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VLADIMIR JABOTINSKY'S «IRON WALL» AND THE ARAB QUESTION IN PALESTINE DURING THE 1920S

This paper explores Vladimir Jabotinsky's revisionist Zionism, his «iron wall» concept, and the Arab question in Palestine during the 1920s. Drawing upon the political accounts by Vladimir Jabotinsky and the relevant literature on the topic, this study aims to investigate Revisionist Zionism and its approach toward the Jewish colonization of Palestine and towards the indigenous people of this country in the 1920s. Through historical and critical analyses of the historical data and other pertinent sources, the study seeks to gain insights into how as the founder of the Revisionist Zionism Vladimir Jabotinsky envisioned the future of Palestine, how a Jewish-dominated state ought to be created, and how the indigenous people should be dealt with by the Zionists. The historical analyses of historical data and a review of studies have demonstrated that Vladimir Jabotinsky was forced to create Revisionist Zionism as a response to the British policy of dividing Palestine into two parts in 1921 and to the fierce indigenous resistance to Zionism and the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Moreover, the study has likewise shown that Jabotinsky became convinced that the Zionists could realize their goal of creating a Jewish-dominated state in Palestine only by erecting a Jewish military fortress, which he termed the «iron wall.» Hence, Jabotinsky suggested that only an «iron wall» would allow the Zionists to prevail and gain control over Palestine. In this regard, this study is not only highly relevant from a historical perspective but also it is pertinent in terms of understanding Israel's policy towards the indigenous people of Palestine since 1948.

Key words: Jabotinsky, Iron Wall, Zionism, Palestine, Jews, Arabs, Revisionist Zionism.

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Владимир Жаботинскийдің «темір қабырға» концепциясы және 1920 жылдардағы Палестинадағы араб мәселесі

Бұл мақалада Владимир Жаботинскийдің ревизионистік сионизмі, оның «темір қабырға» концепциясы және 1920 жылдардағы Палестинадағы араб мәселесі қарастырылады. Владимир Жаботинскийдің саяси еңбектеріне және арнайы зерттеулерге сүйене отырып, бұл мақала ревизионистік сионизмді және оның 1920 жылдардағы еврейлердің Палестинаны отарлау мен олардың бұл елдің байырғы халқына қатысты саясатын зерттеуге бағытталған. Тарихи деректер мен ғылыми еңбектерді тарихи және сыни талдау арқылы бұл зерттеу ревизионистік сионизмнің негізін қалаушы Владимир Жаботинскийдің Палестинаның болашағына қатысты, сондай-ақ Палестинада еврейлердің мемлекетін құру және сионистердің жергілікті халыққа қатысты саясатына қатысты көзқарасын түсінуге тырысады. Тарихи деректерді талдау және зерттеу еңбектеріне шолу жасау Владимир Жаботинскийдің 1921 жылы Палестинаны екі бөлікке бөлу жөніндегі Британияның саясатына және жергілікті халықтың сионизмге және Палестинаны отарлауға тегеуірінді қарсылығына жауап ретінде ревизионистік сионизмді құруға мәжбүр болғанын көрсетті. Бұған қоса Жаботинскийдің пікірі бойынша сионистер Палестинада еврей мемлекетін тек «темір қабырға», яғни еврей әскери бекінісін салу арқылы ғана құруға болатынына көзі жеткені анықталды. Осылайша, Жаботинский тек «темір қабырға» сионистердің жеңіске жетуіне және Палестинада еврей мемлекетін құруға қол жеткізуге мүмкіндік береді деп болжады. Осыған байланысты бұл зерттеу тек тарихи тұрғыдан ғана маңызды емес, сонымен қатар Израильдің 1948 жылдан бері Палестинаның байырғы халқына қатысты саясатын түсіну тұрғысынан да өзекті.

Түйін сөздер: Жаботинский, Темір қабырға, сионизм, Палестина, еврейлер, арабтар, Ревизионистік сионизм.

