

## **1. Ahad Ha-Am ["One of the People"] (Asher Avi Ginsberg), "The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem," 1897**

The truth is bitter, but with all its bitterness it is better than illusion. We must admit to ourselves that the "ingathering of the exiles" is unattainable by natural means. We may, by natural means, someday establish a Jewish State; it is possible that the Jews may increase and multiply, within it until the "land is filled with them" — but even then the greater part of our people will remain scattered on foreign soils. "To gather our scattered ones from the four corners of the earth" (in the words of the Prayer Book) is impossible. Only religion, with its belief in a miraculous redemption, can promise such a consummation. But if this is so, if the Jewish State, too, means not an "ingathering of the exiles" but the settlement of a small part of our people in Palestine, then how will this solve the material problem of the Jewish masses in the lands of the Diaspora?...

Judaism is, therefore, in a quandry: It can no longer tolerate the Galut<sup>15</sup> form which it had to take on, in obedience to its will-to-live, when it was exiled from its own country; but, without that form, its life is in danger. So it seeks to return to its historic center, where it will be able to live a life developing in a natural way, to bring its powers into play in every department, of human culture, to broaden and perfect those national possessions which it has acquired up to now, and thus to contribute to the common stock of humanity, in the future as it has in the past, a great national culture, the fruit of the unhampered activity of a people living by the light of its own spirit. For this purpose Judaism can, for the present, content itself with little. It does not need an independent State, but only the creation in its native land of conditions favorable to its development: a good-sized settlement of Jews working without hindrance in every branch of civilization, from agriculture and handicrafts to science and literature.

### **2a. Martin Buber, "The National Home and National Policy in Palestine," 1929**

It is indeed true that there can be no life without injustice. The fact that there is no living creature which can live and thrive without destroying another existing organism has a symbolic significance as regards our human life. But the human aspect of life begins the moment we say to ourselves: we will do not more injustice to others than we are forced to do in order to exist.

### **2b. "The Bi-National Approach to Zionism," 1947**

We describe our program as that of a bi-national state — that is, we aim at a social structure based on the reality of two peoples living together. The foundation of this structure cannot be the traditional ones of majority and minority, but must be different. We do not mean just any bi-national state, but this particular one, with its

particular conditions, i.e., a bi-national state which embodies in its basic principles... the indispensable postulate of the rescue of the Jewish people. This is what we need and not a "Jewish State:" for any national state in vast, hostile surroundings would mean premeditated national suicide, and an unstable international basis can never make up for the missing intra-national one.

Prevailing Zionist policy hitherto adhered to the axiomatic view that international agreement had to precede, no, determine the intra-national agreement with the Arabs. It is imperative to reverse this order: it is essential to arrive at an intra-national agreement, which is later to receive international sanction....

It should, of course, be borne in mind that genuine despair was prevailing, brought on by an action of extermination never before experienced by any other nation, as well as by the indifference of the world in the face of this action. Yet, despair does not usually render judgment more keen, rather does it lead to an intoxication by political fictions...especially since after an action of extermination of this kind, the poor human soul is inclined to see extermination lurking everywhere.

### **2c. "On the Moral Character of the State of Israel," 1949**

...take the question of the Arab refugees. The possibility existed for the government, and perhaps it still does now, of doing a great moral act, which could bring about the moral awakening of the public, and its influence on the world would certainly not be bad. The government could have taken the initiative of calling an international interfaith congress, with the cooperation of our people and the neighboring peoples — a congress which would have been unprecedented. I do not speak of concessions of one sort or another. The main point is that something be done on our own initiative. Were we not refugees in the diaspora?

### **3. Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf, "Will Israel Become Zion?1973**

Zionism, as I understand it, meant and means primarily the end of subservience to other [people]'s determination. It meant the fulfillment of God's promise (Lev. 26) to "break the bonds of your yoke and make you walk upright," *kom'miyut*. Zionism promised and promises a new, organic authenticity, a Jewish life lived out of inner standards, in dialogue with Jewish sources, speaking the Hebrew language, without the circumlocutions and the evasions of all our fearful ghettos. Zionism opposed and opposes that comfortable liberalism which substitutes premature utopianism for patient Jewish Messianism and which asks us to become part of the nations instead of a nation dwelling alone. Zionism opposed and opposes that Orthodox petrification which treated the *halakhah* as a fortress to be defended and not a life to be lived. . . .

Revolutionary Zionists like Hess and A. D. Gordon and Rav Kook and Martin Buber superbly refracted these traditional Jewish norms until they shone forth with a profoundly innovative communitarianism in the kibbutz, and a brave new Exodus from lands where Jews could no longer live or could not live like Jews. The conquest of the land and the conquest of labor and the conquest of self-hating atavisms were all achievements of Zionism as the authentic and unique national movement of the Jewish people everywhere. . . .

The Jewish state is a fact, ineluctable and glorious, but it is not and may never be the Zion desired by the Movement or foreshadowed by the Tradition. There has been in Israel a steady retreat from socialist and religious egalitarianism. The kibbutz is isolated and diminished and, if it is the glory of our propaganda, it is also a vulnerable island in a sea of capitalist encroachment—and now knows it is. Where Pro-Palestinian Zionism was open, the State of Israel has become triumphalist and often also expansionist. . . .

Israel colonizes the “administered” territories without regard to international law or to the rights of the indigenous Palestinian nationality. . . .

Zionism opposed Orthodox unilateralism, but in the Jewish state, Orthodoxy is empowered, entrenched, established and corrupt. . . .

Zionism spoke movingly of *kibbush avodah* (the dignity of work) but, increasingly, in the Jewish state, hard work is done by Arab hirelings. . . . Did Zionism mean to create an American-style supermarket on the Mediterranean built by Arab masons and carpenters? . . .

#### **4. Yehuda Amichai, "Tourists," 1980**

Condolence calls are all they grant us,  
Sitting in Yad Vashem, looking grave at the Western Wall  
and laughing behind heavy curtains in hotel rooms,  
Taking photos with important corpses at Rachel's Tomb  
and Herzl's grave and on Ammunition Hill,  
Crying over our young men's lovely heroism  
And lusting after our young women's prickliness  
and hanging their underwear for a quick dry  
in a cool, blue bathroom.

Once I sat on the steps by the gate at David's Tower, having laid two heavy baskets by my side. A group of tourists stood there surrounding the guide and I served as their reference point. "You see that guy over there with the baskets? A little to the right above his head is a Roman arch. A little to the right of his head." But he moved, he moved! I said to myself: Redemption will come only when they say to them: You see that Roman arch over there? Insignificant. But next to it, a little to the left and below, sits a man who just bought fruit and vegetables for his family.

#### **5. Shaul Magid, *The Necessity of Exile: Essays from a Distance***

A homeland is an expression of longing and an attachment to a place as an anchor of one's collective identity. The land of Israel is a homeland for the Jews with or without a state.