Palestine emerged. Thus, this was a great step on the way of Jewish people towards becoming a state (Beaumont 63).

B. The Causes of Jewish Immigrations

Adams states that as Jews did have limited work opportunities, as they suffered from discrimination and violence in Europe, as they wanted to die and be buried at the holly land according to their beliefs, as they suffered from systematic slaughters in Russia, as there were attacks to synagogues Jews had to immigrate (Adams 83).

i. Discrimination and Violence against Jews in Europe

The source of inspiration for modern Zionism which represents the return of Jews to their homeland is the ancient land of Israel written in the Old Testament. Political, social and economic conditions that European Jews went through in 19th century led to Zionism. In

addition during the first century A.D. after Rome was conquered the Palestine Jewish community was dispersed and the Jewish history following this also indirectly led to Zionism. Jews left the Holy Land and emigrated or were exiled to Europe. In Europe Jews continued to live in separate communities. They spent their lives according to the customs, laws and traditions of ancient Israel. Because of their religion Jews were not involved in the national life in Catholic, Protestant and Byzantine realms. Moreover, they were exiled by almost all of the leading European nations such as England, France, Germany, Rumania, Spain and Poland (Peretz56).

At this point the question on the reasons why Jews were exiled by not only one nation but by many nations comes to one's mind. When the political history is taken into consideration, it is not possible to say that Jews are always right and that nations which claim that they are excluded are always unjust. Even when today's international relations are taken into consideration there is not any event which can be categorized as fully right or unjust. The perception of each state and community is shaped by its own national and social interests. Therefore, it would not be correct and realistic to tell that the Jewish society was the only party aggrieved by European countries.

ii. Systematic Massacres in Russia

The term pogrom which is generally used for the attacks committed against Jews in the late 19th and 20th centuries in the Russian Empire means a mob attack which authorities shut their eyes to or accept and which is against people or property of racial, religious or national minority. In Russian program means riot or devastation (New York City, United States).

After Tsar Alexander II was assassinated the first serious pogroms started in 1881. Even if the person who killed Tsar Alexander II was not a Jew and even if people could find only one Jew who is related to him, because of rumors Jews and their properties were attacked in many towns and cities in Russia. Till 1900s the number of pogroms decreased however pogroms became widespread in the country from 1903 to 1906. Hence, pogroms against Jews were occasional and not widespread at all till the end of Russian monarchy (New York City, United States).

It was largely believed that it was not the Russian central government that organized pogroms. Nevertheless, the anti-Semitic policy that the government adopted paved the way for pogroms from 1881 to 1917. Because Jews were officially persecuted and harassed it was widely believed that violence against Jews was legitimate. In addition when a few high and minor officials participated in attacks and when the government somehow shut its eyes to pogroms or when the government did nothing to punish the responsible people, this belief was reinforced (New York City, United States).

When the reasons are analyzed it can be observed that it is not possible to say that only one party is right. From time to time even if governments did not engage in activities mentioned above as a state policy, governments can be involved in illegal activities in line with social reactions and demands. In this sense, even if a state is not responsible for such an activity, it can support secretly these kinds of illegal and inhumane activities. Therefore, it can be stated that Jews were exposed to semi-official but systematic discrimination and violence even if they were not exposed to massacre in Russia.

iii. Attacks to Synagogues

In many European countries synagogues were attacked, which was another reason for which Jews immigrated. Synagogue is a symbol of Judaism. Therefore the fact that it was attacked is quite significant in terms of analyzing the relationship between the secular authorities and the church, the law, the theology of glory. While synagogues were not attacked among the pagans, for Christian theologians synagogue was a symbol of the Judaism which is the rival of Christianity. Therefore according to Perry (76) attacks to synagogues are taken as the hostility of Christianity which is politically supported and theologically encouraged towards Judaism.

Unfortunately from time to time various communities in the world can be hostile to other societies which do not belong to their religion. There can be similar activities which are considered as normal by fanatic groups of every religion and even groups of different sects in the same religion. It is unacceptable that societies that belong to religions which gives importance to peace and fraternity to be hostile to people from other religions. However, Jews were also involved in such activities in order to reach their own religious aims. Considering all of these, the fact that only Jews are complaining about these kinds of actions does not necessarily show that Jews are totally right.

B. GREAT JEWISH IMMIGRATIONS TO PALESTINE THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY

Throughout the history several great immigration waves of the Jews to Palestine took place. In this chapter the most important and considerable of the five immigration waves, their reasons, consequences and the comments of the author will be given.

ii. The First and the Second Wave of Immigrations (1882 – 1903, 1904 – 1914)

The year 1882 is recorded as the most important year as being the beginning of migrations creating the State of Israel. In the year 1881, following the death of Russian tsar Alexander, a significant rise of violence towards Jews was noted. Laws were passed in order to stop the bias (Mulhall 87). Moreover, this bias was not only seen in Russia, but the whole Eastern Europe was against Jews. While some Jews were settling to the United States, some others wished to migrate to Palestine (Avneri 51).