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Концепция «железной стены» Владимира Жаботинского и арабский вопрос в Палестине в 1920-е годы

В данной статье рассматривается ревизионистский сионизм Владимира Жаботинского, его концепция «железной стены» и арабский вопрос в Палестине в 1920-е годы. Опираясь на политические труды Владимира Жаботинского и научные труды по теме, данное исследование направлено на изучение ревизионистского сионизма и его подхода к еврейской колонизации Палестины и к коренному населению этой страны в 1920-е годы. Посредством исторического и критического анализа исторических данных и других источников данное исследование стремится понять как основатель ревизионистского сионизма Владимир Жаботинский представлял будущее Палестины, как должно быть создано государство, управляемое евреями, и как сионисты должны обращаться с коренным населением. Анализ исторических данных и обзор литературы показали, что Владимир Жаботинский был вынужден создать ревизионистский сионизм в ответ на британскую политику разделения Палестины на две части в 1921 году и на яростное сопротивление коренного населения сионизму и сионистской колонизации Палестины. Более того, исследование также показало, что Жаботинский был убежден, что сионисты могут реализовать свою цель создания еврейского государства в Палестине, только возведя еврейскую военную крепость, которую он назвал «железной стеной». Таким образом, Жаботинский предположил, что только «железная стена» позволит сионистам одержать победу и получить контроль над Палестиной. В этой связи данное исследование важно не только в исторической перспективе, но и весьма актуально с точки зрения понимания политики Израиля в отношении коренного народа Палестины с 1948 года.

Ключевые слова: Жаботинский, Железная стена, сионизм, Палестина, евреи, арабы, Ревизионистский сионизм.

Introduction

This study seeks to examine Vladimir Jabotinsky's views about the indigenous people of Palestine during the 1920s after the establishment of the British mandate in this country. The study specifically focuses on an in-depth analysis of Jabotinsky's historical and political accounts and essays to understand his «iron wall» concepts to Zionism, how the Zionist project of colonization ought to be carried out, and how the Zionists ought to deal with the objection and resistance of the indigenous Arab population of Palestine to Zionism, Jewish colonization and an achieving a Jewish majority. Critical investigation of Jabotinsky's political views is highly relevant and pivotal not only for understanding the Zionist approach towards the colonization of Palestine and the so-called Arab question during the 1920s but also, it is essential in gaining insights into the evolution of Zionist practices and policies toward the native people of Palestine. Furthermore, this study provides a deeper insight into the current Israeli policy towards the Palestinian territories and its inhabitants as well as political ideologies and political forces within Zionism that are closely affiliated with Revisionist Zionism spearheaded by Vladimir Jabotinsky during the 1920s as a response to the

British decision to partition Palestine into two areas as well as the indigenous resistance to Zionism.

Drawing upon the political and historical accounts penned by Vladimir Jabotinsky as well as upon the relevant literature on the topic, this study sheds light on the emergence of Revisionist Zionism in the 1920s and the political views of its founder Jabotinsky. This study utilizes methods of historical analysis and data analysis to explore Jabotinsky's revisionist Zionism and its dealing with the so-called Arab question. This study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of Jabotinsky's political accounts of Zionism and Zionist policy towards the indigenous people of Palestine, specifically how the strategy of an «iron wall» was formulated and articulated in the 1920s. Studies highlight that Jabotinsky's «iron wall» was a national Zionist strategy to which all groups of Zionism eventually subscribed in the pre-1948 and post-1948 periods. In this case, even if the Labor Zionism was not in line with the core ideology of the Revisionist Zionism, the labor governments of Israel after 1948 not only subscribed to the «iron wall» concept but also put it into practice for the indigenous people of Palestine. A prominent Israeli historian Avi Shlaim points out that the Labor Zionism and the right-wing ultranationalist Revisionist Zionism diverged in terms of their approach to Jew-

ish colonization and dealing with the native people's resistance to Zionism, yet both of them resorted to the «iron wall» in building a Jewish dominated state and transforming Palestine into a Jewish political entity (Shlaim, 2012, p. 81). Despite a multitude of conspicuous differences between Labor Zionism and Revisionist Zionism, they have always agreed about settling the Palestinian issue.

