

Vladimir Jabotinsky *The Jewish Legion* Lesson Plan

Central Historical Question: What were Jabotinsky's plans for the Jewish Legion and what derailed those plans?

Materials:

- The Jewish Legion PowerPoint
- *The Jewish Legion* Video
- Copies of *Documents A-K*.

Plan of Instruction:

The PowerPoint, video and supporting documents reinforce lesson content through purposeful repetition and the gradual addition of new material.

1. Pass out Documents A-K.

Mini-lecture with PowerPoint:

- Slide: Struggle for the Legion: *Jabotinsky faces a number of obstacles while fighting for his Jewish Legion idea, which he hopes will help the British conquer Palestine from the Turks and then serve as a peacetime force in the country. The obstacles include:*
 - 1) *Assimilationist Jews: They oppose a distinctive Jewish regiment fearing it will affect their status as British citizens. As one historian notes: "These assimilationists, though a small minority, were destined to play an important role. ... Their outlook derived from the doctrine that the Jews were not a nation but a religious community and nothing else; and they saw every manifestation of Jewish nationalism as a threat to their acceptance as pure Englishmen."*
 - 2) *Jews who are not assimilated. These are mainly Russian emigrants with strong Jewish religious and cultural ties, who are against fighting for Britain because it means fighting on the side of Britain's ally, Tsarist Russia, which they hate because of the persecution they endured when living there.*
 - 3) *The official Zionist establishment. The leadership of the World Zionist Organization opposes picking sides in the war as Jews are scattered throughout the warring countries. Supporting one side over another may endanger Jews settled in opposing countries. They warn Jabotinsky not to pursue his Legion idea and do what they can to stop him.*

4) *The British government: When Jabotinsky starts lobbying for a Legion, the government is led by PM Herbert Asquith while the War Office is led by Lord Kitchener. Both are against the Jewish Legion idea. As Lt. Colonel John Henry Patterson, the British officer who will eventually command the Jewish Legion, writes: "When Jabotinsky embarked on the Jewish Legion venture, everything was against him and there was nothing whatever to give support to his idea."*

- *Slide: Most Hated Man in Whitechapel: On all sides, Jabotinsky is surrounded by anger and hostility. When he attempts to recruit Jews in Whitechapel, the area of London's East End where most of the Jewish emigrants from Russia live and work, he is met with violence. At one point, at a recruiting meeting, he and a colleague need to escape through a back door, their eyeglasses broken.*

Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the other great Zionist leader who emerged during this period, gives an insight into what Jabotinsky endured. He tells Jabotinsky: "I cannot work like you, in an atmosphere where everybody is angry with me and can hardly stand me. This everyday friction would poison my life and kill in me all desire to work." Despite the hostility, Jabotinsky makes progress. It's clear from internal British Foreign Office documents that Jabotinsky convinces many people in the government that the Jewish Legion is vital to British interests.

- *Slide: Breaking Jabotinsky's Way: In 1916, a number of events improve the situation for Jabotinsky. 1) Lt. Col. John Henry Patterson returns to London to convalesce. He's followed by 120 members of the Zion Mule Corps., including Joseph Trumpeldor. These men re-enlist, creating a ready-made nucleus around which to build a Jewish Legion; 2) Lloyd George becomes prime minister. Unlike the previous prime minister, Lloyd George is sympathetic to Zionist aspirations, and he wants to open a front in Palestine. 3) Tsar Overthrown: On March 19th, 1917 the Russian monarchy is deposed. This removes a huge psychological hurdle for Jews who don't want to serve in the British Army because of its Russian ally. They can no longer reject on the "grounds of principle" serving in a Jewish unit.*
- *Slide: Jewish Legion Forms: On July 10th, 1917, the War Office announces the impending formation of a "Jewish infantry regiment." The Legion becomes known as the "Judean Regiment." The menorah with the Hebrew word "Kadimah," or "Forward," will become its insignia. Lt. Col. Patterson, who had commanded the Zion Mule Corps. in Gallipoli becomes its commander. While it's argued that a Jew should lead it, Jabotinsky says: "This historic privilege had been faithfully won by another:*

by the man who had not been ashamed to undertake the leadership of the mule drivers and who had converted them into a corps. Even though he is not a Jew, he must be our colonel, and I hope that one day he will be our general: Patterson.” Patterson is called to London on July 27, 1917 to begin the organization of the Jewish Legion. He requests Jabotinsky’s help in recruitment. Jabotinsky has already joined the army. He is promoted to lieutenant.

