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XV 2016

A large, white, cursive signature of Simon Dubnow is centered on the cover. The signature is highly stylized and fluid, with long, sweeping lines that extend across the width of the page. It is set against a dark blue background that occupies the lower two-thirds of the cover.

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E-Mail: redaktion@dubnow.de
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Lektorat: André Zimmermann
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Inhalt

Raphael Gross Editorial	9
--------------------------------------	---

Allgemeiner Teil

Brian Horowitz, <i>New Orleans, La.</i> Principle or Expediency: Vladimir Jabotinsky's Displays of Violence and the Construction of His Leadership	15
---	----

David Biale, <i>Davis, Calif.</i> Experience vs. Tradition: Reflections on the Origins of the Buber-Scholem Controversy	33
---	----

Brian M. Smollett, <i>New York</i> Nationalism, Belonging, and Crisis: The Paths of Koppel S. Pinson and Hans Kohn	49
--	----

Atina Grossmann, <i>New York</i> Remapping Survival: Jewish Refugees and Lost Memories of Displacement, Trauma, and Rescue in Soviet Central Asia, Iran, and India	71
---	----

Schwerpunkt

“Jewish Questions” in International Politics – Diplomacy, Rights and Intervention

Herausgegeben von Markus Kirchhoff und Gil Rubin

Markus Kirchhoff/Gil Rubin, <i>Leipzig/New York</i> Introduction	101
---	-----

Israel Bartal, <i>Jerusalem</i> From <i>Shtadlanut</i> to “Jewish Diplomacy”? 1756 – 1840 – 1881	109
--	-----

Carsten L. Wilke, <i>Budapest</i> Competitive Advocacy: The Romanian Committee of Berlin and the Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1872–1878	131
David Engel, <i>New York</i> The Elite and the Street: The Schwarzbard Affair (1926–1927) as a Turning Point in Jewish Diplomacy	157
Philipp Graf, <i>Leipzig</i> The Bernheim Petition 1933: Probing the Limits of Jewish Diplomacy in the Interwar Period	167
Nathan Kurz, <i>London</i> In the Shadow of Versailles: Jewish Minority Rights at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference	187
James Loeffler, <i>Charlottesville, Va.</i> “The Famous Trinity of 1917”: Zionist Internationalism in Historical Perspective	211
Markus Kirchhoff, <i>Leipzig</i> The Westphalian System as a Jewish Concern – Re-Reading Leo Gross’ 1948 “Westphalia” Article	239
Miriam Rürup, <i>Hamburg</i> The Right to be Stateless: Dealing with Statelessness after World War II	265
Carole Fink, <i>Columbus, Oh.</i> Negotiating after Negotiations: Nahum Goldmann, West Germany, and the Origins of the 1980 Hardship Fund	287
Schwerpunkt Bruchlinien – Deutsch-israelische Wissenschaftsbeziehungen seit 1959 <i>Herausgegeben von Jörg Deventer und Magnus Klaue</i>	
Jörg Deventer/Magnus Klaue, <i>Leipzig</i> Einführung	309

Irene Aue-Ben-David/Yonatan Shiloh-Dayan, *Jerusalem*
 Observant Ventures:
 Early German-Israeli Conferences on German History 315

Ari Barell/Ute Deichmann, *Beer Sheva*
 Internationality as Moral Challenge and Practical Success:
 The Origin and Early Development of the Israeli-German
 Collaboration in the Sciences 341

Sharon Livne/Amos Morris-Reich, *Haifa*
 Early Contacts in Genetics, 1949–1965:
 A Historical-Sociological Perspective 371

Jenny Hestermann, *Frankfurt am Main*
 Vor der Diplomatie:
 Deutsch-israelische Wissenschaftsbeziehungen als Brückenbauer? . . . 399

Roni Stauber, *Tel Aviv*
 Zwischen Erinnerungspolitik und Realpolitik:
 Die israelische Diplomatie und das Verhältnis der Bundesrepublik
 zum Nationalsozialismus 419

Gelehrtenporträt

Lisa Moses Leff, *Washington, D. C.*
 Zosa Szajkowski:
 Archivdieb und Pionier der französisch-jüdischen
 Geschichtsschreibung 447

Dubnowiana

Cecile E. Kuznitz, *Annandale-on-Hudson, N. Y.*
 YIVO's "Old Friend and Teacher":
 Simon Dubnow and his Relationship to the Yiddish Scientific Institute 477

Appendix

Seven Letters of Simon Dubnow Concerning His Relationship to the
 Yiddish Scientific Institute, Selected and Annotated by Cecile E.
 Kuznitz, and Transl. from the Yiddish by Vera Szabó 496

Aus der Forschung

Lutz Fiedler, *Jerusalem*
Drei Geschichten einer Desillusionierung –
Wassili Grossman, Ilja Ehrenburg und das Jüdische Antifaschistische
Komitee 511

Literaturbericht

Elisabeth Gallas, *Leipzig*
Frühe Holocaustforschung in Amerika:
Dokumentation, Zeugenschaft und Begriffsbildung 535