Claiming that not only Russia but also the whole Eastern Europe were against the Jews does not sound reasonable. In order to be able to have a complete picture of the causes and consequences one should have a thorough look at the political and economic situations of the time in the aforementioned countries. Otherwise it would not be realistic to claim that Russia and the whole Eastern Europe allied against the Jews, who were only minorities living in these countries. However, this does not mean that Jews of the time did not suffer from certain discrimination and cruelty but it is possible to accuse too many for having allied against Jews at that time.

iii. The Third Wave of Immigrations (1919 – 1923)

The migration recession due to the First World War was ceased after the war. At this time, migrations were just mere continuations of the formers. However, among the Jews migrating, the most sophisticated immigrants came from Romania, Russia, Hungary, and Poland. The dominant cause of these migrations were the foundation of an England-based government in Palestine, and the announcement of Balfour Declaration dating to 1917, which supports Jews in setting up a state of their own in the region (Beaumont 67). Therefore, in the background, political grounds were present to the immigrations.

As it can be observed here one of the main reasons why Jews were willing to immigrate to Palestine is to fulfill their aim of resettling in Jerusalem, their historically and religiously holy city. It is a clear fact that any nation cannot be accused for trying to reach their national aims as long as they prefer just methods.

iv. The Fourth Wave of Immigrations (1923 - 1932)

This wave was significantly comprised of migrations from Eastern Europe. Poland was harsh on Jews, with passing laws that target Jews economically. Consequently, the middle-class of Jews had to move out of the country and migrate (Rolfe 112). The Great Depression dated in 1929, had a global effect. Thus, people who could not find what they hoped for had no choice but to migrate elsewhere.

One of the main reasons for the immigrations is seen to be the economic measures taken against the Jewish communities in the European countries. It is a commonly known fact that Jewish people have always been very active in the economic field throughout out the history and they have always dominated the economic life of the countries they have lived in. Thus, this situation received harsh criticism from the local citizens especially at the times of economic crisis. Then the local governments had to take measures, which might be considered harsh from time to time. However, it is not acceptable that certain groups of people deserve to be punished or exiled for being economically active.

v. The Fifth Wave of Immigrations (1933 – 1939)

During this stage, the Nazis came to power in Germany under the direction of Adolf Hitler. During this time the discrimination against Jewish people began throughout Germany and the worst case of genocide occurred against the Jews as a result. Due to this, European and Middle Eastern Jews began migration on a grand scale. A significant portion of these migrants fled to Palestine and the United States of America (Garner 89).

Among all the waves of immigration the causes of the fifth wave are the most commonly known reasons worldwide and people have no doubt about how much Jewish people suffered.

III. THE CAUSES FOR JEWISH IMMIGRATIONS DURING WWII

Under the direction of Hitler during the Second World War, the German Nazis took control of many European countries. In addition to this, the attitude towards Jews and their areas were genocidal. After the death of the millions of Jews who fell victim to these genocides, the survivors were left searching for a way to leave the country by any means possible. (Curtiss 92).

When the causes of immigration during World War II are elaborated one of the main reasons is the anti-Jewish legislation in prewar Nazi Germany. Then, another reason is the event, which is commonly known as Kristallnacht. Lastly, the most tragic reason is the holocaust.

i. The legislation against Jews in Nazi Germany

The persecution of Jews and Anti-semitism was a core belief for the Nazis. The Nazi party formally declared the intention to separate the Jewish population from the rest of the Aryans and to dissolve the legal, political and civil rights of the Jews in 1920 through their party program, which was composed 25 points (ushmm.org 50).

During the initial period of Hitler's leadership from 1933 to 1939, four hundred laws and regulations were established in order to restrict the private and public lives of the Jewish people. These laws and regulations that were established by the German government impacted every Jew in the country (ushmm.org 50).

An additional wave of legislation aimed at the Jews was established through the Nuremberg Laws in 1935. These laws established firm and swift segregation of the Jews as the Jewish

people could not be admitted into state-run hospitals. Additionally, Jewish authors could not be cited in opinions or legal discourse. The Jews were also banned from serving in the army and Jewish students at university could not participate in doctoral examinations (ushmm.org 50).

