



Otte Wallisch

Older Version:

Hey guys, how are you?

Tell me, has anyone here heard of the declaration of independence?

The declaration of independence is the document on which the state of Israel declared independence. You've never heard of it?

Well, I'm going to tell you a story about it. But before I do, I will be polite and introduce myself.



My name is Otte Wallisch, and I immigrated to Israel about 90 years ago on a rickety, old ship that carried a lot of people. We left Europe and arrived in Israel in the dark, so that the British, who ruled in Israel at the time, wouldn't notice. Wow, it was really scary. The ship that we travelled on was a ship carrying illegal immigrants because according to the British, it wasn't legal to immigrate to Israel at the time- but we believed that the state of Israel belonged to the Jews!

Anyway, after I found a nice apartment in a city called Herzliya, I continued working in the field that I had learned and loved most of all – graphics and art. Despite the fact that I thought that when I'd arrive in Israel I'd work in agriculture, because in those days whoever was Zionist worked the land, I was, in the end and as I always had been, drawn to art

Even by the time I was in 4th grade, in the country that I grew up in, Austria, I loved drawing and my parents sent me to a drawing class. I was an excellent artist!

In Israel, I opened a graphic art business and started making a name for myself. One day, I was contacted by the office of David Ben-Gurion (the first prime minister). They said that he was about to declare the foundation of the state of Israel and asked me to design the scroll of the declaration of independence- the one that would be signed by everyone. It was really exciting and I will never forget that moment.

Ok, if I'm going to be honest with you, it happened a little bit by accident. The person who was supposed to write the scroll made a mistake and spilled ink on the scroll, so they called me instead. But, you know what? I'm not sure it makes a difference because at the end of the day I was the one to write the scroll that everyone is familiar with.

I took my pen in hand and my hands started shaking. Can you imagine? The state of Israel is being founded, and I, Otte Wallisch, the kid from Austria, am honored with writing the scroll of the declaration of independence? There is nothing quite as moving as that. How I wished that my parents could have seen that moment- they would have been so proud.

You know what? I was also one of those who tried designing the flag for the new state of Israel. There was a competition between different designers. Unfortunately, my flag was not chosen. Never mind, the main thing is that I took part. I was a true Zionist. After that, I had the honor of designing many other things in the new state of Israel. Stamps, notes, and many posters that were sent all over the world.

Guys, I want to tell you that it was a huge honor for me - the little kid who immigrated to Israel - to connect between Jews from all over the world, via the field that I love- drawing. I succeeded in creating posters, symbols and drawings that were sent all over the world and created connections between Jewish people living in different countries. Art goes above and beyond languages and, therefore, everyone can understand it. I had the honor of connecting Jewish people and creating closer relationships between them.