Abstracts 571

Contributors 583

Editorial

Das XV. Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts widmet sich in zwei Schwerpunkten aus unterschiedlichen Blickwinkeln Stationen jüdischer beziehungsweise israelischer Diplomatiegeschichte. Der erste, von *Markus Kirchoff* (Leipzig) und *Gil Rubin* (New York) zusammengestellte und herausgegebene Schwerpunkt befasst sich mit Problemfeldern der Ausgestaltung des modernen Staatensystems seit dem 19. Jahrhundert, die für die europäischen Judenheiten von zentraler Bedeutung waren. Gezeigt wird, in welcher Form Fragen von Staatsbürgerschaft, Emanzipation, Minderheitenschutz und humanitärer Intervention in den modernen Debatten zur internationalen Politik hervortraten und welche Lösungsansätze jüdische Protagonisten entwickelten. Der zweite, in der Verantwortung von *Jörg Deventer* und *Magnus Klaue* (beide Leipzig) liegende Schwerpunkt untersucht mit dem deutsch-israelischen Wissenschaftsaustausch seit 1959 einen besonders belasteten Fall internationaler Beziehungen. Anlässlich des vor Kurzem begangenen fünfzigsten Jahrestages der diplomatischen Kontaktaufnahme zwischen beiden Ländern werden vor allem die Widersprüche und Ungleichzeitigkeiten der wissenschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit in den Blick genommen. Inwiefern wurde an Traditionen deutsch-jüdischen Geisteslebens angeknüpft und wie bildete sich der Zivilisationsbruch des Holocaust in ihnen nach? Beide Schwerpunkte werden gemäß der Tradition des Jahrbuchs von den jeweils verantwortlich Zeichnenden gesondert eingeleitet.

Die Beiträge des *Allgemeinen Teils* befassen sich mehrheitlich mit Themen aus dem breiten Feld der jüdischen Intellectual History im 20. Jahrhundert. Zu Beginn zeichnet *Brian Horowitz* (New Orleans, La.) ein politisches Profil von Vladimir Jabotinsky, dem Begründer des revisionistischen Zionismus. Er macht deutlich, dass Jabotinskys Agenda durchaus von Widersprüchen gekennzeichnet war und sein Verhältnis zur Gewalt zwischen prinzipiellen und instrumentellen Überlegungen schwankte. Im Anschluss daran verschiebt *David Biale* (Davis, Calif.) den Fokus in Richtung jüdischer Theologie. Sein Artikel spürt der Kontroverse zwischen Martin Buber und Gershom Scholem nach, die sich in den 1960er Jahren am Thema des Chasidismus entzündet hatte, deren Ursprünge jedoch, wie Biale zeigen kann, bis in die Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs zurückreichen. *Brian M. Smollett* (New York) wendet sich den jüdischen Historikern Koppel S. Pinson und Hans Kohn zu, die vor allem als Nationalismusforscher bekannt geworden sind. Er untersucht dabei die Frage, inwiefern sich die politischen Erfahrungen

JBDI / DIYB • Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook 15 (2016), 9–11.

des 20. Jahrhunderts in die jeweiligen Theorien der Wissenschaftler eingeschrieben und deren eigenen Aktivismus geprägt haben. Demgegenüber erweitert *Atina Grossmann* (New York) in ihrer ereignisgeschichtlich angelegten Studie die Historiografie des Holocaust um eine geografische Dimension. Dafür nimmt sie einen bisher wenig beachteten Aspekt jüdischer Erfahrung in den Blick, indem sie den vor den Nationalsozialisten flüchtenden Juden auf ihrem Weg nach Russland, Indien und in den Iran folgt.

In der Rubrik *Gelehrtenporträt* stellt *Lisa Moses Leff* (Washington, D. C.) mit dem in Polen gebürtigen Historiker Zosa Szajkowski einen ungewöhnlichen Vertreter seines Fachs vor. Obwohl ein Pionier der jüdisch-französischen Geschichte, gelangte Szajkowski vor allem aufgrund zahlreicher Diebstähle von Archivmaterial zu zweifelhafter Berühmtheit. Anschließend skizziert *Cecile E. Kuznitz* (Annandale-on-Hudson, N. Y.) für die Rubrik *Dubnowiana* die Beziehung Simon Dubnows zum Yidisher visnshaftlekher institut (YIVO). Die Autorin unterstreicht die schwankende Bedeutung, die Dubnow für jene zentrale Institution der jüdischen Wissenschaft besaß; darüber hinaus bezieht sie aber auch sein politisches Engagement, das sich an der Idee des Diaspora-Nationalismus ausrichtete, mit ein. Mit sieben Briefen aus der Feder Dubnows, die für diese Jahrbuch-Ausgabe übersetzt und ihr in einem Appendix beigegeben wurden, wird der Leserschaft zudem die Möglichkeit geboten, sich mittels Originaldokumenten vertieft mit dem Verhältnis zwischen Dubnow und dem YIVO zu befassen. In der Rubrik *Aus der Forschung* stellt *Lutz Fiedler* (Jerusalem) dar, wie die Hoffnung sowjetischer Juden in die soziale Utopie des Kommunismus, der ihnen den Weg in die Moderne öffnen sollte, durch den Staatsapparat bitter enttäuscht wurde. Fiedler schildert die Desillusionierung entlang der Lebenswege von Wassili Grossman und Ilja Ehrenburg, die zu den profiliertesten sowjetischen Schriftstellern ihrer Zeit zählten, sowie anhand der tragischen Geschichte des Jüdischen Antifaschistischen Komitees. Die Institution war als Reaktion auf den deutschen Angriffskrieg gegen die Sowjetunion gegründet und 1948 wegen »antisowjetischer Agitation« verboten worden. Ihre Mitglieder waren anschließend Verfolgungen ausgesetzt, viele von ihnen wurden ermordet. Das Jahrbuch wird durch einen *Literaturbericht* von *Elisabeth Gallas* (Leipzig) abgerundet, der die Entstehung und Entwicklung der frühen Holocaustforschung in Amerika zum Gegenstand hat. Ihre Studie macht deutlich, dass die wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit der deutschen Verfolgungs- und Vernichtungspolitik längst nicht erst mit dem Eichmann-Prozess 1961 anhub, sondern schon während des Zweiten Weltkriegs und in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit stattfand – und dies in einer Vielfalt und Tiefe, in der wesentliche Elemente weit späterer Diskussionen bereits aufschienen.

