

1. Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Evidence Submitted to the Palestine Royal Commission," House of Lords, London, February 11, 1937

[T]hree generations have given much thought to analyzing the Jewish position and have come to the conclusion that the cause of our suffering is the very fact of the Diaspora, the bedrock fact that we are everywhere a minority. It is not the anti-Semitism of men; it is, above all, the anti-Semitism of things, the inherent xenophobia of the body social or the body economic under which we suffer.

The phenomenon called Zionism may include all kinds of dreams—a “model community,” Hebrew culture, perhaps even a second edition of the Bible—but all this longing for wonderful toys of velvet and silver is nothing in comparison with that tangible momentum of irresistible distress and need by which we are propelled and borne.

We are not free agents. We cannot “concede” anything. Whenever I hear the Zionist, most often my own Party, accused of asking for too much— Gentlemen, I really cannot understand it. Yes, we do want a State; every nation on earth, every normal nation, beginning with the smallest and the humblest who do not claim any merit, any role in humanity’s development, they all have States of their own. That is the normal condition for a people. Yet, when we, the most abnormal of peoples and therefore the most unfortunate, ask only for the same condition as the Albanians enjoy, to say nothing of the French and the English, then it is called too much. I should understand it if the answer were, “It is impossible,” but when the answer is, “It is too much,” I cannot understand it. I would remind you (excuse me for quoting an example known to every one of you) of the commotion which was produced in that famous institution when Oliver Twist came and asked for “more.” He said “more” because he did not know how to express it; what Oliver Twist really meant was this: “Will you just give me that normal portion which is necessary for a boy of my age to be able to live.” I assure you that you face here today, in the Jewish people with its demands, an Oliver Twist who has, unfortunately, no concessions to make. What can be the concessions? We have got to save millions, many millions. I do not know whether it is a question of rehousing one-third of the Jewish race, half of the Jewish race, or a quarter of the Jewish race; I do not know; but it is a question of millions.

I am going to make a “terrible” confession. Our demand for a Jewish majority is not our maximum—it is our minimum: it is just an inevitable stage if only we are allowed to go on salvaging our people. The point when the Jews will reach a majority in that country will not be the point of saturation yet—because with 1,000,000 more Jews in Palestine

today you could already have a Jewish majority, but there are certainly 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 in the East who are virtually knocking at the door asking for admission, i.e., for salvation.

I have the profoundest feeling for the Arab case, in so far as that Arab case is not exaggerated. This Commission have already been able to make up their minds as to whether there is any individual hardship to the Arabs of Palestine as men, deriving from the Jewish colonization. We maintain unanimously that the economic position of the Palestinian Arabs, under the Jewish colonization and owing to the Jewish colonization, has become the object of envy in all the surrounding Arab countries, so that the Arabs from those countries show a clear tendency to immigrate into Palestine. I have also shown to you already that, in our submission, there is no question of ousting the Arabs. On the contrary, the idea is that Palestine on both sides of the Jordan should hold the Arabs, their progeny, and many millions of Jews. What I do not deny is that in that process the Arabs of Palestine will necessarily become a minority in the country of Palestine. What I do deny is that that is a hardship. It is not a hardship on any race, any nation, possessing so many National States now and so many more National States in the future. One fraction, one branch of that race, and not a big one, will have to live in someone else's State: Well, that is the case with all the mightiest nations of the world. I could hardly mention one of the big nations, having their States, mighty and powerful, who had not one branch living in someone else's State. That is only normal and there is no "hardship" attached to that. So when we hear the Arab claim confronted with the Jewish claim; I fully understand that any minority would prefer to be a majority, it is quite understandable that the Arabs of Palestine would also prefer Palestine to be the Arab State No. 4, No. 5, or No. 6—that I quite understand; but when the Arab claim is confronted with our Jewish demand to be saved, it is like the claims of appetite versus the claims of starvation. No tribunal has ever had the luck of trying a case where all the justice was on the side of one party and the other party had no case whatsoever. Usually in human affairs any tribunal, including this tribunal, in trying two cases, has to concede that both sides have a case on their side and, in order to do justice, they must take into consideration what should constitute the basic justification of all human demands, individual or mass demands—the decisive terrible balance of Need. I think it is clear.

In our opinion [the plan for Palestine] should embrace agrarian reforms, taxation, and customs reforms, a reform of the Civil Service, opening up of Trans-Jordan for Jewish penetration, and assurance of public security by the establishment of a Jewish contingent and by the legalization of Jewish self-defense.

2. Moshe Shamir, "For a Greater Israel," September 22, 1967

The IDF victory in the Six-Day War has catapulted the people and the state into a new and portentous period. Greater Israel is now in the Jewish people's hands. Just as we dare not abandon the State of Israel, we are commanded to perpetuate what is now in her hands: the Land of Israel. We commit fully and steadfastly to the fullness of our land—uniting the Jewish people's past with the Jewish people's future. No government has the right to relinquish that wholeness. The current borders of our state guarantee security and peace while expanding the horizons that once were missing, encouraging a thorough national renewal, physically and spiritually. Within these borders, all will enjoy freedom and equality: the fundamental rights the State of Israel provides all of its inhabitants, with no distinctions. Our future depends on the two principles of continuing aliyah, immigration, and settling the land. A mass migration from all over the Jewish Diaspora is an essential condition for fulfilling the Land of Israel's full national destiny. The new missions and possibilities this era evokes will trigger a new awakening and focus for the People of Israel and the Land of Israel. . . .

