ZIONIST VOLUNTARISM IN THE
POLITICAL STRUGGLE: 1939-1948

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A broad overview of the political system in the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine is presented for the years 1939-1945. The years 1939-1945 were characterized by political dissension. In the period 1945-1948 a crosscutting process may be discerned inside that system. Special attention is given to how this pluralistic and voluntaristic system functioned during World War II and the period of political and military struggle for the founding of the State of Israel. Emphasis is placed on the difference between constructive Zionism, led by the Labor movement and headed by David Ben-Gurion, and on the pure political military Revisionist movement. The political clash between the two movements is described as a confrontation of two political cultures, which eventually determined the fate of Zionism from the 1930s until the founding of the state.

A political history of Zionism and the Jewish community in Palestine during the decade between 1939 and 1948 is a chronicle of an unexpected and unforeseen confrontation without the benefit of either historical experience, a political plan, or spiritual preparedness to confront a new and changing reality. The Holocaust of European Jewry and the immediate opportunity for the establishment of the Jewish state at the end of World War II represented totally new situations which tested the policy and the contemporary political framework of Zionism. Nonetheless, some segments of the new reality could be accommodated by the historical experience previously accumulated by the Zionist movement. One of the lessons it had learned from World War I was that superpower contests opened windows of political opportunity for Zionism. Accordingly, from the very outset of the conflict against Hitler, the Zionist leadership pressed for the establishment of a Hebrew army within the framework of the Allied forces and, in accordance with the Biltmore resolution, called for the foundation of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. These measures constituted a quasi-instinctive political reaction by the same generation which had labored for the Hebrew Battalions and the Balfour Declaration during World War I. In matters affecting relations with the British government, much invaluable historical experience had also been acquired during prior periods of crisis. Even partial cooperation, it had been learned,

harbored the possibility for future political gains and yielded imme-
diate economic and particularly military benefits. Practical coopera-
tion in various spheres between the Jewish community in Palestine and
the British authorities was therefore regarded as a prefatory requisite
for the obtainment of a binding political declaration regarding their
identity of interests. Such was the lesson of the Nili episode and the
Hebrew Brigades during World War I; such too was the lesson of the
years of the Arab Revolt (1936-1939), when thousands of Jewish youth
had acquired military experience within the framework of the various
security detachments set up by the British authorities. Precisely the
same benefits were obtained during the Second World War, both by
Jewish enlistment in the British Army and by Jewish participation in
the supply of food and equipment to the armies encamped in the Mid-
dle East.

The second thread is the *international* nature of the Zionist
Nevertheless, there did exist two entirely new circumstances. One
was generated by the Holocaust, which destroyed the Zionist base in
Europe; the other was the Arab threat to exterminate the Jewish com-
munity in Palestine. Both circumstances were unique, unforeseen and ur-
gent. Hence, any attempt to recapitulate the political occurrences in
the Jewish community in that period and analyze its motives must ad-
dress two problems: 1) the resilience of the political tradition in the
face of the revolutionary changes of the era; 2) the influence exerted on
the actions and plans of the Jewish communal leadership by the war
and by the burden of the struggle to establish the state. In other words,
the tension between change and continuity which is central to all his-
torical research becomes particularly important during this decisive
decade, when the organization and political modus operandi of the
Zionist movement and the Jewish community in Palestine faced the
supreme test. This essay will attempt to deal with these subjects by
first attempting to ascertain the nature of the local Jewish political
framework during the 1940s, while underscoring those advantages
which would influence the course of events during that decade.

The first distinctive thread to run throughout the course of the en-
tire period is the division between the Zionist political majority and
the anti-Zionist minority (such as Agudat Israel, Neturei Karta, the
Communist party and, towards the end of the era, the Hebrew Youth
Circles, better known as the "Canaanites"). This division possessed
political as well as ideological importance since, as will be seen, iden-
tification with Zionist goals and adherence to the institutional
framework of the Zionist movement largely determined the boundaries
of the political struggle and permitted rival forces to collaborate on
specific political issues. In the absence of a common ideological plat-
form, it is doubtful whether those restraints which were imposed upon
the internal struggles could have indeed been maintained.