Am Ende dieses Editorials steht ein herzlicher Dank des Herausgebers. Für die wissenschaftliche Redaktion dieses Bandes, im Besonderen für die

enge Zusammenarbeit mit den Mitherausgebern sowie den Autorinnen und Autoren, richtet er sich an Petra Klara Gamke-Breitschopf. Die Übersetzungen aus dem Englischen und dem Hebräischen ins Deutsche sowie aus dem Jiddischen und dem Deutschen ins Englische wurden von Felix Kurz, Markus Lemke, Vera Szabó und William Templer in der bewährten Weise vorgenommen. André Zimmermann, der den Leserinnen und Lesern von Publikationen des Dubnow-Instituts bereits aus diversen Impressen bekannt ist, hat nach mehr als zehn Jahren das Lektorat des Jahrbuchs von Monika Heinker übernommen. Auch ihm gilt großer Dank, ebenso wie Jana Duman für ihren Anteil am englischsprachigen Lektorat der Beiträge. Schließlich ist vor allem Ludwig Decke, aber auch Juliane Pfeiffer zu danken, die beide mit viel Engagement und beeindruckender Zähigkeit weit über die formale Vereinheitlichung hinaus an den Beiträgen gearbeitet haben.

Im April 2017 trete ich das Amt des Präsidenten der Stiftung Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin an und lege daher mit der Herausgeberschaft des Jahrbuchs das führende Periodikum des Instituts vertrauensvoll in die Hände meiner Nachfolgerin Yfaat Weiss – verbunden mit den besten Wünschen für die Einrichtung, die engagierten Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter sowie alle Freunde und Förderer.

Raphael Gross

Leipzig/Berlin, Frühjahr 2017

Allgemeiner Teil

Brian Horowitz

Principle or Expediency: Vladimir Jabotinsky's Displays of Violence and the Construction of His Leadership

The question of whether Jabotinsky's relation to violence was instrumentalist or essentialist, whether his motives to use violence were grounded in principle or in expediency are issues that are treated here. This paper seeks to ask several questions: How did Jabotinsky defend violence and in which context? Was he successful in legitimizing his extreme form of nationalism? Essentially, he portrayed himself as a national liberator, something similar to Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had devoted himself to defense, but at a certain point availed himself of the opportunity to use power. In terms of violence, was Jabotinsky like or different from Garibaldi?

My interpretation, as laid out in my reading of his life and works, is of a politician who was deeply contradictory and pulled in diverse directions by the events and ideas of his time. Jabotinsky instrumentalized violence but also conceived of it as an essential part of his program. The image of violence and aggression played a central part in the ideology and practice of his movement, Revisionist Zionism, as well as of the two groups that he organized: Tsohar, the Revisionist political party, and Betar, the youth group. In his programmatic statements that accompanied the establishment of the Revisionist Party in 1925, Jabotinsky insisted on the establishment and maintenance of Jewish armed forces. In the 1930s, some of his followers adopted the look and rituals of European nationalist paramilitary fighters of the time – brown shirts, martial exercises, marching in formation, and firing weapons. Some of his followers extolled a more radical militarism and called for immediate armed revolt against British rule in Palestine. Others were more realistic and saw the need for trained armed troops to complete a variety of tasks, from defending the Yishuv from Arab marauders to helping facilitate illegal emigration to Palestine. However, it is wrong to conflate Jabotinsky's viewpoint with that of all of his followers. As we shall see, he tended to weigh the value of violence against diplomatic and moral values, in contrast to others, who conceived of violence as an end in itself.

My contention is that Jabotinsky used the rhetoric of the far right, but expressed in his words and actions an ambivalence toward the use of force. The secondary literature shares this view generally, although not uni-

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formly.¹ Yaacov Shavit perceives him as an ideological extremist and sees no difference between Jabotinsky and those who came after him who are largely viewed as amoral on the question of the use of political violence. Shavit wrote that

“[t]he fundamental assumptions were shaped during the 1930s, taking concrete form during the 1940s. During the 1950s they stood in the wings of the ideological arena in Israel, waiting for an opportunity to break through to center stage. This opportunity presented itself after June 1967.”²

In contrast to Shavit, I interpret Jabotinsky as anything but messianic. Some of his plans appeared utopian, but his methods and conceptions of politics were grounded in the realities of his time. He had little patience for apocalyptic thinking, and for this reason differs from Abba Achimeir, Yehoshua Yievin and Uri Zvi Greenberg.

