

1. Leon Pinsker, from “Auto-Emancipation,” 1882

The Jews are not a living nation; they are everywhere aliens, therefore they are despised.

The civil and political emancipation of the Jews is not sufficient to raise them in the estimation of the peoples.

The proper, the only remedy, would be the creation of a Jewish nationality, of a people living upon its own soil, the auto-emancipation of the Jews; their emancipation as a national among nations by the acquisition of a home of their own.

We should not persuade ourselves that humanity and enlightenment will ever be radical remedies for the malady of our people.

The lack of national self-respect and self-confidence of political initiative and of unity, are the enemies of our national renaissance.

In order that we may not be constrained to wander from one exile to another, we must have an extensive, productive place of refuge, a *rendezvous* which is our own.

The present moment is more favorable than any other for the plan unfolded.

The international Jewish question must receive a national solution. Of course, our national regeneration can only proceed slowly. We must take the first step. Our *descendants* must follow us in measured and not over-hasty time.

A way must be opened for the national regeneration of the Jews by a congress of Jewish notables.

No sacrifice would be too great in order to reach the goal which will assure our people's future, everywhere endangered.

2. Theodor Herzl, from “A Solution of the Jewish Question,” 1896

Let the sovereignty be granted us over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the requirements of the nation - the rest we shall manage for ourselves...The creation of a new state has in it nothing ridiculous or impossible. We have, in our day, witnessed the process in connection with nations which were not in the bulk of the middle class, but poor, less educated, and therefore weaker than ourselves. The governments of all countries, scourged by antisemitism, will serve their own interests, in assisting us to obtain the sovereignty we want...For I propose an inner migration of Christians into the parts slowly and systematically evacuated by Jews...we shall be able to effect a transfer of property from Jews to Christians in a manner so peaceable and on so extensive a scale as has never been known in the annals of history.

Everything must be carried out with due consideration for acquired rights and with absolute conformity to law, without compulsion, openly and by light of day, under the supervision of authority and the control of public opinion. . . .

[Our clergy] must...clearly understand from the outset, that we do not mean to found a theocracy, but a tolerant modern civil state. We shall, however, rebuild the Temple in glorious remembrance of the faith of our fathers. We shall unroll the new banner of Judaism - a banner bearing seven [five pointed] stars on a white field. The white field symbolizes our pure new life, the seven stars, the seven golden hours of a working day. For we shall march into the Promised Land carrying the badge of labour. . . .

Shall we choose [the] Argentine [Republic] or Palestine? We will take what is given us and what is selected by Jewish public opinion. . . .

The very name of Palestine would attract our people with a force of extraordinary potency. Supposing His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return pledge ourselves to regulate the whole finances of Turkey. There we should also form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism. . . .

What form of constitution shall we have? I incline to an aristocratic republic, although I am an ardent monarchist in my own country. . . .

What language shall we speak? Every man can preserve the language in which his thoughts are at home. Switzerland offers us an example of the possibility of a federation of tongues. . . .

But we can do nothing without the enthusiasm of our own nation. The idea must make its way into the most distance miserable holes where our people dwell [and] into their lives will come a new significance. Let each of them but think of himself, and what vast proportions the movement must assume! And what glory awaits those who fight unselfishly for the cause! A wondrous generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabean will rise again.

3. Theodor Herzl, from *The Jewish State*, 1896

We must not visualize the exodus of the Jews as a sudden one. It will be gradual, proceeding over a period of decades. The poorest will go first and cultivate the soil. They will construct roads, bridges, railways, and telegraph installations, regulate rivers, and provide themselves with homesteads, all according to predetermined plans. Their labor will create trade, trade will create markets, and markets will attract new settlers—for every man will go voluntarily, at his own expense and his own risk. The labor

invested in the soil will enhance its value. The Jews will soon perceive that a new and permanent frontier has been opened up for that spirit of enterprise which has heretofore brought them only hatred and obloquy.

4. The First Zionist Congress, “The Basel Program,” 1897

The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law.

The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

1. The promotion, on suitable lines, of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.
2. The organization and binding together of the whole Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.
3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.
4. Preparatory steps towards obtaining government consent, where necessary, to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.

5. Max Nordau, from “Zionism,” 1902

The new Zionism, which has been called political, differs from the old, religious, messianic variety in that it disavows all mysticism, no longer identifies itself with messianism, and does not expect the return to Palestine to be brought about by a miracle, but desires to prepare the way by its own efforts. The, new Zionism has grown only in part out of the inner impulses of Judaism itself, out of the enthusiasm of modern educated Jews for their history and martyrology, out of an awakened pride in their racial qualities, out of ambition to save the ancient people for a long, long future and to add new great deeds of posterity to those of their ancestors. For the rest, Zionism is the result of two impulses which came from without: first, the principle of nationality, which dominated thought and sentiment in Europe for half a century and determined the politics of the world; second, anti-Semitism, from which the Jews of all countries suffer to some degree.

6. James Balfour, “The Balfour Declaration,” 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty’s Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

His Majesty’s Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours,

James Balfour

7. David Ben-Gurion, from “The Imperatives of the Jewish Revolution,” 1944

What, therefore, is the meaning of our contemporary Jewish revolution—this revolt against destiny which the vanguard of the Jewish national renaissance has been cultivating in this small country for the last three generations? Our entire history in the Galut has represented a resistance of fate—what, therefore, is new in the content of our contemporary revolution? There is one fundamental difference: In the Galut the Jewish people knew the courage of non-surrender, even in the face of the noose and the auto-da-fe, even, as in our day, in the face of being buried alive by the tens of thousands. But the makers of the contemporary Jewish revolution have asserted: Resisting fate is not enough. We must master our fate; we must take our destiny into our own hands! This is the doctrine of the Jewish revolution—not nonsurrender to the Galut but making an end of it.

Galut means dependence—material, political, spiritual, cultural, and intellectual dependence—because we are aliens, a minority, bereft of a homeland, rootless and separated from the soil, from labor, and from basic industry. Our task is to break radically with this dependence and to become masters of our own fate—in a word, to achieve independence. To have survived in the Galut despite all odds is not enough; we must create, by our own effort, the necessary conditions for our future survival as a free and independent people. The meaning of the Jewish revolution is contained in one word— independence! Independence for the Jewish people in its homeland!

Dependence is not merely political or economic; it is also moral, cultural, and

intellectual, and it affects every limb and nerve of the body, every conscious and subconscious act. Independence, too, means more than political and economic freedom; it involves also the spiritual, moral, and intellectual realms, and, in essence, it is independence in the heart, in sentiment, and in will. From this inner sense of freedom outer forms of independence will develop in our way of life, social organization, relations with other people, and economic structure. Our independence will be shaped further by the conquest of labor and the land, by broadening the range of our language and its culture, by perfecting the methods of self-government and self-defense, by creating the framework and conditions for national independence and creativity, and finally—by attaining political independence. This is the essence of the Jewish revolution.