On February 2, 1918, the newly created Legion marches through Whitechapel. The greeting is dramatically different from the hostility Jabotinsky met when first trying to start the Legion. Jabotinsky writes of that day: “There were tens of thousands of Jews in the streets, at the windows and on the roofs. Blue-white flags were over every shop door; women crying with joy, old Jews with fluttering beards, murmuring, ‘Shehecheyanu’; Patterson on his horse, laughing and bowing, and wearing a rose a girl had thrown him from a balcony; and the boys, those ‘tailors,’ shoulder to shoulder, their bayonets dead level, each step like a single clap of thunder, clean, proud, drunk with the national anthem, with the noise of the crowds, and with the sense of a holy mission.”

- Slide: In the Fight: *The Jewish Legion fights well. They are praised for their work and take part in one major action in the Jordan Valley. Jabotinsky believes Col. Patterson will be made a general and the Legion will increase in size to a brigade. He writes to his wife on Aug. 11, 1918: “Allenby definitely decided to form a Jewish Brigade and make Patterson a General. We expect it any day. ... I still believe that we will have a Division as well – if ... the Turks will not collapse before that, something I wholeheartedly hope for.”*
- Slide: Hopes Dashed: *But the opposite happens. With the war at an end, the Legion is oppressed due to anti-Semitism within the British Army. Medical care is denied them after many come down with malaria, and they are constantly harassed when on leave. The mistreatment becomes increasingly vicious and trickles down to the rank-and-file from Gen. Allenby’s staff.*

In his memoirs of the Legion years later, Jabotinsky attempts to explain the British Army’s hostility to Zionism, ascribing the reason to British character and the particular character of Commander Edmund Allenby. Jabotinsky writes of Allenby: “It is a remarkable but notorious fact that the strongest of soldiers are often weak and influenced with the utmost ease. As a general, Allenby was a good strategist – at any rate, they say so, and I am not qualified to judge. But they found it necessary to make him a statesman as well. And here he showed himself strong only as an

“executive” – only as the executor of the counsel of others, and not as the true moving spirit; a big “motor car” which can be driven by anybody with a little skill and a little luck.”

The Legion is sharply reduced in number. In the spring of 1919 there are 5,000 men in the Legion; one year later, only 300 to 400 remain. Shortly after writing a letter to Allenby complaining of the treatment of the Legion, Jabotinsky is demobilized. Jabotinsky’s main hope is lost -- that the Legion will act as a peacetime force in Palestine, and by its presence have an important impact on post-war decisions.

- *Slide: Post-War Hostility: After the war is won, the British military administration continues its openly anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist behavior. Jabotinsky believes the prospects of the Zionist cause are being systematically undermined by the military administration. As one historian writes: the administration “was filled from top to bottom with confirmed opponents of the official British policy of the Jewish National Home. They considered this policy to be an inadmissible folly and openly demonstrated their utter hostility and contempt for the Jews and their national aspirations. Growing Arab impertinence was deliberately fostered by government officials.” A Zionist Commission led by Dr. Chaim Weizmann arrives in Palestine on April 4, 1918. On January 6, 1919, Jabotinsky is appointed chief political officer of the Commission. He repeatedly warns Weizmann that dangerous precedents are being set.*
- *Slide: Haganah: It becomes clear to Jabotinsky by the summer of 1919 that the British administration would not be unhappy if an Arab pogrom broke out to show the government back in London that the Balfour Declaration could never work. Certain British officers encourage the Arabs to turn to violence. Jabotinsky calls a conference of Palestine Zionist leaders and urges them to create a self-defense force. They agree and Jabotinsky is put in charge of organizing one.*
- *Slide: Arab Riots: On April 4, 1920 Arabs celebrate the Nebi Mussa festival. Thousands of pilgrims converge on Jerusalem. The crowd, incited by anti-Jewish speeches, starts attacking Jewish passers-by and Jewish stores. The Haganah successfully defends Jerusalem against the rioters. But the self-defense group is blocked by British soldiers from coming to the aid of the Jews in the Old City, where some are killed and wounded.*
- *Slide: Defenders Convicted: The British authorities arrest the Jewish defenders of Jerusalem. Jabotinsky says that if his men are arrested he should be as well. The British oblige and arrest him. His men are convicted on illegal weapons possession to three years imprisonment. Jabotinsky is*