It is critical to acknowledge that Jabotinsky established his own political movement precisely because he did not find what he wanted among the existing groups. An aggressive military stance was not absent in Palestinian Jewish life, as is evident in the Shomer movement.³ But Jabotinsky had a political vision that went beyond guarding Jewish property and was connected with politics in the larger sense. He rejected the class principle, supported unlimited immigration of Jews to Palestine, and proposed the establishment of a Jewish army.

Since Jabotinsky’s attitude and connection with violence was not simple, unambiguous, or uniform, we should not be surprised by contradictory statements and actions. In his Revisionist political program, he insisted on the “Legion principle,” the idea that Jews were entitled to a self-defense force “that should be legalized, for without legality it cannot be properly trained, led, and equipped.”⁴ This force, consisting of Jewish fighters and paid for by the Jewish population of Palestine, would have the role of providing security for the Yishuv.

The difficulty of categorizing Jabotinsky’s attitude toward violence is not hard merely because he restrained himself in its use. Rather we face an interpretive question. One view contends that his conception of violence was

- 1 Although my position has support in the secondary literature from Colin Shindler and Yechiam Weitz: Colin Shindler, *The Land Beyond Promise. Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream*, London/New York 1995, 7–19; Yechiam Weitz, *Bein Ze’ev Jabotinsky le’Menachem Begin. Kovets meamarim al ha’tenua ha’revizionistit* [Between Ze’ev Jabotinsky and Menachem Begin. Essays on the Revisionist Movement], Jerusalem 2012, 15–33.
- 2 See Yaacov Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement, 1925–1948*, London 1988, 141.
- 3 David Ben-Gurion, *Chaluzischer Zionismus oder Revisionismus*, Berlin 1934.
- 4 Vladimir Jabotinsky, *State Zionism*, New York [1934], 8.

relatively harmless. True, he insisted that young men and women should be trained in the use of firearms, dress in uniform and learn to march. But this is similar to other national movements from East-Central Europe: the Arrow Cross in Hungary, Poland's *Endecja* (*Narodowa Demokracja*), and the Sokol movement in Czechoslovakia.⁵ *Betar*, the Revisionist youth movement, recalls Sokol with hiking, paramilitary training, with an emphasis on personal conduct and discipline.⁶ Another view portrays Jabotinsky as far more dangerous. In the 1930s, he was often criticized as a Jewish fascist.

This claim also complicates our understanding, since it is undeniable that Revisionist Zionism contained elements of fascism, the leadership principle, the imagined politics as classless and united behind the leader, the struggle against Communism, and the emphasis on organized force as paramount in politics.⁷

Even to start answering this question, it is vital to remember that fascism was a “normal” political philosophy in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Zeev Sternhell, for example, has written:

“Indeed, to think of fascism as a phenomenon that is inseparable from the mainstream of European history and to consider the fascist ideology as a European ideology that took root and developed not only in Italy and, in a very violent and extreme form, in Germany but also elsewhere can lead to parallels and comparisons that, for many people, are still difficult to accept.”⁸

It is difficult to accept because for Jews the extreme political right was taboo. In modern times Jews as a minority group in Europe identified primarily with the political left. Jews favored the replacement of conservative elites, greater equality of opportunity, and improvement in the rights of workers, all of which was important for practical and ideological reasons. Thanks to the relative absence among the political left of discrimination

- 5 Benedetto Croce played a role in Jabotinsky's thinking. Arye Naor argues that “Crocean aesthetics as an active and activating factor in history found expression in Jab's thinking in the concept of *hadar*, with which he translated the aesthetic ideal into a central normative rule. The ethos, however, also has a collective dimension and Jabotinsky excitedly described the aesthetics of the collective act in several places: his depiction of the Philistines' pagan rituals in his novel *Samson*, his account of the gymnastics of the Sokols in the Czech region of Austria-Hungary, which he lauded in a speech to members of *Macabbi*, and his description of the aspirations to order, precision and discipline in *Betar* activity.” Idem, *Jabotinsky's New Jew. Concept and Models*, in: *Journal of Jewish History* 30 (2011), no. 2, 141–159, here 151.
- 6 Roland Clark, *Holy Legionary Youth. Fascist Activism in Interwar Romania*, Ithaca, N. Y., 2015, 6.
- 7 Robert O. Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, New York, 2004.
- 8 Zeev Sternhell, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology. From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution*, with Mario Sznajder and Maia Asheri, Princeton, N. J., 1994, ix f.

based on ethnicity or nationality, Jews were attracted to the political left. However, Jews on the political left were obligated to shed religious and ethnic affiliation with the Jewish community.