As it is evident, Jews were subjected to every kind of alienation and segregation in Nazi Germany. The fundamental reason for this is known globally as Nazi's ultimate goal of forming a pure race of Germans, which they called Aryan. As the targeting of Jews by the German government was increasingly getting intense, Jews slowly had to give up their rights. First came the right of working in state. Jews were excluded from becoming civil servants only because of them being Jews, which leads to incrimination based on race. This racism then followed them even to banishment of receiving medical care and getting low rations of food. Thus, which started as discrimination within the society, rapidly became an act of ethnic cleansing. In the light of this fact it can be concluded that the law against the Jews in Nazi Germany was one of the most valid reasons for the immigration.

ii. Kristallnacht

On November 9th through November 10th of 1938, viscous programs were established by the Nazis through anti-Jew riots and state supported revolt against the German Jewish community. This was known as the "Night of Broken Glass", or the *Kristallnacht*, which refers to the many shattered windows of the Jewish synagogues, community centers, stores and homes that were destroyed during these events. In all, the rioters, which were supported by the Nazi regime, looted 7500 businesses owned by Jews, destroyed over 260 synagogues, and murdered more than 90 Jews. Additionally, the rioters damaged and destroyed Jewish schools, cemeteries, hospitals and police stations while the German emergency personnel including fire fighters and police officers, took no action. This was a defining moment in history, where the Kristallnacht intensified the anti-Jewish policy established by the Nazis, which evolved into the Holocaust (ushmm.org 50).

Frankly, at a point, discrimination of Jews reached to a collective act that was also supported by the State of Germany. Backed by the officials, from the government to the local police forces, Nazis were simply rehearsing their upcoming task of genocide. The revolt, namely the

Night of Broken Glass was the most obvious hint of what was about to come. Moreover, these were all foreshadowed after the establishment of the Nuremberg Race Laws. Therefore, it may be said that these plot of events were indeed systematical and planned and under these circumstances it can be said that Jews did not almost have any option but to immigrate.

iii. The Holocaust

The Holocaust, which was the largest genocide act against the Jewish people in the history of the world, has been analyzed many times throughout history. In this context, the holocaust began as a carefully laid out plan, which involved bigotry and lies as opposed to an immediate attack of gas chambers and shooting during the 1940s (huffingtonpost.com 1). In general terms, the holocaust is described as the systematic execution of over 5 million Jewish people during World War II by the German government.

A broader perspective can also result in examining the Holocaust from 1941, 1939 or even 1933. The Holocaust survivors amount to over 400,000 Gypsies and over 4 million Jews (Niewyk& Nicosia 127). Despite being freed from concentration camps, relieved from hiding or coming out of refuge, the instinct of these survivors was to seek out relatives that may have survived the ordeal once the situation presented itself (Niewyk& Nicosia 128).

The Holocaust, the darkest pages of human history, still stands as a main topic in many discussions, such as which groups that were subjected to ethnic cleansing shall be included in The Holocaust. The inclusion of the homosexuals, mentally and physically disabled people, Romas, or even some prisoners to the Holocaust may be a topic of controversy, however a definite fact stands still; Jews were subjected to an ethnic cleansing with many other significant groups in the society. However the cleansing of Jews was the predominant element. Moreover, one must not overlook the difficulties Jews faced after the liberation from the concentration camps. Many sought their relatives that may be alive, and many others found themselves in the middle of civil wars and traumas. Therefore, the Holocaust itself does not only cover the concentration camps, but all of the difficulties and torments of the Jewish

society. Thus, there is no doubt that holocaust is the most valid reason for the immigration acts of the Jews during World War II.

IV. CONCLUSION

To conclude the study with its general lines, it can be observed that the subject of the paper, the causes for the immigrations of Jews, was covered in four chapters. In the first chapter, a general introduction to the study was made. In the second chapter, an overview of the Jewish immigrations was made. In doing this overview, it was understood and realized that discrimination and violence against Jews in Europe, systematic massacres in Russia, and attacks to synagogues in different time periods have forced Jews to immigrate and settle down in other places. Especially by means of the offensive behavior against them, several methods of exclusions, hatred, bodily harms and immaterial damages, restrictions, massacres and killings of thousands and assimilation efforts; several nations and dictatorships oppressed these people throughout the history. However, it was also stated by the author that all the simultaneous oppressive acts by several states like Russia and Eastern European countries against Jews cannot be taken as an intentional alliance against Jews. On the contrary the economic and political circumstances of the time should be also taken into consideration in order to have an impartial and objective understanding of the events. However, the fact that there might have been certain economic and political reasons which forced the European countries and Russia to take measures should not underestimate the sufferings of the Jews at that time. In the third chapter, the causes for Jewish immigrations during World War II were handled. For this purpose, this chapter was divided into four sections which included the topics dealing with the legislation against the Jews in Nazi Germany, the Kristallnacht and the Holocaust. It can be said that, after realizing the issues addressed in this chapter, Jewish people had especially suffered a lot during World War II. The main reason for this struggle was the opinions, ideas and perceptions of the Nazi Party and mainly its leader, Adolf Hitler.

As the leader of Nazi Party, several efforts were made to exclude Jews and assimilate them and as a result his hatred caused the killings of thousands, mainly the Jews. The results of these events are still one of the most crucial, shocking, extreme and intensive events of history of humankind and all these events are the most valid and just reasons for the several immigrations of the Jews.

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