



Voice α

I belong to a group of people who, from the time when Britain conquered Palestine, have not ceased to strive for the achievement of genuine peace between Jew and Arab.

By genuine peace, we inferred and still infer that both peoples should together develop the Land without one imposing his will on the other. In view of the international usages of our generation, this appeared to us to be very difficult but not impossible. We were and still are well aware that in this unusual - even unexampled - case, it is a question of seeking new ways of understanding and cordial agreement between the nations. Here again, we stood and still stand under the sway of a commandment.

We considered it a fundamental point that in this case two vital claims are opposed to each other, two claims of a different nature and a different origin, which cannot be pitted one against the other and between which no objective decision can be made as to which is just or unjust. We considered and still consider it our duty to understand and to honour the claim that is opposed to ours and to endeavour to reconcile both claims. We cannot renounce the Jewish claim; something even higher than the life of our people is bound up with the Land, namely, the work that is their divine mission. But we have been and still are convinced that it must be possible to find some form of agreement between this claim and the other; for we love this land and we believe in its future, and, seeing that such love and such faith are surely present on the other side as well, a union in the common service of the Land must be within the range of the possible. Where there is faith and love, a solution may be found even to what appears to be a tragic contradiction.

Martin Buber

Letter to Ghandi, 1939

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/BuberGandhi.html>



Voice 1

Two brief remarks: In the first place, if anyone objects that this point of view is immoral, I answer: It is not true; either Zionism is moral and just or it is immoral and unjust. But that is a question that we should have settled before we became Zionists. Actually we have settled that question, and in the affirmative.

We hold that Zionism is moral and just. And since it is moral and just, justice must be done, no matter whether Joseph or Simon or Ivan or Achmet agree with it or not. There is no other morality.

All this does not mean that any kind of agreement is impossible, only a voluntary agreement is impossible. As long as there is a spark of hope that they can get rid of us, they will not sell these hopes, not for any kind of sweet words or tasty morsels, because they are not a rabble but a nation, perhaps somewhat tattered, but still living. A living people makes such enormous concessions on such fateful questions only when there is no hope left. Only when not a single breach is visible in the iron wall, only then do extreme groups lose their sway, and influence transfers to moderate groups. Only then would these moderate groups come to us with proposals for mutual concessions. And only then will moderates offer suggestions for compromise on practical questions like a guarantee against expulsion, or equality and national autonomy.

I am optimistic that they will indeed be granted satisfactory assurances and that both peoples, like good neighbors, can then live in peace. But the only path to such an agreement is the iron wall, that is to say the strengthening in Palestine of a government without any kind of Arab influence, that is to say one against which the Arabs will fight. In other words, for us the only path to an agreement in the future is an absolute refusal of any attempts at an agreement now.

Ze'ev Jabotinsky

The Iron Wall, 1923

<http://www.marxists.de/middleeast/ironwall/ironwall.htm>



Voice א

The idea I have developed in this pamphlet is an ancient one: It is the restoration of the Jewish State. . . The decisive factor is our propelling force. And what is that force? The plight of the Jews. . . I am profoundly convinced that I am right, though I doubt whether I shall live to see myself proved so. Those who today inaugurate this movement are unlikely to live to see its glorious culmination. But the very inauguration is enough to inspire in them a high pride and the joy of an inner liberation of their existence. . .

The plan would seem mad enough if a single individual were to undertake it; but if many Jews simultaneously agree on it, it is entirely reasonable, and its achievement presents no difficulties worth mentioning. The idea depends only on the number of its adherents. Perhaps our ambitious young men, to whom every road of advancement is now closed, and for whom the Jewish state throws open a bright prospect of freedom, happiness, and honor perhaps they will see to it that this idea is spread. . .

I consider the Jewish question neither a social nor a religious one, even though it sometimes takes these and other forms. It is a national question, and to solve it we must first of all establish it as an international political problem to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council.

We are a people — one people.

Palestine is our unforgettable historic homeland. . . Let me repeat once more my opening words: The Jews who will it shall achieve their State. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and in our own homes peacefully die. The world will be liberated by our freedom, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness. And whatever we attempt there for our own benefit will rebound mightily and beneficially to the good of all mankind.

Theodore Herzl

The Jewish State, 1896

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Zionism/herzlex.html>



Voice 7

In sum: Hibbat Zion [love of Zion], no less than "Zionism," wants a Jewish State and believes in the possibility of the establishment of a Jewish State in the future.

But while "Zionism" looks to the Jewish State to furnish a remedy for poverty and to provide complete tranquility and national glory, Hibbat Zion knows that our State will not give us all these things until "universal Righteousness is enthroned and holds sway over nations and States" -- it looks to a Jewish State to provide only a "secure refuge" for Judaism and a cultural bond to unite our nation.

"Zionism," therefore, begins its work with political propaganda; Hibbat Zion begins with national culture, because only through the national culture and for its sake can a Jewish State be established in such a way as to correspond with the will and the needs of the Jewish people.

Asher Ginsberg (Ahad Ha'am)

1897

<http://www.uscj.org/Koach/bimaterials.htm>



Voice

It all seems very clear: From now on our principal idea must be Labor. Through no fault of our own we have been deprived of this element and we must seek a remedy. Labor is our cure. The ideal of Labor must become the pivot of all our aspirations. It is the foundation upon which our national structure is to be erected.

Only by making Labor, for its own sake, our national ideal will we be able to cure ourselves of the plague that has affected us for many generations and mend the rent between ourselves and Nature. Labor is a great human ideal. It is the ideal of the future, and a great ideal can be a healing sun. Though the purpose of history is not, to be sure, to act the teacher, still the wise can and must learn from it. We can learn from our condition in the past and in the present, for we must now set the example for the future. We must all work with our hands.

We need a new spirit for our national renaissance. That new spirit must be created here in Palestine and must be nourished by our life in Palestine. It must be vital in all its aspects, and it must be all our own.

A.D. Gordon

1911

<http://www.uscj.org/Koach/bimaterials.htm>



Voice 1

Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) is not something apart from the soul of the Jewish people; it is no mere national possession, serving as a means of unifying our people and buttressing its material, or even its spiritual, survival.

Eretz Israel is part of the very essence of our nationhood; it is bound organically to its very life and inner being. Human reason, even at its most sublime, cannot begin to understand the unique holiness of Eretz Israel; it cannot stir the depths of love for the land that are dormant within our people.

What Eretz Israel means to the Jew can be felt only through the Spirit of the Lord which is in our people as a whole, through the spiritual cast of the Jewish soul, which radiates its characteristic influence to every healthy emotion. This higher light shines forth to the degree that the spirit of divine holiness fills the hearts of the saints and scholars of Israel with heavenly life and bliss.

Abraham Isaac Kook

Written between 1910 and 1930

<http://www.uscj.org/Koach/bimaterials.htm>