On the political right there were few options for Jews because most, if not all, the right-wing parties in Eastern Europe were characterized by anti-Jewish attitudes. Sometimes these parties also represented certain classes of people, such as the nobility, whose interests differed from those of Jews and other members of the lower classes. Wealthy Jews, the so-called *shtadlanim* who were intercessors with the government could have organized a conservative party of their own, but their modus vivendi of back-door negotiations with power structures made it impossible for them to work openly. In a democracy this would have entailed a challenge to their confidants who were used to secret accommodation.⁹

In Zionism's early days under Herzl's leadership, it was viewed as a movement for the wealthy.¹⁰ There was considerable expense involved in purchasing the shekel and the goals of the movement – building up a national home in Palestine – appeared distant from the day-to-day problems of life in Eastern Europe.¹¹ However, Zionist parties soon arose with goals of class equality and immigration to Palestine.¹² Zionism on the right centered around the General Zionists who sought an alliance with wealthy non-Zionists to help finance immigration and facilitate relations with the great powers.¹³

A Jewish radical right probably might have formed in pre-World War I Eastern Europe (as it did in the 1930s), but this would have contravened the spirit of the times. The right was viewed as an ideological scourge responsible for anti-Jewish violence and persecution and was not therefore seen as a viable alternative. Perhaps the Jewish political right was not entirely invisible. Its presence was felt by a percentage of the masses who followed the

9 David Gintsburg apparently conceived of such a party of Jewish oligarchs, but it was never realized. See B. V. Anan'ich, *Bankirskie doma v Rossii, 1860–1914 gg. Ocherki istorii chastnogo predprinimatel'stva* [Banking Houses in Russia 1860–1914. Essays On the History of Private Entrepreneurship], Leningrad 1991, 103–108. Interestingly, Jabotinsky held Genrikh Sliozberg, the greatest of the intercessors, Baron Horace Gintsburg's personal assistant, in the highest esteem. See Vladimir Jabotinsky, G. B. Sliozberg, in: Genrikh B. Sliozberg, *Diela minuvshikh dnei. Zapiski russkago evreia* [Things from the Past. Notes of a Russian Jew], 3 vols., Paris 1933–1934, here vol. 1, Paris 1933, ix–xiv.

10 Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War*, Chapel Hill, N. C., 1996, 3–9.

11 *Ibid.*, 86.

12 Yitzhak Maor, *Ha-tenu'ah ha-Tsionit be-Rusiyah. Me-reshitah ve-'ad yamenu* [The Zionist Movement in Russia. From Its Origins to Our Day], Jerusalem 1986, 303–308.

13 Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel. From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, New York 2007, 191 f.

adage, “*Dina de-malkhuta dina*” (The law of the land is the law).¹⁴ In other words, they were involved in politics at the local level, serving on councils and using business contacts to influence government policy toward Jews to the extent possible in places where democracy was imperfect or entirely absent.

The radical right, with its public displays of nationalism and calls for political mobilization, represented something unfamiliar to Jewish politics. However, the link between democracy and the supremacy of the leader was popular in Europe at the time thanks to Carl Schmitt.¹⁵ Jews on the left complained about the leadership principle because the association with military style was similar to those groups that employed anti-Jewish violence. At times even Jabotinsky himself expressed discomfort with the idea of the strongman and he wanted to appear a humanist of the late-nineteenth century.¹⁶ As a result of his contradictory rhetoric, Jabotinsky’s conception of violence was unclear. Some followers had the impression that he shared their view of violence as an end in itself rather than as a means toward an end.¹⁷

Regarding the strategy of employing the radical right to advance a form of Zionism, Jabotinsky imitated trends in Europe, especially Eastern Europe, and tried to change the habits of his group to better adapt it to the existing European rituals of violence.¹⁸ To succeed in making their own state, Jews had to become, to some extent, similar to their persecutors who had nation-states. Thus, Jabotinsky invented the Betar youth movement that placed primary emphasis on strict behavior: cleanliness, politeness, respect for others, and chivalry.¹⁹ Betar members were also required to practice marching, and use firearms and violence when needed.

Jabotinsky’s personal experience with violence emerged from his earliest days as a Zionist in Odessa around 1903, when he joined an armed Jewish self-defense unit.²⁰ During World War I, he helped to establish the Jewish

14 Eliezer Schweid, *The Attitude toward the State in Modern Jewish Thought before Zionism*, in: Daniel J. Elazar (ed.), *Kinship and Consent. The Jewish Political Tradition and Its Contemporary Uses*, London 1981, 127–147.

15 See Carl Schmitt, *Der Wert des Staates und die Bedeutung des Einzelnen*, Tübingen 1914.

16 This is the viewpoint especially of Raphaella Bilski Ben-Hur, *Every Individual, a King. The Social and Political Thought of Ze’ev Vladimir Jabotinsky*, Washington, D. C., 1993.

17 Colin Shindler, *The Rise of the Israeli Right. From Odessa to Hebron*, New York 2015, 191.

18 Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris 1979, 22.

19 Vladimir Jabotinsky, *Die Idee des Betar. Ein Umriss betarischer Weltanschauung*, transl. from the Yiddish into German by I. Goldstein, Lyck 1935, 15.

20 Shlomo Gepstein, *Ze’ev Z’abotinsky. Ha-yav, milhamto, hesegav [Ze’ev Jabotinsky. His Life, War, Accomplishment]*, Tel Aviv 1941, 22.

