

**Document A: “The Jabotinsky Story”, Joseph B. Schechtman (1961)**

The concept of “evacuation” had been ripening in Jabotinsky’s mind long before it became the storm center of Jewish public life. As early as August, 1932, he said at the Fifth Revisionist World Conference in Vienna: “Several million Jews must, in the nearest future, evacuate the main centers of Eastern Europe and create in Palestine a national Jewish State.” Three years later, at the Foundation Congress of the New Zionist Organization (September, 1935), he spoke of the “exodus” as the solution of the Jewish problem, and in June, 1936, at the above-mentioned mass meeting in Warsaw, he already openly spelled out *evacuation* as the only constructive solution of the Jewish problem.

However, none of these pronouncements, made publicly and with Jabotinsky’s usual clarity of emphasis, provoked strong, let alone violent, criticism and opposition. They were discussed in the Jewish multilingual press calmly, as a viewpoint which may be right or wrong, but as “legitimate” as any other. It was not before September, 1936, that the same pronouncement suddenly aroused an almost unprecedented barrage of indignant denunciation as a heresy bordering on national treason. This writer and two other members of the N.Z.O. *Nessiut* [presidency] in Warsaw (Dr. J. Damm and J. Spektor) were unwittingly instrumental in unleashing this storm.

Anxious to acquaint Polish public opinion with Jabotinsky’s policy, we made arrangements with the editors of the Warsaw conservative daily *Czas* – one of the oldest and “cleanest” Polish papers, which had never indulged in anti-Jewish utterances – for a special four-page supplement devoted to a full expose of the evacuation scheme. The supplement appeared on September 8, the day of Jabotinsky’s arrival in Warsaw; it contained a reprint of his 1924 article: “The Favorable Storm,” and articles by Dr. Jan Krakowsky (Dr. Jan Bader) and this writer, as well as an editorial, in which the *Czas* expressed its support for Jabotinsky’s ideas. We made these arrangements on our own initiative and responsibility, without previous consultation with Jabotinsky. When he arrived and saw the paper, he did not seem to be very happy about it, but, with his usual loyalty to his collaborators, abstained from any unfavorable comment; he even congratulated us on a well-done job.

But it was exactly this *Czas* supplement that more than anything upset and enraged adverse Jewish public opinion in Poland and elsewhere. It was not so much the content of the articles as the fact of their publication in a non-Jewish paper, which produced the violent outburst of indignation and vituperation. As long as such views remained “within the Jewish community,” argued the critics, they could be opposed, but tolerated; but to bring them into the open through the medium of the non-Jewish press was, in their eyes, the peak of irresponsibility, detrimental to the most vital interest of Polish Jewry. It was claimed that by speaking directly to the Poles, Jabotinsky was breaking Jewish national discipline and opening the way to Polish interference with “internal Jewish affairs”; that, by doing so, he was jeopardizing Jewish civic equality in the country; that he wrongly “exaggerated and dramatized” the Jewish need for mass emigration; and that by stressing both the necessity and desirability of cooperation with the Polish Government in order to secure possibilities for large-scale emigration to Palestine, he was exonerating “this anti-Semitic Government” from blame for the sore plight of its Jewish subjects.

*Source: The Jabotinsky Story: Fighter and Prophet, Joseph B. Schechtman, Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1961, p. 338-339.*

**Document B: “Testimony of Vladimir Jabotinsky” Palestine  
Royal Commission Minutes of Evidence (1937)**

We have got to save millions, many millions. I do not know if it is a question of re-housing 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. ...

We maintain unanimously that the economic position of the Palestinian Arabs under Jewish colonization and owing to 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 the Arabs of Palestine will necessarily become a minority in the country of Palestine. What I do deny is that that is a hardship. That 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’s else’s State: well, that is the case with all the mightiest nations of the world. I could hardly mention any 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, 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.

*Source: Palestine Royal Commission: Minutes of Evidence Heard at Public Sessions, His Majesty’s Stationary Office, London, 1937, p.371-372.*

**Document C: “The Jabotinsky Story”, Joseph B. Schechtman (1961)**

On April 21, 1938, three young members of the *Betar* group in the colony of Rosh Pinah, Abraham Shein, Shalom Zurabin and Shlomo Ben Yosef (his name in Poland was Shlomo Tabacznik), outraged by a recent Arab attack on a Jewish bus on the Safed-Rosh Pinah route, during which fourteen Jews were killed and four Jewish women raped, decided to retaliate against an Arab bus carrying passengers to the neighboring village of Jaouni, from which the Arab terrorists originated. The attack miscarried; none of the Arab bus passengers was injured. Nevertheless, the British Military Court in Haifa on June 3 sentenced Zurabin to be placed under medical observation; Abraham Shein and Shlomo Ben Yosef were to “hang by the neck until they were dead.”