sentenced to 15 years. In fact, it is the same sentence given to two Arabs who had raped Jewish girls during the riots. Jabotinsky and his men are placed in Acre Fortress. But outrage builds abroad at their sentencing, something the military administration hadn't counted on. The administration quickly reduces the sentences. But the men remain in prison.

- Slide: Freedom: *The military administration comes to an end and a civilian one takes its place with the arrival of Sir Herbert Samuel on June 30, 1920. Samuel as his first act issues a pardon to Jabotinsky and his comrades. But he also pardons two Arab rapists, drawing a moral equivalence between the two groups.*
- Slide: Exonerated: *Jabotinsky isn't satisfied. Officially, his sentence still stands. He goes to London and hires attorneys to fight the sentence and see to it that it's expunged from his record. He succeeds in quashing the military court's sentence both for himself and his men.*

2. Play video: The Jewish Legion

Introduce inquiry question: What were Jabotinsky's plans for the Jewish Legion and what derailed those plans?

3. Whole class discussion:

- Why was the Jewish Legion a revolutionary idea?
- Internal opposition often hindered the achievement of goals set by Zionist leaders. How did this play out in the case of the Jewish Legion?
- What changes politically to make the Jewish Legion possible?
- If we frame this as a great man vs. forces of history test case, do you think anyone but Jabotinsky could have succeeded in the creation of the Jewish Legion?

4. Hand out Review Questions (may be used as end of class Quiz).

Document A: “*The Jabotinsky Story: Rebel and Statesman*”, Joseph B. Schechtman (1956)

It is hardly an exaggeration to state that – with very few exceptions – he was completely alone and isolated in the Zionist world in his struggle for an active Zionist policy and for the creation of the Jewish Legion. ...

His contention that, in the best interest of the Zionist cause, the World Zionist Organization must take a clear and definite position in favor of the Allies, and against Turkey and Germany, met with bitter opposition from various quarters. The official position of the Zionist leadership, decided upon at the meeting of the Actions Committee in Copenhagen in December 1914, was one of strictest “neutrality.” ...

More hostile and disappointing was the attitude of the Jewish population of the London East End, in their overwhelming majority emigrants from Russia. They were openly and violently hostile to any suggestion to do military service in any form. ...

The official leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community were fixed in their opposition to the very idea of a specific Jewish unit. Their conception of Judaism was a Marranic one, and they were anxious, in all things and above all things, to hide from the world not so much their Judaism as the fact that on account of it any differentiation should exist between them and the vast majority of their fellow citizens. ...

The assimilationists mobilized all their influence to kill the Regiment. On August 30th, a deputation headed by Major Lionel de Rothschild and Lord Swaythling came to see the War Minister Lord Derby and bluntly demanded cancellation of the entire Jewish Regiment scheme. ...

Dr. Weizmann frankly admitted to Jabotinsky he could not and did not care to make his own political work more complicated and difficult by openly supporting a project formally condemned by the Zionist Actions Committee and extremely unpopular with the Jewish population of London. Once he told Jabotinsky: “I cannot work like you, in an atmosphere where everybody is angry with me and can

hardly stand me. This everyday friction would poison my life and kill in me all desire to work. Better let me act in my own way; a time will come when I shall find a means to help you as best I can." "Such a time did come, he kept his word and I have not forgotten it," Jabotinsky gratefully acknowledged in 1928. But then, in the autumn of 1915, and long afterward, Weizmann's sympathy could find no tangible expression, nor could it alter the general atmosphere of irritation and hostility in which Jabotinsky lived.