Legion that fought under the British aegis. In 1920, he organized a Jewish militia in Palestine that fought to protect Jerusalem during the Arab riot of that year.²¹ In the 1930s, Jabotinsky advised European Jews to learn to use a firearm.²² During the Arab uprising of 1936 to 1939, he was ambivalent toward political terror and more supportive of *havlaga* (self-restraint).²³

It is difficult to generalize from these different contexts. In Odessa the goal was to protect Jews from a drunken mob, although such action was prohibited by the Tsarist government. In World War I, the goal was to support the British with a view to their ultimately victory in the war, which in turn would give Jews an advantageous position in the post-war peace settlement and the possible creation of a Jewish Palestine. In Palestine the goal was to oppose Arab aggression with a Jewish armed force, which in Jabotinsky's view would strengthen Zionism's political position.

Jabotinsky's most significant pronouncements about violence are contained in two articles from 1923, *About an Iron Wall. Arabs and Us* and *The Ethics of an Iron Wall*.²⁴ When *About an Iron Wall* appeared, Jabotinsky was in Paris. He had become well known thanks to a worldwide press campaign that both championed his role during the riots of 1920 and criticized the long prison term to which Britain had sentenced him. Released after three months, Jabotinsky came to America as a representative of Keren ha-Yesod, the Zionist fund. Afterwards he served as a member of the Zionist Executive, but left due to disagreements. In 1924 he took control of the resurrected Zionist newspaper in Russian, *Rassvet* (Dawn), which would serve as the central press organ of the Zionist Revisionists, the new political party that Jabotinsky established in 1925.

The political situation in Palestine in the early 1920s can be characterized as a shift of Britain in the direction of the Palestinian Arabs. Now the mandatory power, Great Britain, had promised in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to work toward the creation of a national home for Jews in Palestine. Subsequently, Britain scaled back its commitment for a variety of reasons.

21 Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Life and Times of Vladimir Jabotinsky*, 2 vols., here vol 1: *Rebel and Statesman. The Early Years*, Silver Spring, Md., 1956, 320–342.

22 Vladimir Jabotinsky, *Oifn pripetchek* [On the Hearth], in: *Haynt* [Today], 16 October 1931, 9f.

23 Shmuel Dothan, *Pulmos ha-halukah bi-tekufat ha-mandat* [The Polemic over Partition during the Mandate], Jerusalem 1979, 131.

24 Vladimir Jabotinsky, *O zheleznoi stene. My i araby* [On the Iron Wall. The Arabs and Us] in: *Rassvet* [Dawn], vol. 19, no. 42/43, 4 November 1923, 1–3; idem, *Etika zheleznoi steny* [Ethics of the Iron Wall], in: *Rassvet*, vol. 19, no. 44/45, 11 November 1923, 2–4. My quotations come from idem, *O zheleznoi stene. In Rechi, stat'i, vospominaniia* [On the Iron Wall. Speeches, Articles, Memoirs], Minsk 2004. All translations by Brian Horowitz except where explicitly noted.

In its first *White Paper* published in 1922, the British government outlined its plan to limit Jewish immigration. The first High Commissioner, Herbert Louis Samuel, attempted to win the support of Arabs locally and in the Middle East generally through plans to affirm in law the Palestinian Arabs' majority status in the country.²⁵ Jabotinsky wrote his Iron Wall essays in this context.

His first and main point was to advocate that Britain should pursue a policy devoted exclusively to Zionist immigration in Palestine. Secondly, Britain must deliver this message in a manner that would compel Arabs to see no other option. Jabotinsky wrote:

“Thus we conclude that we cannot promise anything to the Arabs of the Land of Israel or the Arab countries. Their voluntary agreement is out of the question. Hence those who hold that an agreement with the natives is an essential condition for Zionism can now say ‘no’ and depart from Zionism. Zionist colonization, even the most restricted, must either be terminated or carried out in defiance of the will of the native population. This colonization can, therefore, continue and develop only under the protection of a force independent of the local population – an iron wall which the native population cannot break through.”²⁶

Jabotinsky was aware that many people would object to this militaristic version of Zionism. Harmful consequences could ensue if Zionism were viewed as immoral. To the claim that his assertions were heartless and unethical, he had a ready answer: Jews had a greater right to Palestine because they were homeless.²⁷ In *The Ethics of an Iron Wall* he wrote:

“There are 38 million Arabs. They occupy Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Tripoli, Egypt, Syria, Arabia and Iraq, a space (not counting the deserts) as big as half of Europe. On average there are 16 Arabs for every English square mile on this huge territory. For comparison it is useful to remember that in Sicily there are 352 individuals for every square mile, and in England 669. It is even more useful to remember that Palestine consists of approximately one of two-hundredths of this territory. But when homeless Jewry asks for Palestine, it turns out to be ‘immoral’ because the locals find it uncomfortable.”²⁸

According to Jabotinsky, it was pointless to argue that the two sides don't understand each other or that viewpoints have not been clearly presented. In fact, each side was painfully clear about the other's motives and goals. Contemporary Jewish leaders such as Chaim Weizmann attempted to pursue a

25 Rory Miller, Introduction, in: idem (ed.), *Britain, Palestine and Empire. The Mandate Years*, Burlington, Vt., 2010, 1–14, here 4f.

26 Jabotinsky, *O zheleznoi stene. My i araby*, 267. Translation cit. from <<http://www.marxists.de/middleeast/ironwall/ironwall.htm>> (1 August 2016).