The second thread is the *international* nature of the Zionist

political framework. Small and marginal political groups aside, the roots of the traditional parties lay in the diaspora, to which they looked for numerical and financial support. The relative political strength of the parties in the Jewish community was significantly determined by the size of the flow of men and money from the diaspora to Palestine. Nevertheless, the relationship between political strength in the Yishuv and status in the diaspora was severely limited.[1]

At the close of World War II, when apprehensions over the fate of European Jewry had been gruesomely validated, a new era began in the history of the Jewish people. The extermination of the majority of European Jewry meant that the parties operating in the Jewish community of Palestine were now detached from their traditional sources of sustenance in Eastern Europe. A temporary phenomenon had become a permanent reality. The political system would henceforth be more Palestinian than it had ever been during the 40-year period commencing with the establishment of the first parties in Palestine during the Second Aliyah. However, the national trauma did not produce far-reaching changes in the realm of political organization. It did not produce structural revamping and reform; it did not heal divisions that predated the calamity of the Holocaust; nor did it promote the rise of new forces in the public arena. Possibly, the tenacity of popular viewpoints, and the persistence of patterns of political institutionalization, can be attributed to the strength exerted by historical continuity. But while the importance of the diaspora connection should not be minimized, that was not the sole relevant explanation for the relative political status of the Jewish parties in Palestine.

The third characteristic thread is directly related to the issue just raised. A distinction existed between political parties which functioned solely as parties, and parties which combined political activity with a *constructive character*. Parties affiliated to the Labor movement comprehended the need to establish reciprocal relations between political achievements and economic construction. This provided them with a signal advantage over the "civil" parties, especially the Revisionists, who were primarily interested in political activity. The Labor movement's initial advantage was compounded by the historical process. The importance of political constructivism increased from the mid-1930s onward, when the international and national situation deteriorated and the involvement of the national institutions in the economy and society of the Jewish community intensified. This period witnessed a significant increase in national expenditures, signalling a pattern which reached unprecedented heights in the years 1943-1948.[2] This development, which attested to the enhanced position of the national institutions, reinforced the economic, social, and political status of the workers' movement. It alone possessed both the economic tools and the traditional organizational assets (notably the General Labor

Federation [Histadrut][3]) which could be placed at the disposal of the general community. Because of its constructive nature, the workers' movement also profited during the war from an expanding economy stimulated by the demand of the British army stationed in Palestine. These processes accounted for its economic as well as political advantage over the civilian sector, including the Revisionist movement.

Fourth, note must be taken of the stability of the Yishuv's political system, maintained even though Zionist and Jewish communal organization was *essentially voluntary*. Democratically inclined parties persisted in their adherence to the system notwithstanding internal disagreements; only groups otherwise inclined defected.[4] Thus, despite experiencing a succession of splits and political shocks during and after the 1930s, the system experienced no severe upheavals in its structure or leadership. This phenomenon of leadership stability amidst organizational division is again a product of the Labor movement's constructivism, to which the General Labor Federation undoubtedly contributed a considerable share. Given the "ideological" tendency of the Histadrut's various components, one would have expected division and the dissolution of common frameworks; yet the Histadrut remained organizationally intact and increased its political and economic "reach." Paradoxically, it was precisely the ideological movements within the Yishuv who displayed the greatest self-restraint. Plagued by sectional interests, personal conflicts, and social and political differences of opinion, the pragmatic groups from the civic sector lacked anything like the common socio-political framework possessed by the Histadrut.

Finally, one recalls that the political system itself always possessed two aspects; one *manifest, formal and legal*, the other *latent and clandestine*. Here too, however, inner tensions reflected the system's dual nature. Civilian control over the military arm was maintained, despite the understandable and natural tension between the two. Furthermore, the very existence of the Haganah as a clandestine body propped up the structure of the voluntary communal organization. In addition to the ideological Zionist consensus, the constructive method, and the democratic essence of the parties, the joint underground activity served as a restraining factor, which prevented the disintegration of the system. As we shall see, the course taken by the defecting groups was quite different.