Vocabulary

Marranic: referring to Marrano, a Spanish or Portuguese Jew who was converted to Christianity during the late Middle Ages, usually under threat of death or persecution, especially one who continued to adhere to Judaism in secret.

Source: The Jabotinsky Story: Rebel and Statesman, Joseph B. Schechtman, Thomas Yoseloff Books, New York, 1956, p. 207-248.

**Document B: “*Trial and Error*”, Chaim Weizmann
(1949)**

It is almost impossible to describe the difficulties and disappointments which Jabotinsky had to face. I know of few people who could have stood up to them, but his pertinacity, which flowed from his devotion, was simply fabulous. He was discouraged and derided on every hand. Joseph Cowen, my wife, who remained his friend until his death, and I, were almost alone in our support of him. The Zionist Executive was of course against him; the non-Zionist Jews looked on him as a sort of portent. While he was working for the Jewish Legion we invited him to stay with us in our London house, to the discontent of many Zionists.

Source: Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann, Chaim Weizmann, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1949, p. 167.

Document C: “Forward to The Story of the Jewish Legion”, Lt. Col. John Henry Patterson, (1926)

When Jabotinsky embarked on the Jewish Legion venture, everything was against him and there was nothing whatever to give support to his idea. First of all, it was a precedent-breaking idea. Since the fall of Judea and the Jewish dispersion all over the globe, there never was a Jewish military unit anywhere in the world. For two thousand years, the Jews had had neither a state organization of their own nor any military formation of their own. Furthermore, by the very fact of the Jewish dispersion, the Jewish people had a stake in every land, and this was later to be one of the chief arguments of the opponents of the Jewish Legion. “How can we dare,” they would say, “to join either of the warring alliances?” In other words, they claimed that if a Jewish Legion was formed within the framework of the British Army, the Jews of Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey would pay the price, for surely vengeance would engulf them. ...

In most countries of Europe, especially in Eastern, Central and Southern Europe, where the bulk of the Jewish people lived, the Jews were neither *de jure* nor *de facto* full-fledged citizens of their respective states. Also, in spirit, moreover, they did not feel like full-fledged members of these European nations. This state of affairs, which developed during several centuries, had brought about a widespread indifference among the Jews regarding the fate of such states. They were not expected to be wholehearted patriots of the countries which treated them like stepchildren – and they were no such patriots, though to the extent they were allowed to serve such countries they always served them loyally. What they principally were concerned with – for very obvious reasons – was how this or that development in the nations among whom they lived as a hated or persecuted minority would affect their own lives and interests.

Step by step, this attitude, logical and justified as it was in light of the treatment accorded to the Jews in all those countries, developed into a kind of philosophy of the Jewish *Galuth*. It was a philosophy of complete passivism. ...

It is against this background of thorough passivism consecrated by hundreds of years of tradition that Jabotinsky's idea of a Jewish Legion has to be seen, in order to realize the depth of the abyss which divided Jabotinsky's way of thinking from that of Jewry as a whole. Indeed, if he were to call the Jews to take up arms in order to defend themselves from an attack by local hooligans or pogromists – as he did in his earlier days in Russia and later in Palestine – his appeal would have fallen on much more receptive ears. But what he wanted this time was an official emergence of the Jewish people from the traditional state of absolute neutrality in a war among the European nations. He wanted to transform the Jewish people from a conglomeration of minorities living in various lands and officially belonging to the various nations, into a nation of its own with a national policy of its own. Small as the Jewish Legion was in number, it was to be a symbol of a Jewish Army, and what is more: an official proclamation of belligerency on behalf of the Jewish people as such. No more neutrality, no more passivism, but a very active stand of a co-ally with the Allies. If there ever was a call for a national revolution, Jabotinsky's idea of a Jewish Legion was such a call. It was a revolution against tradition, against the fundamental way of thinking of his people, and a call to take a national stand in world events.

No wonder that Jabotinsky encountered such fierce opposition among Jewry to his idea of a Legion. The wonder was that he found in himself enough strength to go on with his campaign for a Jewish Legion despite that opposition, and to bring it to ultimate realization.

Vocabulary

De jure: by right, according to law.