27 Idem, *Etika zheleznoi steny*, 273.

28 Ibid.

path of obfuscation by claiming miscommunication. Jabotinsky asserted that the main issue – open emigration for Jews with the goal of a Jewish majority in Palestine – revealed the absence of any difference between the “carnivores” and “vegetarians,” militarists or pacifists.²⁹ Actually, Weizmann, among others, would have accepted a Jewish minority status.

Jabotinsky insisted that he respected Arab intelligence more than his colleagues, claiming that it was useless to lie about Zionist goals since Arabs understood what was at stake. Lying would not work in any case; no native would be fooled. Only honesty was moral because, by giving fair warning of what was to come, Jews could minimize the suffering that would surely occur.

“We should have answered this question before we took the first shekel. And we did answer it positively. If Zionism is moral, i. e. legitimate, then justice should be fulfilled independent of anyone’s agreement or disagreement. And if A, B or C want to interfere by means of force in justice’s fulfillment because they find it profitable, then we can interfere with them again with force. This is ethics, there is no other ethics to speak of.”³⁰

Although the articles concern violence, politics was also a central focus. The articles conveyed to his supporters Jabotinsky’s plans for an expansive Jewish Yishuv that was prosperous, populous, and well defended. The articles were also addressed to Chaim Weizmann, leftist Zionists, the British government, and American Jews. His proposal for an “iron wall” against the Palestinian Arabs was meant first and foremost as a rebuttal of Winston Churchill’s *White Paper* of 1922 that limited Jewish immigration. Jabotinsky also criticized the British creation of a Hashemite kingdom in Transjordan in 1921, on territory that he had viewed as patrimony for Jewish settlement. Despite irritation with the government, Jabotinsky appealed to the morality of the British people. Although the British government might abandon its commitment temporarily, the British people should remember Jewish suffering that justified an iron wall.

The articles mocked Weizmann, the head of the World Zionist Organization, whom Jabotinsky accused of cowardice and undue caution. His provocative declarations attempted to force the articulation of ultimate goals, in contrast to Weizmann who attempted to present Zionism as a peaceful ideology. In writing the articles, Jabotinsky was aware that immigration had stalled. Despite the British acquisition of the Mandate in 1920, fewer Jews had arrived than anticipated. The Jewish population of Palestine in 1923 was

29 Idem, *O zheleznoi stene. My i araby*, 267 f.

30 Ibid., 268. Jabotinsky expressed this same argument in 1937 at his appearance in London before the Royal (so-called) Peel Commission.

16 or 17 percent, amounting to approximately 160,000. Jabotinsky was confronted with the possibility that either Zionism was not the solution to the Jewish problem or barriers existed to Jewish emigration.

Jabotinsky feared that security concerns were scaring off immigrants. A strong statement in support of defense was obligatory in order to neutralize the Arab threat that arose in 1920 and 1921 following the demobilization of the World War I Jewish Legion in 1918. Jabotinsky urged the reconstitution of a Jewish legion with a permanent presence in Palestine. Such an army would consist of members of the Yishuv who would assume the financial burden of defense. He expressed certainty that Jewish armed units would liquidate any physical threat from Palestine's Arabs. However, the Arabs themselves were not addressed in this statement. They were given a *fait accompli*.

The Iron Wall essays show that Jabotinsky did not conceive of violence as a value for its own sake. It formed part of a larger political strategy as a deterrent against a countervailing force, in this case Arab resistance to Jewish immigration and majority status. According to Jabotinsky, the goal of deterrence worked best with a public display of force, a regular army that was legal, in contrast to an underground militia that was untrained and in danger of arrest.³¹ The articles also reflect his realization of the weakness of the Yishuv which could succeed only in collaboration with a world power such as England.

In his declarations he featured the rhetoric of violence, particularly in claims that Britain should use an iron wall to stop Arab resistance. Critics have noted that Jabotinsky's pronouncements are largely prescriptive and could even be characterized as unrealistic or utopian.³² However, he intended to gain political popularity by rejecting a gradualist approach and presenting his ultimate vision, that of a majority Jewish Palestine protected by armed force.

With regard to the composition of Zionist Revisionism in the 1920s, adherents were primarily Russian émigrés in Europe, Jewish agricultural workers in Palestine (especially from Middle Eastern countries), and young radicals in Riga, Vienna, Harbin (China), and elsewhere.³³ This ragtag membership was generally subservient to the Revisionist leadership and to Jabotinsky personally.

31 Idem, Was Wollen die Zionisten-Revisionisten, [Paris] 1926, 16–18.

32 A good example is Yosef Gorny, Zionism and the Arabs, 1882–1948. A Study of Ideology, Oxford 1987, 61.

33 Joseph B. Schechtman/Yehuda Benari, History of the Revisionist Movement, vol. 1.: 1925–1930, Tel Aviv 1970, 79–82.

Revisionists employed forms of so-called low-level violence, such as fist fights between agricultural workers with Revisionist sympathies and supporters of the Histadrut, the trade union that was originally founded by Jewish workers in Haifa and became associated later with the Zionist labor movement.³⁴ In 1929, Revisionists blew the shofar at the Western Wall, although the British government had warned against this. In 1929, Abba Achimeir disrupted a lecture at the Hebrew University with a smoke bomb, and later another Revisionist took down the German flag at the German Consulate in Jerusalem.³⁵

Radicalism grew in intensity among some Zionist Revisionists in the late 1920s. When Jabotinsky became the editor of *Doar Hayom* (The Daily Mail) in 1929, he adopted a message closer to the radical right of Europe and supported the view that the Zionists were entitled to the territory on both sides of the Jordan River. The newspaper featured extremist statements by Jabotinsky himself and younger writers, such as Achimeir, Greenberg, and Yievin. These three admired Jabotinsky, but rejected much of his political program, such as internationalism, the alliance with Britain, and the appeal to universal morality. Although they agreed with him about the need for the harsh treatment of Arabs, they had a different idea of the leader. They had little respect for democracy and advocated a strong leader, such as Jabotinsky himself.