3. The Tehiya Party Platform, 1988

The exclusive and eternal right to the Land of Israel lies with the Jewish people. That right is anchored in the heritage of the Jewish People and the Zionist vision. This right cannot be surrendered, abrogated, or transferred under any condition. No government has the authority to yield up any portion of the Land of Israel whatsoever. Any political solution that includes the withdrawal from portions of the Land of Israel under our control is summarily invalid. We will oppose all forms of territorial compromise or plans for autonomy. Tehiya will continue to struggle in the Knesset as in the past to legislate the Law of Sovereignty that will apply Israel's sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. On that day that the Law of Sovereignty will be passed the name of the state will be changed from "Israel" to "Eretz-Yisra'el"—the Land of Israel.

4. Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, 1951

I have written this book primarily for my own people, lest the Jew forget again—as he so disastrously forgot in the past—this simple truth: that there are things more precious than life, and more horrible than death. But I have written this book also for Gentiles, lest they be unwilling to realize, or all too ready to overlook, the fact that out of blood and fire and tears and ashes a new specimen of human being was born, a specimen completely unknown to the world for over eighteen hundred years, "the Fighting Jew."

That Jew, whom the world considered dead and buried never to rise again, has arisen. For he has learned that “simple truth” of life and death, and he will never again go down to the sides of the pit and vanish from off the earth. . . .

It is axiomatic that those who fight have to hate—something or somebody. And we fought. We had to hate first and foremost, the horrifying, age-old, inexcusable utter defenselessness of our Jewish people, wandering through millennia, through a cruel world, [exposed to the masses for whom] . . . the defenselessness of the Jews was a standing invitation to massacre them. We had to hate the humiliating disgrace of the homelessness of our people. We had to hate—as any nation worthy of the name must and always will hate—the rule of the foreigner, rule, unjust and unjustifiable per se, foreign rule in the land of our ancestors, in our own country. We had to hate the barring of the gates of our own country to our own brethren, trampled and bleeding and crying out for help in a world morally deaf. . . . And in our case, such hate has been nothing more and nothing less than a manifestation of that highest human feeling: love. For if you love Freedom, you must hate Slavery; if you love your people, you cannot but hate the enemies that compass their destruction; if you love your country, you cannot but hate those who seek to annex it.

5. Benjamin Netanyahu, "A Place Among the Nations," 1993

In 636, after a brief return of the Byzantines under Heraclius, the Arabs burst into the land—after having destroyed the large and prosperous Jewish populations of the Arabian Peninsula root and branch. The rule of the Byzantines had been harsh for the Jews, but it was under the Arabs that the Jews were finally reduced to an insignificant minority and ceased to be a national force of any consequence in their own land. . . . In combination with the turmoil introduced into the land by the Arab conquest, these policies finally succeeded in doing what the might of Rome had not achieved: the uprooting of the Jewish farmer from his soil. Thus it was not the Jews who usurped the land from the Arabs, but the Arabs who usurped the land from the Jews.

The first result of the atrophy of Jewish resistance was physical destruction on an unimaginable scale. No other people has paid such a price for being defenseless. But there was a second fateful consequence: Slowly and surely, through the centuries of exile, the image and character of the Jew began to change. For non-Jews, the glorious Jewish past faded into dim memory and irrelevance. The word Jew became an object of contempt, derision, at best pity. It became synonymous with the word coward in a hundred different tongues. The adjective wandering was affixed to it, signifying the rootlessness and precariousness of Jewish existence. . . . Worse, a substantial

segment of Jewish opinion assimilated this disparaging image of the Jew, and many Jews came to view themselves as other had come to view them. This took on a particularly pernicious twist in the modern era. As the doctrines of modern pacifism emerged, many Jews rushed to embrace them, pretending they could transform into a universal virtue what had always been a unique vulnerability of the Jews. That the Jews “would not” (could not) resort to arms, that they would not “demean” themselves by “stooping to violence,” was taken to be a clear sign of their moral superiority over other peoples who were not similarly constrained. Once leading segments of Jewish opinion in Europe had transformed Jewish weakness into positive good, the Jewish people’s chances of escaping its fate reached a new low. . . .

With the founding of the State of Israel, the majority of Jews quickly came to understand the critical importance of military power—a change far more abrupt and spectacular than the gradual loss of this understanding had been. For if the rendering of the Jews from a militant to a docile people had taken place over many centuries, here in the space of only a few years a reborn Jewish sovereignty rediscovered the art of soldiering. . . .

But the change in the way the Jews viewed themselves was even more dramatic. It had begun as early as the 1890s. Visitors to Palestine at the time noted a change in the first generation of Jewish youngsters who had been raised on the land outside the enclosed ancient Jewish quarters of Safed and Jerusalem. Unlike their Orthodox brethren, these young Jews, mostly sons and daughters of recent immigrants, cultivated the land, rode horses, learned to shoot, spoke a revived Hebrew, and were capable of befriending or confronting the Arabs, earning their respect if not their love. Israel encounters difficulties in explaining its position that no other nation encounters. No other country faces both constant threats to its existence and constant criticism for acting against such threats. . . .

This is an important part of the secret of the success of Arab propaganda: It appeals to a world that has not yet accustomed itself to the sight of Jewish strength, military and political. It implicitly urges philo-Semites to yearn for a “purer” age when Jews were beyond reproach because they were beyond succor.

But now the Jews have entered a new phase in their history. Since the rise of Israel, the essence of their aspirations has changed. If the central aim of the Jewish people during exile was to retrieve what had been lost, the purpose now is to secure what has been retrieved. It is a task that has barely begun, and its outcome is of profound import not only for the fate of the Jews but for all mankind. . . .

The rebirth to Israel is thus one of humanity's great parables. It is the story not only of the Jews, but of a human spirit that refuses again and again to succumb to history's horrors. It is the incomparable quest of a people seeking, at the end of an unending march, to assume its rightful place among the nations.