

## Talk to Peace Picnic 2008

20<sup>th</sup> July, Hove Lawns, 4.50 p.m.

In 1923 Zeev Jabotinsky wrote *The Iron Wall*, an influential essay on Zionism, the ideology behind the establishment of Israel. Here are some of the things he wrote in that book:

Any native people view their country as their national home, of which they will be complete masters. They will never voluntarily allow a new master.

So it is for the Arabs. Compromisers among us try to convince us that the Arabs are some kind of fools who can be tricked with hidden formulations of our basic goals.

I flatly refuse to accept this view of the Palestinian Arabs.

They have the precise psychology that we have. They look upon Palestine with the same instinctive love and true fervor that any Aztec looked upon his Mexico or any Sioux upon his prairie.

Each people will struggle against colonizers until the last spark of hope that they can avoid the dangers of conquest and colonization is extinguished.

The Palestinians will struggle in this way until there is hardly a spark of hope.

Force must play its role – with strength and without indulgence. In this, there are no meaningful differences between our militarists and our vegetarians.

1923 is a very long time ago, and you may say Jabotinsky was an extremist in a different time, and to quote him now is simply to stir up hatred. But actually, as he himself understood, he was not an extremist; rather he simply, and honestly, said it like it was – and, more importantly, like it is.

For the aim of the Zionist movement is not essentially different now than it was in 1923, or indeed in 1895 when Theodor Herzl published his book, *The Jewish State* – that is, the establishment and maintenance of an exclusive Jewish state.

And unfortunately for the Zionists, the Palestinians have refused to lose that ‘spark of hope’.

The Zionist project could not deliver justice to the Palestinians, as Jabotinsky so well understood. He was not interested in justice for them, he wanted to create a Jewish state regardless of the injustice this might cause to others.

Justice demands a different kind of state, a state

- which is not based upon exclusivism,
- that is not based upon Apartheid,
- that is not based upon the extinction of the hopes of non-Jews.

Justice also demands that we stop pretending.

- Pretending that a viable two-state solution is the sincere intention of the Israeli government and elite.
- Pretending that the settlements will eventually be dismantled by the Israeli government.
- Pretending that Israel is a genuine democracy.
- Pretending that Israel does not threaten other countries in the Middle East with its nuclear weapons.
- Pretending that Israel must have special privileges because of the Holocaust.
- Pretending that the concept of a Jewish state in Palestine is good, and that it is only the execution of that idea which comes into question.
- Pretending, lastly, that we can avoid the accusation of antisemitism when we demand justice for the Palestinians.

Zeev Jabotinsky was an honest man, unlike many who follow the same creed. Let us match his honesty in our opposition to that idea.