The period between World War II and the 1948 War of Independence is characterized by *uncertainty*, initially over the fate of European Jewry, and subsequently over the prospects of the political and military struggle for a Jewish state. Hence, it constituted an interim period, tantamount to an historical crossroads. One chapter in the history of the Jewish people and of Zionism had ended and another had commenced. It was precisely in this period that Zionism was confronted

with its supreme contest for survival, in three senses of the term: *de-fense* of the Jewish community's existence in Palestine; *selection* of a political strategy; and initiating *action* for securing the political goal. This triple confrontation also tested the public and the traditional methods of political action at several levels — ideological, political, social and organizational. Apart from the "external" challenges represented by British hostility and Arab opposition, the Zionist tra-dition also confronted an "internal" struggle. During this period the alternative posed by Revisionist Zionism ceased to be mere political experimentation and became a concrete program of revolutionary mili-tary action coupled with political designs. It thus collided with the Labor movement, which represented Zionist continuity in both respects.

The struggle between two movements, in all its aspects, illustrates the nature of the Jewish community's political system, including its self-doubts and internal difficulties, its dedication to the traditional method, and its parallel and cross-cutting political lines. Irrespective of the fact that in purely electoral terms the struggle pitted an over-whelming majority against a small minority (roughly 15 percent of the Yishuv), the power of the Revisionists and especially that of the IZL (Irgun Zvai Leumi) cannot be properly estimated only in formal and quantitative terms. Their standing in the Jewish world and in the Jew-ish community in Palestine immeasurably surpassed their electoral strength and the numerical importance of the IZL, which numbered only a few thousand members.[5] The IZL, as is well-known, enjoyed broad sympathy among Religious-Zionist circles; possessed supporters among the General Zionists and particularly farmers and members of the Brit Hatzionim Haklaiim (General Zionist Alliance); and engaged the warm feelings of Jewish immigrants from Asia and Africa. Fur-thermore, the ethos and myth projected by members of the IZL, who were fighting the British out of a sublime sense of self-sacrifice, touched youthful hearts everywhere, including those of people who, from an ideological and organizational standpoint, were affiliated to the Labor movement.[6]

The different attitudes attached to the concept of *voluntarism* by the Labor movement and its affiliated political bodies, on the one hand, and by the Revisionist movement, on the other, underlay the po-litical behavior of the Jewish community during this period of struggle between the majority and the minority. The conceptual differences be-tween the two rivals did not derive from the fact that Labor had ostensibly secured perpetual leadership within the Zionist movement, while Revisionism was condemned to constitute an eternal opposition. Historical reality was vastly different. For an entire generation, be-tween the years 1905 and 1930, the Labor movement was the "oppositionist minority" within the Zionist movement. Its leaders, an-ticipating subsequent Revisionist behavior, would chafe in frustration

over the actions and failures of the Zionist Organization and uttered unceasing protests and complaints. There were even those, for example, Ben-Gurion, who occasionally "sinned" by contemplating "defection" from the Zionist Organization. It was this feeling of frustration and disappointment that, at the beginning of the 1920s, led the Achdut Ha-Avoda party to attempt a political alliance with Zeev Jabotinsky, who had just recently left the Zionist Executive because of the Stavinsky Affair.

Nevertheless, the concept of "defection" was very different in the two cases. To the extent that some members of the Labor party toyed with the idea, they did so at a time of apparent failure — when their movement's "constructive" enterprise was pilloried as a baseless experiment which squandered the national assets. This was not to be the case with the Revisionist movement which defected precisely at the moment when its political power within the Zionist movement was on a path of continuous ascent.

One cannot explain this phenomenon in terms of the Revisionists' "mania for fracture." As has already been demonstrated, all of the movements — left and right — and political parties were afflicted with this characteristic. If anything it was more applicable to the Labor movement whose history, since its origin during the days of the Second Aliyah, was continuously checkered by sundry splits and defections alternating with tendencies towards unity. Likewise, it is difficult to explain the Revisionist "defection" in terms of the importance which that movement, and especially its leader, Zeev Jabotinsky, placed on the need for strong and even coercive leadership which could apparently not be attained within the framework of the Zionist movement. The desire for leadership or "the ambition for hegemony" (to use the idiom of the time) was equally shared by the Labor movement. Already during the Second Aliyah, Labor's leaders were convinced that the movement was predestined for leadership by "the decree of history." As the years passed and the experience of Zionist activity accumulated with its successes and failures, their conviction was invigorated and reinforced.