Materials and Methods

The study is based on the historical accounts, political essays, and other works of the early Zionist leaders such as Vladimir Jabotinsky, who was the right-wing ultra-nationalist Zionist who formed the Revisionist movement during the 1920s after the British government partitioned historic Palestine into Palestine and Transjordan along the Jordan river, prohibiting Jewish colonization and settlement on the eastern bank of the river. As a response to the British decision to divide Palestine and bar Jewish colonization in Transjordan, Vladimir Jabotinsky seceded from mainstream Zionism and set up Revisionist Zionism, which claimed both banks of the Jordan River. Specifically, we focus on discussing and analyzing Vladimir Jabotinsky's political essays written during the 1920s, especially his political essay «On the Iron Wall» published in Russian in 1923. As we seek to understand the Zionist policy toward the indigenous Arab population of Palestine from the perspective of Revisionist Zionism and its founder Vladimir Jabotinsky, it is highly pertinent and crucial to carry out an in-depth analysis and breakdown of Jabotinsky's historical and political accounts. Although Jabotinsky's political essays were penned as a response to the British decision to separate Transjordan from Palestine and proscribe Jewish colonization of the eastern bank of the Jordan River, he also increasingly focused on how the Zionists ought to deal with the so-called Arab question, specifically how the Zionists ought to gain the Arab consent to Zionism and Jewish colonization of Palestine. In his political essays on Zionism and the Zionist policy towards the Palestinian Arabs, Jabotinsky concluded that the Palestinian Arabs would never agree to Zionism, a Jewish demographic ascendancy and a Jewish state in Palestine.

Vladimir Jabotinsky's accounts are highly relevant to our study in terms of gaining deeper insights and understanding of the approaches and strategies of the proponents of Revisionist Zionism concerning the Arab question in Palestine. In his essays, Jabotinsky argued that like any other indigenous people around the world, regardless of their level of

development, the Arabs in Palestine would always resist and object to Zionism and would never agree to a Jewish demographic domination in Palestine. He pointed out that the indigenous Arabs would always seek to keep the Arab character and identity of Palestine and would never allow the Zionists to replace the Arabs. From this standpoint, it is essential to analyze Jabotinsky's political essays as a pivotal historical and political source. In addition to the accounts of Jabotinsky, the study draws upon the relevant literature on Zionism and the Zionist colonization of Palestine. To provide an in-depth analysis and assessment of historical accounts and relevant literature, the study employs the method of historical analysis and historical data analysis. The use of historical methods allows for a deeper analysis of historical sources and a critical review of studies on the topic, as well as for a more objective evaluation of historical events and developments unfolding in Palestine during the 1920s due to the Zionist colonization.

Literature review

The study draws upon the relevant literature on the topic, specifically in analyzing the historical and political accounts of Revisionist Zionism and Vladimir Jabotinsky's views and attitudes towards the Arab question and implementation of the Zionist colonization project, the study is engaged in a critical literature review. To get a proper understanding of Jabotinsky's approach and in general the Revisionist Zionism's strategy towards the Arab question, we have critically analyzed the works by Shlaim (2012, 2014), Heller (1998), Horowitz (2017, 2021, 2024), Zouplna (2004, 2008), Zureik (2016), Yiftachel (2016), Tress (1984), Said (1980, 1994), Pappé (2006, 2014), Masalha (1992, 2000), Rabkin & Yadgar (2024), Sayegh (1965), Wolfe (2006), Zhumatay & Yskak (2024a, 2024b), Cook (2008), Goldstein (2018), Kaplan (2005), Kaplan & Penslar (2011), Khalidi (2020), Davis (1973) and others. In Shlaim's works (2012, 2014), a brief overview of the background of the Revisionist Zionism and Jabotinsky's political activism is provided. Shlaim and other authors point out that Jabotinsky believed that the Zionist project of settler colonialism in Palestine could be realized only with the sponsorship and assistance of great powers, namely Great Britain. Shlaim (2012, 2014), Pappé (2006, 2014), Horowitz (2017, 2021, 2024), Zouplna (2004, 2008), Goldstein (2018), Masalha (1992, 2000), and other scholars highlight that Jabotinsky's «iron wall» was adopted by his followers and the proponents of the

Revisionist Zionism as the ideological basis for their policy towards Palestine and the Palestinian people.