In an article from 1930, entitled *Letter to Zionist Youth*, Achimeir wrote:

“Zionism is a goal for which every means is kosher for its attainment [...]. It is proper for us to fight with envy and hate. [...] Each and every one of us must present the question as one presents the conquest of Israeli advance on both sides of the Jordan River: are you for us or in opposition.”³⁶

In another article he was more explicit about his conception of power. “A creative politics does not wait [for power], but fights. We do not give at the time when we want to give, but fight at the hour when there is the strength to take [it]. We have to nurture in our youth the ‘will to power,’ to use Nietzsche’s expression.”³⁷

Jabotinsky was influenced by his young colleagues’ conception of violence as aesthetic, cleansing, and messianic. In contrast to his earlier perspective on military training that emphasized pageantry, marching, and uni-

34 Anita Shapira, *Ha-ma'avak ha-nikhzav. 'Avodah 'ivrit, 1929–1939* [The Struggle of Disappointment. Hebrew Labor, 1929–1939], Tel Aviv 1977, 197f.

35 Yonathan Shapiro, *The Road to Power*. Herut Party in Israel, Albany, N. Y., 1991, 46.

36 Abba Achimeir, *Michtav le-noar yehudi* [Letter to the Jewish Youth], in: *Doar Hayom* [The Daily Mail], 21 October 1931, 1.

37 Idem, *Betar ba-tfisat olam* [Betar on the Edge of the World], in: *Ha-Tsiyonut ha-mechapchanit* [Revolutionary Zionism], Tel Aviv 1968, 21 (first publ. 1928).

forms, he now valorized conspiratorial armed resistance. In his article *On Adventurism* (1932) he writes:

“The essence of the argument is as follows: isn’t it time to reexamine all of Betar’s methods, and perhaps even Revisionism’s? These methods emerged during the years when we believed in quickly attaining radical changes in the political conditions of the Palestinian building-up through peaceful means. But that faith has disappeared. Herzlian Zionism has been pushed almost entirely underground, and thus the methods have to be different. Now one must concentrate on active political protest; the youth especially should go their way; the former ideas of Betar self-education have lost their meaning and have even become a total waste of time. [...] ‘Sans-culottes’ make history; Lenin, Mussolini, and Hitler succeeded thanks to ‘sans-culottism’; and we should cultivate this spirit ourselves (of course for a different goal).”³⁸

Studies of Jabotinsky in the 1930s portray his reacting to changes within the Revisionist camp.³⁹ Jabotinsky was ambivalent about Achimeir and his group, the Brit ha-Biryonim who he feared wanted to assume control. Desiring Achimeir’s support, he also worried about losing full control over Revisionism. In 1933 at the annual conference of Zionist Revisionism in Prague, the executive committee, which consisted of Jabotinsky’s old friends and veterans, tried to remove him as leader. In response Jabotinsky dissolved the executive committee and took over exclusive power in the organization. A few months later he arranged a referendum on this action and gained 90 percent support.⁴⁰ It could be argued that this unilateral action was inspired by the aggressive mentality of Brit ha-Biryonim. Much the same could be said of Jabotinsky’s leaving the World Zionist Congress in 1934 and establishing his New Zionist Organization (NZO) in 1935.

In his opponents’ eyes Jabotinsky appeared to be without scruples and conscience. His image was hardly improved by the Arlosorov Affair in 1933, in which he defended Abraham Stavsky, the Revisionist convicted of Hayim Arlosorov’s murder. Arlosorov, a rising star in the Labor movement, was murdered in May 1933 on the Mediterranean shores in Jaffo, south of Tel Aviv. The British police and much of the public believed that he had been assassinated for political reasons by a Revisionist.⁴¹

It should be noted that Jabotinsky assumed Stavsky’s defense with hesitation and only as a last resort. He maintained Stavsky’s innocence on the grounds of weak evidence and he drew attention to inconsistencies in the

38 Vladimir Jabotinsky, Smysl “avantiurizma” [On Adventurism], in: *Rassvet*, 24 July 1932, 4.

39 Jan Zouplna, Vladimir Jabotinsky and the Split within the Revisionist Union. From the Boulogne Agreement to the Katowice Putsch, 1931–33, in: *Journal of Israeli History* 24 (2005), no. 1, 35–63, here 36.

40 Shapiro, *The Road to Power*, 23.

41 Shabtai Tevet, *Retsach Arlosorov [Arlosorov’s Murder]*, Jerusalem/Tel Aviv 1982.