It is tempting to cite "political activism" as a cause for the defection of the Revisionists from the Zionist Organization. After all, they did find themselves harried, often beyond endurance, by the compromising and moderate Zionist policy. But in this matter, too, Revisionism was not alone. In tactical terms, at least, the political activism of the Labor movement was not essentially inferior to that of the Revisionists, and occasionally even surpassed it. Thus, for example, the original demand for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine emanated from Labor's ranks following the Balfour Declaration while Jabotinsky was still a moderate Zionist leader. Opposition to the Peel Commission's recommendation to divide the Land of Israel was no less

intense among large segments of Labor than among the Revisionists. The support evinced by the "moderate" leaders who supported partition, on behalf of population transfers, to which Jabotinsky objected for various reasons, was an additional display of far-sighted political activism.[7]

Thus, while each of these explanations perhaps accelerated the Revisionists' decision to leave the Zionist Organization, none directly generated that action. The initial — albeit indirect — cause is probably to be sought in other circumstances, one which also illuminates the political behavior of the contemporary party system in Palestine.

The root of the rift, it is here suggested, lay in disparate social realities — that of the Labor movement, on the one hand, and the Revisionist movement, on the other. The former was essentially constructive and the second essentially political. The constructivism of the Labor movement was umbilically tied to the Zionist Organization, since that body represented the sole source of financial nourishment requisite to continuing the Labor movement's constructive enterprise.[8] Conversely, the Revisionist movement had a clearly political orientation and downgraded constructivism as a major avenue of nation-building. It therefore possessed much greater freedom of action and could regard the fracturing of traditional political frameworks with greater equanimity than the Labor movement. Hence the strength of one movement constituted the weakness of the other and conversely. Even after its defection, the Revisionist movement discovered scope for activity outside the Zionist Organization. The Labor movement, however, amassed its strength within the Zionist establishment by accepting the yoke of discipline while it was still a minority party, and by strengthening that discipline when it commenced its period of leadership.

Obedience to majority discipline posed itself as the principal and practical question in the political history of the Zionist movement, especially in the Land of Israel where it was to be realized. It has already been noted that rebellion against the authority of the majority was a phenomenon that permeated all the political and public bodies of the Jewish community.[9] However, no dispute between the majority and the minority in the history of the Jewish community could equal the public passion, the cardinal importance, and the political significance of the competition between the Revisionist movement and the Labor movement.

In the realm of principle, the struggle pitted two concepts of democracy. The Revisionist concept was essentially political, formal and legalistic. The Socialists, however, downplayed the importance of legalistic formalism and instead accentuated the importance of the constructive act. In other words, the clash was between a formal democratic approach and a genuinely democratic approach. The Revisionist movement did not recognize the authority of the *voluntary* democratic

institutions of the Zionist movement to impose the restraints of discipline. In its opinion, such authority was entrusted only to national political institutions. In contradistinction, the traditions of the Labor movement did invest voluntary institutions with the political sanction to impose discipline on the public. In the absence of a better substitute, they deserved the same respect as national political institutions. Both the individual and groups had to heed their discipline precisely because they had freely assented to the incorporation of these institutions. On the practical plane, the Labor movement believed in disciplined action in all spheres of Zionist organization — be it in the world movement or in the Jewish community in Palestine. The leader of the Revisionist movement, Zeev Jabotinsky, sought to substitute an *agreement* between autonomous groups for the *discipline* of majority decisions. Therefore, in defecting from the "old" Zionist Organization and by forming the "new" Zionist Organization, he intended to create a different type of Zionist unity which would be based on an agreement between the two.[10]

The rationale for schism, creating unity on another basis, was further elaborated by Menachem Begin; it became the *right of defection* for the sake of the principal revolution. In Begin's words, "the history of religions and nations teaches us that the possibility of defection without revolution exists, but there is no possibility for revolution without defection." A revolution, he maintained, is not a putsch; a revolution is not a matter that is put to a vote; a revolution does not take place in the wake of a "resolution" which has been formulated down to its last passages, at the close of "a general debate." The conquest of the Bastille preceded the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens; the Boston Tea Party preceded the Bill of Rights. A revolution always erupts from "the depths"; otherwise, it does not erupt at all. It is not subject to "discipline"; it imposes discipline upon its perpetrators. In fact, defection and revolution are one and the same *"just as revolution and progress are one and the same"* (my emphasis, Y.G.).[11] With these words, Menachem Begin accentuated the differences between his approach to the concepts of revolution and defection and that of the Labor movement. In his opinion, the struggle itself constitutes the revolution, whereas in the view of the Labor movement, struggle was an adjunct to the free development of a new Jewish society. The establishment of such a society had to encompass far more than political liberation and personal liberty alone. This conceptual difference is central to the ideological distinction separating the IZL from the Palmach.