Scholars of settler colonialism around the world such as Patrick Wolfe call attention to the essence of settler colonialism, which eventually leads to the erasure and removal of the indigenous people by the colonized through various means and methods, including large-scale violence and ethnic cleansing (Wolfe, 2006). Scholars of Orientalism and cultural aspects of colonization focus on how the colonizers tend to invoke colonial discourses and stereotypes to justify their conquest, colonization, and subjugation of the colonized (Said, 1980, 1994). Shlaim argues that Jabotinsky's followers seem to have failed to understand the genuine meaning of Jabotinsky's «iron wall» and his strategy towards the indigenous population of Palestine (Shlaim, 2012, 2014). Studies indicate that by proposing an «iron wall», Jabotinsky intended to terminate the Arab animosity towards Zionism and the Zionist colonization project, but not to physically eliminate the Indigenous people (Horowitz, 2017, 2021, 2024; Shlaim, 2012, 2014). In the period of the formation of Revisionist Zionism, Jabotinsky is believed not to have harbored any idea of uprooting the indigenous people of Palestine to make room for European Jews (Shlaim, 2012, 2014). Quite the contrary, Jabotinsky intended to grant certain rights to the Palestinian Arabs, yet Palestine would demographically be dominated by Jews (Shlaim, 2012). Moreover, unlike other forms of Zionism, as the leader of Revisionist Zionism, Jabotinsky did acknowledge the distinct national character and identity of the Palestinian Arabs (Shlaim, 2014).

Studies on Revisionist Zionism and Jabotinsky's thought focus on the rise of Jabotinsky as a political figure, theoretician, and Zionist (Goldstein, 2018; Heller, 1998; Horowitz, 2017, 2021, 2024). Jabotinsky's political essays written during the 1920s such as the «Iron Wall» and others offered viable solutions to a great deal of issues like constant conflict with the indigenous Arab population over Jewish immigration and colonization, the British support for Zionism and the Zionist project, the British decision to divide Palestine into two segments in 1921 and its consequences for Zionism (Davis, 1973; Zureik, 2016; Cook, 2008). Scholars draw attention to the fact that even if Jabotinsky's «iron wall» may seem to imply the use of violence against the native people to carry out Jewish colonization and make them accept Zionism Jabotinsky articulated a way to establish peace and cooperation between the indigenous people and the Zionists (Kaplan, 2005; Kaplan & Penslar, 2011; Khalidi, 2020).

Nonetheless, even if the «iron wall» concept offered a violent way of achieving the major goal of Zionism, namely transforming Palestine into a Jewish-majority country, ultimately Jabotinsky envisioned peace and coexistence between two ethno-religious communities in Palestine (Masalha, 1992, 2000; Rabkin & Yadgar, 2014; Sayegh, 1965; Zouplna, 2004, 2008). Yet a Jewish majority and dominance in Palestine could only be achieved with violence and terror against the indigenous people who were determined to resist Zionism (Pappe, 2006, 2014; Tress, 1984; Said, 1980, 1994). Thus, the literature points out that Jabotinsky's ultimate goal of achieving a Jewish demographic majority and transforming Palestine into a Zionist political entity could be realized only through brute force against the Arabs and coercion of the indigenous people to consent to Zionism (Heller, 1998; Horowitz, 2017, 2021, 2024; Yiftachel, 2016).

Results and Discussion

After the British government separated Transjordan from Palestine in 1921, right-wing ultranationalist Zionists led by Vladimir Jabotinsky set up Revisionist Zionism. During the British mandate in Palestine, the British government lent tremendous support to Zionism and encouraged the immigration of European Jews to Palestine (Shlaim, 2012, 2014). Although Britain's commitment to Zionism was unwavering, ironclad, and rock-solid, the British decision to establish Transjordan and ban Jewish settlement on the east bank of the Jordan River upset and alienated the right-wing Zionists. This drastic change in British policy in Palestine induced the emergence of the Revisionist movement within Zionism. The leader of the Revisionist Zionism Vladimir Jabotinsky had been a leading figure in the Zionist movement, ardently advocating Jewish immigration and colonization of Palestine, Jewish settlement on both banks of the Jordan River, and eventually gaining a Jewish demographic majority in Palestine (Pappe, 2006, 2014). Vladimir Jabotinsky published several political essays, in which he outlined his vision of a Jewish Palestine, where through consistent immigration of European Jews this land ought to be transformed into a Jewish majority country. Keeping in mind the presence of the Arab majority in Palestine, Vladimir Jabotinsky articulated his views and attitude towards the indigenous people of Palestine who constituted a demographic majority in Palestine and achieved a Jewish majority (Yiftachel, 2006). In 1923, he penned his essay titled «*The Arab Question. On the Iron Wall*», in which he highlighted that