Jabotinsky considered this sentence an outrage, both politically and morally. At a mass meeting in London, he said: “For two years a handful of young [Arab] hooligans had been terrorizing the country of Jewish hopes. The Arabs went about freely, while humiliating the Jews and saying to them, in effect: ‘You are dirt, you must not move about this country freely.’ And then two youngsters, of seventeen and nineteen, went out and fired a volley, as it happened killing no one, and they were arrested, tried, and sentenced to death by a Government that was either unable or unwilling to do something which any other Government in its place would have done with a couple of battalions in a couple of weeks.” ...

Jabotinsky spared no efforts to marshal all possible forces in English public opinion to save the youths’ lives. Appeals for reprieve came from the Jewish national organizations, from the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, from two Anglican Bishops, from the *Manchester Guardian*, from the Polish Government, from Chief Rabbi Herzog of Palestine, from British M.P.’s and newspaper editors, from churches and synagogues. Jabotinsky approached the Secretary of War, Leslie Hore Belisha; at his request, Dulanti, Ireland’s High Commissioner in London, went to see the new Secretary for the Colonies, Malcolm MacDonald, who vaguely promised “to see what he can do.”

All this was of no avail. On June 18, Shein’s sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, but Ben Yosef’s was upheld. Six days later, Major-General Robert H. Haining, General Officer Commanding British forces in Palestine,

confirmed the death sentence. The execution date was fixed for June 29. The remaining few days were packed with redoubled efforts, particularly the last day. In a cable to Ben Yosef's mother, Jabotinsky assured her: "We are making every effort and knocking at all the doors until early morning in order to save your son." This was no exaggeration. The execution was fixed for June 29, eight A.M. (six A.M. London time). At two P.M., June 28, influential Conservative M.P.s, Vivian Adams and Sir John Haslam, in answer to Jabotinsky's plea, went to see MacDonald; their mission was unsuccessful. At 4 P.M. it was Jabotinsky's turn to be received by the Colonial Secretary. The audience lasted thirty-five minutes. MacDonald was polite but unyielding. Though only a few years ago he himself fought for the abolishment of capital punishment, he now insisted that the "unruly elements must be taught a lesson which would be severe enough to intimidate them and keep them quiet." Jabotinsky argued that he knew his own nation better: they would not be scared, on the contrary, the hanging of Ben Yosef was bound to arouse strong repercussions among the Jewish youth of Palestine; it would lead to acts which the British Government would have every reason to regret. MacDonald confidently replied that he was certain that the official Zionist bodies were in full control of the Jewish youth; should a few hotheads try to break this control, they would be effectively opposed by the entire *Yishuv* and its official representation. The attempt failed. At 6 P.M. the Irish High Commissioner again came to see MacDonald, who told him that he had seen Jabotinsky two hours before and stated his position firmly, and that in the meantime he had received a cable from Haining which only strengthened his stand.

At about nine P.M. Jabotinsky received a phone call from Tel Aviv: Dr. Philipp Joseph, the attorney for the condemned youth, excitedly reported that he had found a precedent dating back to 1901, when during the Anglo-Boer war, an appeal to the Privy Council against a Court Martial verdict had been allowed: "You will find the record on page ... of the book ... Try and get a stay of execution for a few days in order to prepare an appeal." This new chance of saving the boy's life precipitated a series of frantic efforts. Jabotinsky hastened to Major Nation, an M.P. and an experienced solicitor, who immediately arranged for a conference with MacDonald, the Attorney General for the British Isles, Sir Donald Sommerville, and the legal adviser of the Colonial Office, asking for a stay of execution. The conference was to take place in one of the rooms of the House of Commons, which was then in session. Simultaneously Colonel Wedgwood was alerted. He asked the Librarian of the House of Commons to enable Jabotinsky, despite the