Let us pass from the theoretical to the practical distinction. One can contend, in a paradoxical manner, that Jabotinsky's viewpoint regarding a Zionist unity founded on an agreement between independent bodies approximated that proposed by Yitzchak Tabenkin. Tabenkin

maintained that the split in Mapai opened the road to a general unity of the Labor movement based on autonomous ideological organizational bodies. However, if a similarity exists, an essential difference between the two concepts remains. There is no better method to observe this difference than to examine the connection between the political movements and their secret military organizations, i.e., between the Zionist Revisionists and the IZL, on the one hand, and the General Labor Federation, Mapai, the Achdut Ha-Avoda movement, and the Palmach, on the other. However, before we turn to a clarification of the differences between the status of the IZL and that of the Palmach vis-a-vis their political movements, let us direct our attention to the common features shared by these two military organizations. Both organizations were linked to youth movements which served as repositories of their ethos and as reservoirs for recruitment. Both were not political bodies, but their commands were identified with political parties: that of the Palmach with the Achdut Ha-Avoda movement and the Kibbutz Hameuchad, and that of the IZL with the Revisionist movement. A deep link of personal respect and veneration between the military commanders and a leadership figure outside the organization occasionally existed. Yitzchak Tabenkin provided such a figure for the Palmach and Zeev Jabotinsky for the IZL. Yet the essential difference overpowered the external similarity.

Let us first provide factual clarification. Primary attention should be devoted to the fact that Jabotinsky's justification for the division and the subsequent right of defection formulated by Begin awarded ideological legitimacy to a chain of defections. The first of these defections was the departure from the Zionist Organization; it was succeeded by the defection of the IZL from the authority of the Haganah and the almost total rift between the IZL and the political Revisionist movement; and finally by the formation of the Lehi as a result of a split within the IZL. The dynamic of splits brought about the disintegration of the Revisionist movement both in theory and in practice during this period.

Quite different was the structure of relations between the Palmach and its ideological and political framework. Despite the internal struggles in Mapai between the majority and "Faction B" (and later between the Achdut Ha-Avoda movement and Mapai in the Histadrut), and despite the fact that the majority of members in the Palmach apparently were inclined toward the left wing of the Labor movement, such tension did not result in an organized defection and no independent military body was established. This fact is worthy of special emphasis, because in addition to ideological and political differences, tension existed between the Palmach's command and the leadership of the Haganah and the Histadrut over questions related to large-scale enlistment into the British army which the Palmach opposed.

The Palmach and its leadership objected to the partition of the country, and made no secret of its disinclination to cooperate with the British Criminal Investigation Department during the period of the "Season." Altogether, differences of opinion between the activist command of the Palmach and the moderate leadership of the Jewish community were quite significant during the post-World War II struggle against the British. Yisrael Galili testified that "the bonds tying the fighters to the leadership were very frayed and on the verge of coming apart on more than one occasion."[12] Nonetheless, the Palmach retained its connections with its parent movement and with the Jewish community's political framework. Its command observed the obligation of discipline and obedience to the broader military framework, the Haganah. It was scrupulous in maintaining the pluralistic nature of the organization from the movement standpoint, and refrained from any attempt to influence youth groups that were unaffiliated with the Kibbutz Hameuchad.[13]

The Palmach became an inseparable part of the General Labor Federation which belonged to the Zionist organizations and the institutions of the Jewish community in Palestine. The constructive nature of this framework of ties held the activist tendencies of the Palmach in check from the very outset. In contradistinction, this system of brakes and curbs was not present in the Revisionist movement and hence the restraints that could have prevented the disintegration of the Revisionist movement's network were absent. From this it may be deduced that the constructive method, both as an ideological preference and as an organizational concept, was what permitted the existence of the Zionist political network as a structure of two levels — the manifest political level and the clandestine military level, while maintaining an indissoluble, albeit problematic, connection between them. Here a question crucial to an understanding of Zionist policy and its political behavior in general, and during the decade under discussion in particular, poses itself. Did the basic outlook regarding society and its political structure influence Zionist policy, and thus, in turn, the political history of the Jewish community? In other words, to what extent did the theoretical constructs influence the methods of struggle against the British authority during this decade?