he was believed to be hostile to Arabs and an ardent proponent of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Palestine to make way for invading Jewish settlers from Europe (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 262). Yet he indicated that both assumptions were wrong as his emotional attitude towards the indigenous people was the same as towards all other peoples, notably polite indifference (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 262).

Although Jabotinsky's worldviews evolved dramatically later, in his 1923 essay he positioned himself as a more accommodating and softer Zionist. To be precise, he pointed out that the plan of ethnic cleansing of the Indigenous people of Palestine to make room for Jewish settlers was impossible and infeasible as there would always be two peoples in Palestine, the indigenous people and European Jewish settlers (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 262). Moreover, Jabotinsky stressed that both peoples would be equal and treated as such, highlighting: «I am ready to swear for us and our descendants that we will never violate this equality and will not attempt to displace or oppress» (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 262). Yet he made it clear that the equality and a balance of power between these two peoples depend not on the Zionist attitude towards the indigenous people, but exclusively on the attitude of the latter towards Zionism (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 262). It should be noted that the purported equality between the indigenous people of Palestine and Jewish settlers did not necessarily imply forging a multicultural, multireligious, and multiethnic society where both the natives and Jewish settlers would coexist side by side in peace. Palestine had been inhabited by indigenous people speaking Arabic and practicing Islam, Christianity, and Judaism for centuries. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century with the rise of Zionism in Europe, Jews from Europe started to immigrate to Palestine, building Jewish settlements (Tress, 1984; Zouplna, 2004, 2008). The leaders and proponents of Zionism intended to transform Palestine into a Jewish-dominated land and create their nation-state on that land. In this regard, Vladimir Jabotinsky knew the indigenous people of Palestine would never acquiesce in the Zionist efforts to erase Palestine to pave the way for a Jewish homeland.

As a leading hardliner right-wing ultra-nationalist Zionist, Vladimir Jabotinsky's Zionism pursued a full demographic, cultural, religious, and ethnic change in Palestine from being an Arab country into a Jewish-dominated state. So basically, de-Palestinization and de-Arabization and respectively Judaization and Hebraizing historic Palestine have always been at the core of Zionism. As Ilan Pappé highlighted in this matter, the goal of the Zionists

has been to take as much Palestinian land as possible, yet with as few Palestinians as possible (Pappé, 2006). Yet for that Jabotinsky rightly pointed out that the indigenous people of Palestine would never voluntarily agree to turning Palestine into a Jewish state (Saïd, 1980, 1994). He was certain that voluntary reconciliation between the Palestinian Arabs and Jewish settlers was out of the question and inconceivable, even in the foreseeable future. By reconciliation, he meant the indigenous acquiescence and consent to the Zionist takeover of Palestine. In this case, Jabotinsky indicated that he had already realized the impossibility of gaining the voluntary consent of the indigenous people of Palestine to transform this land from an Arab country into a nation with a Jewish majority (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 263).

In contrast to other Zionists, especially Labor Zionists, Vladimir Jabotinsky was perhaps one of the most sober and pragmatic figures who displayed a deep understanding of the mindset, soul, and attitudes of the indigenous peoples towards invaders and colonizers. He demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the historical background and contextual factors peculiar to Palestine, indicating that «no colonization, anywhere, ever, and for no native can be acceptable» (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 263). It was evident that Jews as a religious community had certain connections, especially biblical links to historic Palestine. Yet when European Ashkenazi Zionist colonization started, Palestine was overwhelmingly an Arab land, being inhabited by a people speaking Arabic, practicing Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, who were regarded as part of the greater Arab nation (Massad, 2003; Morris, 2004). According to Jabotinsky, the Arab majority of Palestine felt that they were indigenous to this land and were the right owners of Palestine. As a result, this indigenous population of Palestine felt intimidated and threatened by European Jewish immigration and considered the encroachment of European Jews as a violation of indigenous rights and trespassing on their property. In this regard, Jabotinsky knew Arabs would never voluntarily consent to Jewish colonization and takeover of Palestine, transforming it into a Jewish-majority country (Masalha, 1992, 2000).