De facto: in fact, in reality, especially when without lawful authority.

Galuth: the forced exile of Jews.

Source: The Story of the Jewish Legion, Vladimir "Ze'ev" Jabotinsky, Bernard Ackerman Inc., New York, 1945, p.14-16.

Document D: “*With the Judeans in the Palestine Campaign,*” Lt. Col. John Henry Patterson (1922)

At the end of the presentation the General [Edward Chaytor] made the following address:

Colonel Patterson, Officers, N. C. O.'s and men of the 38th Jewish Battalion Royal Fusiliers, I have specially come here today, first of all to present decorations to the officers and men who won them in the recent operations under my command.

Secondly, I want to tell you how sorry I am that I was not able to put you in the van in the advance on Es Salt. I wished that you had been there, and I wanted you to be there, but the Indian Infantry and other units were in a more favourable position from which to spring off, while you were still entangled miles to the northward in the heavy sandhills of the Jordan Valley. In any case, even had you been in the van, you would have seen but little fighting for the mounted men got well to the front, and were able to effect the capture of Es Salt and Amman before the Infantry could possibly come up.

I am pleased to be able to tell you, however, that I was particularly struck with your good work on the Mellahah front, and by your gallant capture of the Umm Es Shert Ford, and defeat of the Turkish rearguard when I gave you the order to go, for I was then enabled to push my mounted men over the Jordan at that crossing, and so you contributed materially to the capture of Es Salt, the guns, and other material which fell to our share, to the capture of Amman, the cutting of the Hedjaz Railway, and the destruction of the 4th Turkish Army, which helped considerably towards the great victory won at Damascus.

Source: With the Judeans in Palestine, Lt. Col. John Henry Patterson, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922, p. 186.

**Document E: “Letter to Gen. Edmund Allenby”,
Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky (July 1918)**

Sir:

I was the initiator of both the Zion Mule Corps and the actual Jewish Battalions. Today I am forced to witness how my work is breaking into pieces under the intolerable burden of disappointment, despair, broken pledges, and anti-Semitism, permeating the whole administrative and military atmosphere, the hopelessness of all effort and of all devotion.

The common opinion is that you are an enemy of Zionism in general and of the Jewish Legion in particular. I still try to believe that this is not true, that things happen without your knowledge, that there is a misunderstanding, and that the situation can yet improve.

In this hope, as the last attempt to stop a process which threatens to impair forever Anglo-Jewish friendship throughout the world, I beg you to grant me a personal interview and permission to speak freely. This letter is entrusted to your chivalry.

{Signed}

Vladimir Jabotinsky

Source: As Quoted In: Lone Wolf: A Biography of Vladimir (Ze’ev) Jabotinsky, Vol. 1, Shmuel Katz, Barricade Books, New York, 1996, p. 488.

Document F: “*The Jabotinsky Story: Rebel and Statesman*”, Joseph B. Schechtman (1956)

The anti-Zionist attitude of the British military authorities found the Jewish soldiers a convenient and defenseless victim. Discrimination against, and unfair treatment of, the legionnaires was becoming increasingly widespread and vicious. The volunteers, in particular the Americans and Canadians, who had come to Palestine with high expectations, were deeply affected by this attitude. They started clamoring for speedy demobilization and repatriation.

Source: The Jabotinsky Story: Rebel and Statesman, Joseph B. Schechtman, Thomas Yoseloff Books, New York, 1956, p. 277.

**Document G: “*The Story of the Jewish Legion*”,
Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky (1926)**

The decrees from which the Legion suffered were directed not only against the Legion but against the whole Yishuv, and worse – against Zionism.

Just how and why such an attitude existed at G.H.Q. is another story. The result of it was that atmosphere which we ordinarily call anti-Semitism, which is how I shall describe it. But in speaking of the causes, I repeat – do not take the word “anti-Semitism” too literally. Neither Allenby nor even Bols was a Jew-hater; of the others I shall mention there were perhaps only one who could be so described ...

What was it, then, that made them all anti-Semitic agitators ...?