late hour, to look for the required legal source. Jabotinsky came with two younger collaborators, and a frantic search started in the library. The record of the South African case was not found. Jabotinsky was downcast. The House of Commons in the meantime adjourned. The lobby became deserted. Jabotinsky and his colleagues did not leave the House. At one A.M. they were still waiting for the results of Nathan's conference with MacDonald. Finally, Nathan emerged from the conference room: the plea was refused. At this moment, Robert Briscoe, the only Jewish member of the Irish Dail (Parliament of Ireland) and a devoted follower of Jabotinsky, who had joined them, recalled a similar case: in 1920, an Irish "terrorist" was also sentenced to death, but they succeeded in obtaining a stay of execution and later a reprieve. Nathan rushed to the House of Commons Library, hoping to trace the record of this Irish case. After some time he returned: he could not find it. Nor could the lawyer who had handled the case be traced. Briscoe's reaction was "Don't you know the English way of dealing with national revolutionary movements? First, they just ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they start arresting and hanging, and then they sit down with you at a Round Table conference. You have already reached the penultimate stage of hanging, bear this ordeal with firmness." But Jabotinsky paid no heed to this comforting philosophy. He was fully absorbed by the urge to save Ben Yosef's life. At two A.M. (four A.M. in Acre) he phoned another solicitor who eagerly agreed to make one more try. Thirty minutes later, they rang the bell at the door of the High Court. To the astonished Court Attendant, who lived in the building, they explained that it was a matter of life and death for a young man, and he uncomplainingly led them to the cellar where the 1920 records were kept. Candles were lit, and the search began. By half-past three they had found the record, and rushed to the Colonial Ministry. MacDonald's private secretary was very kind and considerate; he did not at all resent being awakened in the middle of the night. But he was sorry, he did not know where the Colonial Secretary was spending the night. ... It was already five A.M. in London – seven A.M. in Acre: too late to prevent the hanging.

Jabotinsky went back to the office. Then he went home. His wife later told friends that he did not go to bed; for the first time in her life she saw him cry.

Source: *The Jabotinsky Story: Fighter and Prophet*, Joseph B. Schechtman, Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1961, p. 468-471.

**Document D: “Lone Wolf”, Shmuel Katz (1996)**

[*Speech on Tisha B'Av, Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky, (August, 1938)*]

It is now three years that I am calling on you, Polish Jewry, who are the crown of world Jewry. I continue to warn you incessantly that a catastrophe is coming closer. My heart bleeds that you dear brothers and sisters do not see the volcano which will soon begin to spit its all-consuming lava. Listen to me in this 12th hour. In the name of God! Let any of you save himself as long as there is still time. And of time, there is very little. ...

And I want to say something else to you on this day, the Ninth of Av: Those who will succeed in escaping the catastrophe will live to experience a festive moment of great Jewish joy; the rebirth and establishment of the Jewish state! I do not know whether I myself will live to see it – but my son will! I am certain of this, just as I am certain that the sun will rise tomorrow morning. I believe in it with all my heart.

*Source: Lone Wolf: A Biography of Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky Vol. 2, Shmuel Katz, Barricade Books, New York, 1996, p.1649.*

**Document E: “The Founding Fathers of Zionism”, Benzion Netanyahu (2012)**

[Jabotinsky] understood that the time had come to *bring into* Zionism not only awareness of the need to form an army, but also awareness of the value of *military capability* as a positive factor in the life of the nation. Therefore, he spoke not only of a professional army that would serve the needs of internal and external defense (as Herzl had done in *The Jewish State*), but of educating the youth as a whole as soldiers so that the people could withstand the harsh struggle for national revival. Likewise, he viewed it necessary – for the very same reason – to explain that there is good and bad militarism, just as there is good and bad nationalism, and that military education also contains certain exalted values, which only it can impart.

Jabotinsky’s approach was not accepted by most Zionists, who continued to deride him for his opinions. In this struggle over a new education for the youth, the wide gap between Jabotinsky and his generation came to light. Today it is difficult to understand the intensity of the resistance which Jabotinsky encountered in this matter, because his demands seem to us today elementary and obvious. But at the time, these things did not seem elementary, but superfluous and damaging, and at any rate – revolutionary. Here I will merely quote briefly from Mr. Medzini, a well-known journalist in his time, who criticized Jabotinsky. “Let us state the truth,” this journalist wrote. “A large part – perhaps a majority – of the Jewish population in Palestine, did not display, for various reasons, excessive enthusiasm for the very idea of the Legion. *The military world-outlook*, which for Jabotinsky and his disciples is an inseparable part of their ‘imperial’ world-outlook, is *remote and alien to many of us.*”

Source: *The Founding Fathers of Zionism*, Benzion Netanyahu, Balfour Books, Jerusalem, 2012, p. 213.