Vladimir Jabotinsky drew attention to the fact that there had not been any case when colonization had occurred with the consent of the natives. Regardless of whether they were cultured or uncultured, the natives always resisted and fought against colonization. At the same time, regardless of the civilizational level of the colonizer, it did not affect the native's attitude toward the colonizer. That

was why conquest and colonization always took place without the consent of the native and against his will. For that reason, the colonized always behaved like a robber (Kaplan, 2005; Kaplan & Penslar, 2011). Even if the colonized demonstrated his goodwill and noble intentions, the native tended to fight with equal ferocity against both evil and good colonizers. In this case, Jabotinsky emphasized that «The question of how much free land there was in that country played no role... There was no one in the world with such a strong imagination as to seriously foresee the danger of a real «displacement» of the natives by newcomers. The natives fought not because they consciously and feared displacement, but simply because no colonization, anywhere, ever, and for any native can be acceptable» (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 263).

In Jabotinsky's view, every native people regardless of their level of development, whether civilized or barbarian, tended to see their country as their national home. Accordingly, the natives would always strive to be and forever remain the owner of the land and country, and thereby they would never consent voluntarily to share their homeland with the colonizer. This logic ought to be applied to the Arabs, who would resist the Zionist colonization and would never consent to a Jewish majority in Palestine (Cook, 2008; Khalidi, 2020; Sayegh, 1965). Jabotinsky called attention to how many Zionists tended to harbor a naïve idea that it was possible to fool the Arabs and that they could be bought and thus may yield to the Zionists their primacy in Palestine for certain benefits and rewards. Such reductionist and oversimplified views were deeply flawed, and mistaken, and ought not to be applied to the Palestinian Arabs. Although Jabotinsky perceived the indigenous people of Palestine as culturally backward and were at least five centuries behind European Jews, the internal difference between them and Zionists was confined within this distinction. As their love for their homeland was deep and strong, it was rather foolish to believe that the indigenous people would voluntarily agree to the realization of Zionism in exchange for the cultural and material benefits that European Jews may bring to Palestine. Likewise, it was a childish fantasy emanating from some kind of deeply biased disdain and contempt for the Palestinian Arabs that they were a cheap and corrupt race who could easily give up their homeland for a good network of railways. In Jabotinsky's view, this perception is deeply flawed, baseless, and spurious (Horowitz, 2021, 2024). Jabotinsky warned his fellow Zionists that some Arabs were believed to be corrupt and thus could easily be bribed, yet this

logic should not be generalized to the whole Palestinian society because the Palestinian Arabs would never abandon their patriotism and their love for their homeland: «Every nation would fight the colonizer as long as there is a spark of hope to eliminate and root out the colonial threat. This is exactly what the Arabs in Palestine are doing and will keep doing so as long as there is a spark of hope» (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 264).

In Jabotinsky's time, many Zionists believed that the Arab resentment and resistance to European Jewish immigration and colonization occurred due to some misunderstandings and that they may have misunderstood the Zionist intention. These Zionists thought that if they could explain to the natives their modest and good intentions, the Arabs would extend their hand to Jews. Yet Jabotinsky drew attention to the deficiency of such beliefs. For instance, a leading Zionist Sokolov spoke about how the Arabs were wrong regarding the Zionist intentions, who did not purportedly seek the uprooting of the natives, depriving them of their property and subjecting them to oppression (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 265). Sokolov argued that Jews were not striving for a Jewish government or self-rule in Palestine. However, the Arabs understood the Zionist intentions and mentality. During the 1920s and 1930s, the most pressing issue for the Zionists perhaps was ensuring uninterrupted and unrestrained Jewish immigration to Palestine so that Jews could attain a majority status. In this regard, the Arab press pointed out that the Zionists were right now dreaming neither about expelling or oppressing the Arabs nor about a Jewish government, they were now concerned about only one matter – unlimited Jewish immigration and noninterference of the Arabs (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 265). During the British mandate in Palestine with the assistance of the British authorities, the Zionists pursued the goal of gaining a Jewish majority through mass immigration of European Jews to Palestine. According to the Zionists, only a demographic Jewish primacy would allow them to transform Palestine into a Jewish state (Heller, 1998).