To understand this, we must return for a moment to consider those characteristics of the English of which I have so often spoken. The average Englishman of the ruling caste is inherently opposed to any big, far-reaching project, and at least he is averse to expressing sympathy with such projects. He considers it bad form. More so when any scheme smacks of sentimentalism, of repairing the world’s ills, of saving somebody or other from Lord knows what. ...

It is the army, however, in which is it most strongly represented, and the higher the rank the stronger. ... They are antagonistic in exactly the same way to everything tinged with “fancy,” to anything that is not quite twice-two – for instance, an offensive on the Eastern front; for instance, Zionism. ...

Yet this was only half the trouble. The other half was probably just as important. Here I come to the names I mentioned earlier – [T.E.] Lawrence and [Harry St John Bridger] Philby. I limit myself to these two, but there are many others – for even the caste has its own dreamers. They chose an idea which was in complete harmony with the most honored English traditions – not wild, not novel, not “fancy.” Their dream was “Greater Arabia.” England has administered countries where Arabic is spoken, like Egypt or the Sudan, for over forty years. There is a mountain of accumulated experience for

dealing with such peoples. They would be “liberated,” they would be united and they would be called “Greater Arabia.” They would even be given Arab kings, picturesque sheiks in green turbans, dear grown-up children who sit on divans with their legs crossed under them and who require English advisers in all matters of state. Such a dream – rather! ...

The Balfour Declaration stabbed these Lawrences and Philbys to the heart. They had seen Jews, both rich – in Lady N.N.’s salon – and poor, in Whitechapel; quite sufficient for them to realize that the idea of the National Home had nothing to do with “picturesque” Chasidim with curls (which they could certainly have “swallowed,” for they are not Jew-haters) but with modern Jews, wearing trousers on their legs and hats on their heads, and with European ideas under those hats. An end to all the *couleur locale*! Tramcars in Jerusalem! Instead of camels and palms, red roofs of brand new colonies, where girls and young men would walk freely together, just as in England! Horrors!

Vocabulary

Couleur Locale: French for ‘local color’: distinctive, sometimes picturesque characteristics or peculiarities of a place or period as represented in literature or drama, or as observed in reality.

Source: *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky, Bernard Ackerman Inc., New York, 1945, p.169-171.

**Document H: “*The Story of the Jewish Legion*”,
Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky (1926)**

We knew from the very beginning that, given even a maximum of success, the Jewish Legion could be only a part of the Army of Conquest. But quite another matter was the question of the Army of Occupation. In this we saw the main purpose of the Jewish Legion. If there was to be no possibility of its being sufficiently large to win Palestine itself, it should be sufficiently strong – and this was our fundamental aim – to form the major portion of the garrison which would remain in Palestine after the conquest. A garrison need not be so large as a conquering army. For a small country like Palestine, not thirty, but twenty, or even fifteen thousand men would be sufficient to play the leading part in maintaining law and order. And it was important that it should play this part at the time when the various Powers were discussing the future of the occupied territories.

Source: The Story of the Jewish Legion, Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky, Bernard Ackerman Inc., New York, 1945, p.145.

Document I: “Letter to V. Jabotinsky”, Chaim Weizmann (January 22, 1919)

The impertinence of the Arabs grows from day to day. Not forty-eight hours go by without fiery speeches in Ramle concluding with a call to the Arab sword ... The behavior of the authorities in Palestine makes it clear to the Arabs that the Declaration is not meant to be implemented. Your proposals, as formulated in your last telegram, are not satisfactory, because they lack the most important ingredient: that the government of Eretz Israel shall be appointed according to a list submitted by us. I do not believe that this is difficult to achieve. On the contrary, the more the British concede to us, the easier it will be for them to get Palestine. But even if this demand of ours is turned down, failure to state it is to me an unforgivable sin.

You are signing a declaration of confidence in the British – that they will choose only people friendly to us. You have no right to grant them such a certificate, knowing very well, as you do, that we here are surrounded by enemies and that the Foreign Office has taken not a single step to remedy the situation.

The activity of the administration has taken on the nature of a systematic attack by the junior officials while the senior officials shut their eyes. I feel it is my duty to warn you in advance that if matters go beyond certain limits I shall do one of two things: either I shall leave everything or I shall take measures to ensure that the noise from Palestine reaches Europe.