**Document F: “The Iron Wall”, Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky,  
(November 2, 1923)**

We cannot offer any adequate compensation to the Palestinian Arabs in return for Palestine. And therefore, there is no likelihood of any voluntary agreement being reached. So that all those who regard such an agreement as a *conditio sine qua non* for Zionism may as well say "non" and withdraw from Zionism.

Zionist colonization must be stopped or it must be continued independently of the feeling among the Arabs. Which means that it can proceed and develop only under the protection of a power that is independent of the local population – behind an iron wall, which the native population cannot breach.

That is the sum of our whole Arab policy. Not “must be” the sum: it is in fact the sum of our Arab policy – whether we admit it or not. Why do we need the Balfour Declaration? Why a Mandate? Their value to us is that a non-local power has undertaken to create in the country such administrative and security conditions as will make it impossible for the local population to hinder us if they should wish to do so. And every day all of us, all without exception are demanding that the non-local power fulfill its undertaking strictly and consistently. In this respect there is no difference between our “militarists” and our “vegetarians”.

***Vocabulary***

Conditio sine qua non: an indispensable condition, element, or factor.

*Source: The Iron Wall, Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky, First Published as ‘O Zheleznoi Stene’ in newspaper Rassvyet, Nov. 2, 1923.*

## Document G: *“Lone Wolf”, Shmuel Katz (1996)*

The remains of Jabotinsky, who was buried in the New Montefiore Cemetery on Long Island, New York, were transferred twenty-four years later to the state of Israel. Thus, a decision taken on March 15, 1964, by the government of Israel, headed by Levi Eshkol, fulfilled the wish expressed in his last will and testament. During the preceding fifteen years of the existence of a Jewish government, numerous appeals were made to Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion to fulfill that wish; and it became clear that this was the all but unanimous desire of the nation. From the president (Yitzhak Ben-Zvi) downwards, public figures of every stripe and newspapers of every political coloring explained to him what in fact needed no explaining: the debt of the Jewish people and of the state to the man who had been forced into exile by the hostile British government. And the reason for that exile? – precisely his tireless teaching, when all the other Zionist leaders had abandoned the idea of the state, that the aim of Zionism and Britain’s undertaking was the establishment of the Jewish state. They pointedly recalled to him that the very expression in 1935 of Jabotinsky’s wish on the return of his body was a unique demonstration of his faith – a faith Ben-Gurion and his colleagues had lost – that the state would arise, in spite of everything.

Ben-Gurion knew, from those many hours of intimate conversation in 1934, that Jabotinsky “lived” the Jewish state in his bones. All his teachings were infused with a sense of the state as a reality long before it came into existence; and that sense of reality helped many of his young followers live through the years of struggle and near despair after his death. In the very years that Jabotinsky wrote his will, one of his disciples, Reuven Hecht, once showed Jabotinsky some sketches he had made of proposed insignia for the state, the army and the air force. He added diffidently that he himself thought of these as childish nonsense, but Jabotinsky assured him, “Not at all. We shall need all of them very soon.” That same year Hecht, visiting the Zionist Congress in Lucerne, spoke to Weizmann (who knew him through his family) and urged upon him the need to train pilots for the future air force. Weizmann replied:

“Jewish pilots? ... Maybe my grandchildren, or your children, will live long enough to see them flying.”

It was surely Ben-Gurion's sharp recollection of his own attitudes precisely during that period – of frequent public and private denials of the Jewish state idea, and most specifically his denigration of that idea in his speech before the Royal Commission in 1936 – that stiffened his determination, when he became prime minister, to deny Jabotinsky the honor and the glory and the demonstration of love of the mass of the people that would surely find expression in a funeral in Jerusalem.

His regular reply to those who approached him personally on the subject was: "We don't need dead Jews in Eretz Israel, only live Jews." He added that he was prepared to allow for two exceptions: Baron Edmond de Rothschild and Theodor Herzl.

In the event when, after Ben-Gurion's departure from office, the funeral took place on July 9, 1964, it proved the occasion for an outpouring of love and respect by a whole people.

*Source: Lone Wolf: A Biography of Vladimir "Ze'ev" Jabotinsky Vol. 2, Shmuel Katz, Barricade Books, New York, 1996, p.1790-1791.*