The Zionists assured the indigenous people that Jewish immigration from Europe to Palestine would be limited if the economic capacity of Palestine would permit. Nonetheless, the Arabs understood incessant Jewish immigration may gradually lead to a Jewish demographic dominance and displacement of the natives. Yet achieving a Jewish majority in Palestine was the paramount goal of Zionism and the Arabs would resist Zionist colonization and takeover. This was because unabating Jewish immigration would gradually result in a Jewish ma-

majority and the fate of the minoritized Arabs would depend on the goodwill of that majority. The bottom line was that Jewish immigration would eventually turn into a win-lose situation for the Arabs whose minoritized status would undermine their aspirations and cause. Hence, Jabotinsky rightly pointed out that «there are no misunderstandings. The Jews want only one thing – freedom of immigration, and respectively, the Arabs do not want precisely this Jewish immigration» because a minority would be subject to the will of a majority (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 265). Jabotinsky anticipated the Arab resentment and objection to Jewish immigration and colonization because colonization in any form and shape could not be accepted by the natives.

Since the indigenous people of Palestine resisted Jewish immigration, the Zionists came up with the idea that they should get consent to Zionism from other Arabs in Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and so on. Yet in this regard, Jabotinsky warned that even if the Zionists succeed in getting consent from other Arabs, the attitude of the Palestinian Arabs towards Zionism would remain unaffected and unchanged. This was because even though for Egyptian or Syrian Arabs Palestine may seem a tiny segment of the vast Arab world, yet for the Palestinian Arabs Palestine was not just a remote periphery but rather it was the only homeland, the center and support of their national existence (Goldstein, 2018). By considering the contextual factors and realities, Vladimir Jabotinsky suggested that Zionist colonization of Palestine would have to be carried out without the consent and even against the will of the indigenous people. Furthermore, he highlighted that not only the Palestinian Arabs but also, Arabs from other parts of the Middle East would not consent to a Jewish majority and lose the Arab character of Palestine. It was because the issue was not just about Arabs, but primarily about Arab nationalism, which like any nationalism, especially Italian nationalism before 1870, was striving for unity and state sovereignty. In other words, Arab nationalists in all parts of the Arab world were seeking the elimination of English and French colonialism in Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and elsewhere. In contrast, Zionism and the Zionists were dependent and relied entirely on the English mandate and French support. Therefore, any idea of assisting and collaborating with Arab nationalism would be tantamount to suicide and betrayal. From this perspective, the Zionists could not get involved in such political collusion and connivance, the purpose of which would be the removal of the English and French from the Arab world and the destruc-

tion of these colonial empires. Such back-stabbing and double-dealing would be suicidal for Zionism, which would be crushed and obliterated by European powers for its treachery.

As it was out of the question and inconceivable to get the consent from both the Palestinian Arabs and the rest of the Arab world to Zionism and a Jewish majority, Jabotinsky emphasized that there were only two options: either the Jews ought to renounce Zionism and abandon a plan of a Jewish majority in Palestine or they would have to keep colonization without the consent and against the will of the natives. Moreover, as the Zionists had tried everything to achieve their major goal of a Jewish majority and all options had been exhausted, they would have to continue their colonization efforts only under the protection of a force or power independent of the local population, which Jabotinsky defined as an «iron wall» (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 267). An «iron wall» was conceptualized by Jabotinsky as the Jewish military outpost or garrison in the Arab world that would be designed and intended to carry out Jewish Zionist colonization of Palestine and compel the Palestinian Arabs to consent to Zionism and accept Jewish Palestine. In Jabotinsky's view, only a powerful Jewish military fortress would be able to make the native population unable to break down the «iron wall» and would break the backbone of the indigenous resistance and induce their consent to Zionism (Horowitz, 2017).