If you argue against me that I am making, or threatening to make, your task more difficult, I must answer in all bitterness that you are making things more difficult for yourself. Maybe it is not your fault but that of your advisors, but that makes no difference. The fact that the Foreign Office is being accustomed to the thought that the Zionists will *swallow everything* reduces the value of your efforts. I am surprised that you do not understand this.

Forgive me for the sharp letter; but I did not take part in a self-defense organization in my youth in order now to sit and watch

peacefully the Arabs having it drummed into their heads that they *can* get rid of us if only they kick us hard enough.

Source: Lone Wolf: A Biography of Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky, Vol. 1, Shmuel Katz, Barricade Books, New York, 1996, p. 425-426.

Document J: “The Jabotinsky Story: Rebel and Statesman”, Joseph B. Schechtman (1956)

The Nebi Moussa festival came. Thousands of pilgrims started converging on Jerusalem. On April 4th, the crowd, inflamed by anti-Jewish speeches, started attacking Jewish passers-by and Jewish stores. Soon Jewish blood was shed and the mob rushed into the Jewish quarter to kill and to pillage, shouting: *El Dowleh ma'ana* – “the government is with us.” Instead of assisting the victims, the Arab police either adopted a passive attitude or joined the attackers. The pogrom lasted two days and resulted in five Jews and four Arabs killed, and 211 Jews and 21 Arabs wounded; two Jewish girls were raped. ...

Immediately after the outbreak of the riots, Jabotinsky, in accordance with the previously established disposition, dispatched to the Jaffa and Damascus gates two *Haganah* companies, which were posted nearby in New Jerusalem. But they found the gates closed to them and held by British troops whose rifles, bayonets, and machine guns “were directed not against the pogromists but against Jews who wanted to penetrate the Old City and to bring help.” Nobody was allowed to enter or to leave. The Jews of Old Jerusalem paid dearly for their anti-*Haganah* attitude. In a letter to the London *Times*, published in 1921, Jabotinsky rightly stated that in the Easter, 1920, riots “the only part of Jerusalem affected by the riots was the Walled City where, owing to the old-world character of its Jewish inhabitants, no local self-defense could have been organized; all the other quarters of the City were guarded by Jewish patrols, with the result that not one casualty occurred there.”

Source: The Jabotinsky Story: Rebel and Statesman, Joseph B. Schechtman, Thomas Yoseloff Books, New York, 1956, p.327-328.

Document K: “Jabotinsky: A Life”, Hillel Halkin (2014)

To add insult to injury, the British then sought to demonstrate their even-handedness by arresting nineteen of the Jewish defenders for the illegal possession of three rifles, two pistols, and 250 rounds of ammunition. Jabotinsky, hearing of this, went to the police, declared himself responsible for the weaponry, and demanded to be arrested too.

The British obliged him. After a week’s detention, the group went before a military court. The nineteen were convicted and sentenced to three years at hard labor. Jabotinsky was tried separately and served as his own counsel. Acquitted on two counts, he was convicted on three others and sentenced to fifteen years in prison – as many as were given, in absentia, to Haj Amin el-Husseini, who had meanwhile gone into hiding.

The convicted men were incarcerated in an old Turkish prison in Acre. They spent three months there while an outraged Yishuv protested, backed by Zionist supporters in England and America. Early in the summer of 1920, the military regime in Palestine was disbanded and a civilian administration took its place. To the delight of the Zionists, the Lloyd George government appointed Herbert Samuel as the country’s first high commissioner. One of his initial acts was to pardon and free the Acre prisoners.

Source: Jabotinsky: A Life, Hillel Halkin, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2014, p. 129-130.

Review Questions

Name _____

1. Explain why the following groups opposed a Jewish Legion: 1) Assimilationists 2) Russian Jewish emigrants 3) the official Zionist organization.

2. What did Jabotinsky see as the main purpose of the Legion?

3. What is Jabotinsky's explanation for the British military's anti-Zionist behavior?

In the space below answer the following: *What were Jabotinsky's plans for the Jewish Legion and what derailed those plans?*