By proposing a viable solution to the so-called Arab question under the banner of an «iron wall», Vladimir Jabotinsky suggested that the Zionists ought to deal with the Arab policy in such a way, no matter how much they may pretend to be hypocrites (Shlaim, 2014). On the one hand, he admitted that Jewish immigration and colonization of Palestine were unfolding due to the direct assistance and support of Britain. On the other hand, the British mandate and Jewish colonization were justly encountering the native resistance. In his view, the meaning of the British backing for Zionism and the Zionists was that Britain as an external power had undertaken the duty to create in Palestine such advantageous and favorable conditions for Zionism, which in turn no matter would deprive the indigenous population of their ability and possibility of interfering with Zionist colonization in any shape. For that reason, the Zionists were increasingly dependent on the British patronage, without its backing, Zionism would be unsustainable and short-lived. Therefore, the Zionists, both 'doves' and 'hawks' without any exception would have to urge the major sponsor of their colonization to fulfill its role every day without any

reservation (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 267). Thus, Jabotinsky suggested that only an «iron wall» would allow the Zionists to prevail and gain control over Palestine.

Conclusion

Drawing upon the relevant literature and historical sources, using the historical methods of document and data analysis this study has explored Vladimir Jabotinsky's political views and his «iron wall concept». The study has demonstrated that Jewish Zionist colonization of Palestine was always at the center of the debate in Zionist circles, especially since this issue was of greater importance to Jabotinsky. The study has revealed that, unlike Labor Zionism, the Revisionist Zionism led by Jabotinsky claimed both banks of the Jordan River and objected to the British prohibition of Jewish colonial settlement on the east bank of the Jordan River. Regarding Zionist colonization, regardless of all objections and reproaches, Jabotinsky believed that despite the native resistance and opposition to a Jewish majority, Zionism was a just cause, ethical and moral. Thus, if Zionism was moral and just, it should be carried out regardless of the agreement or disagreement of others. In this case, if any force, including the Indigenous population, would seek to prevent the implementation of this just cause by force, accordingly, they must be confronted with the same force, specifically the Jewish bayonet or an «iron wall». Yet at the same time, Jabotinsky did not exclude a deal with the Palestinian Arabs; quite the contrary, he suggested that only a voluntary agreement was unthinkable. He argued that like any other colonized people, the Arabs in Palestine would always resist and try to get rid of Zionism, «As long as the Arabs have even a spark of hope to get rid of us, they will not sell this hope for any sweet words or any nutritious sandwiches, precisely because they are not

a rabble, but a people, albeit backward, but alive. A living person makes concessions to such enormous, fatal issues only when there is no hope left and when there is no longer a single loophole in the iron wall. Only then do the extreme groups, whose slogan is «no way,» lose their charm, and influence passes to moderate groups. Only then will these moderates come to us with a proposal for mutual concessions» (Jabotinsky, 2004, p. 268-269).

As can be seen, Jabotinsky's approach to the so-called Arab question was designed to erect a Jewish military fortress in Palestine, which would implement the Zionist project of colonization and achieve a Jewish majority in Palestine by fighting back the indigenous resistance and focusing on breaking the backbone and will of the natives to extract their consent to Zionism. When only the natives would be compelled to be convinced of the impregnability and invincibility of the Zionist «iron wall», they would have to come forward and mitigate their recalcitrant attitudes towards Zionism and start to bargain honestly with the Zionists on a multitude of critical issues around guarantee against displacement, equality, equal rights, human rights, civil rights, and national and cultural identity. In this case, Jabotinsky alluded that the Jews would be able to grant the natives such guarantees and rights that would assure and soothe them, which would usher in a new age where both Jews and the indigenous people would live side by side in peace and harmony. Yet he highlighted that the only way to achieve such a deal with the natives would be an «iron wall», a Jewish military outpost, which would not be inaccessible to any Arab influence and the Indigenous resistance to Zionist colonization efforts. That is why, Jabotinsky argued that without such an «iron wall», all Zionist attempts to reach any agreement with the native people were meaningless and unsustainable. Only a Jewish «iron wall» would ensure the Arab acquiescence to Zionism and Jewish colonization of Palestine.

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