The Political Legacy of the Zionist Movement

Zionist policy during the 50 years from Herzl until the foundation of the State of Israel can be divided into three periods. The first extends from the First Zionist Congress until the outbreak of the First World War, when the Zionist Organization was transformed into a political instrument dealing with plans and negotiations surrounding

the future of the Land of Israel. The second period stretches from the Balfour Declaration to 1929, during which time an ideological imprimatur and international political recognition were bestowed upon the aspirations of the Zionist movement, and the constructive base for the Jewish National Home in the Land of Israel was established. The third period, from the beginning of the 1930s until the establishment of the state, witnessed the development of Jewish-Arab confrontation, a discernible rift between the British government and the Zionist movement, and the outbreak of a political and military struggle for the establishment of the Jewish state.

One can further divide the latter period which comprises the decade under discussion into two subperiods. The first, extending from 1929 until 1939, was dominated by Chaim Weizmann's formulation of policy for the Zionist movement. The counterpoint, the opposition to this policy, was supplied in its most lucid manner, both in theory and in practice, by Zeev Jabotinsky. The identity between the personality and the policy was so evident that one can definitely speak about Weizmann's method and Jabotinsky's method in Zionist policy during those years. The second sub-period, that stretching from 1939 to 1948, was dominated by the policy administrated by David Ben-Gurion and opposed by the IZL.

Ben-Gurion's method and the alternative to it did not exert an equal influence on Zionist policy. The extra-institutional opposition of the IZL did not alter the course of the Zionist movement in an essential manner. Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the fact that the Zionist policy directed by Ben-Gurion was shaped in the midst of a bitter dispute and violent struggle with the IZL. The impact of that struggle was discernible both for good and for evil. A dynamic process was underway which disrupted the continuity of the political tradition, while it sought to preserve its basic essentials. In order to understand the prominent differences between the two methods and to grasp the finer distinctions between them, one must return to the period preceding World War Two.

The great rivalry between Chaim Weizmann and Zeev Jabotinsky must not distract our attention from the fact that both personages shared certain outlooks. These left their imprint on the two Zionist movements and on both leaders' admirers; they also influenced Zionist policy and its political leadership. Both men were Anglophiles — partly because of their strong links to Western culture, partly because of their heartfelt belief that democratic liberalism carried within it the finest values of mankind, and partly because they trusted that a country which attached deep respect towards political obligations offered the Zionist movement a chance as well.

The cultural-ideological tie to Britain also influenced their policies. Neither Weizmann nor Jabotinsky believed that Zionism's aim

could be attained by violent struggle against Britain; both believed that their political method could induce England into fulfilling the obligations implicit in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate over Palestine. Thus, the difference between their two approaches was rooted not in principles but in political methodology.

"Weizmannism" as a political method, with which the Labor movement identified, was characterized by consistent patience, by a stubborn moderation, by a belief in quiet diplomacy and by an ability to withstand protracted negotiation. The readiness to agree to political compromise as long as it advanced the Zionist enterprise was an essential part of this method. The alliance with England, thus perceived, was the sole political guarantee for Zionism's realization. Hence, Weizmann was seized by a deep anxiety concerning the non-exploitation or squandering of the unique historical opportunity that this alliance offered the Jewish people, an opportunity that perhaps would never repeat itself. Despite the fact that Britain proved herself over the course of the years to be unstable and even treacherous, the possibility of a rift with her and detachment from her was considered very dangerous for the Zionist enterprise. Zionism's policy towards Britain was characterized by extraordinary caution. The fear of being dragged into clashes with Britain, which would produce a general and almost irrevocable confrontation with her, accounted for this caution. The limits of political abnegation and compromise according to this concept were determined by the historical timing and the possibility for continuing Zionist construction.

This policy, whose practicality and compromising tendency derived from an appreciation of the historical occasion, was opposed by Jabotinsky. He fathered the policy of Zionist pressure, whose essence was its demonstrative public nature and which sought various outlets for itself. The first outlet was the unambiguous declaration that a Jewish state was the ultimate goal of Zionism. This declaration was not intended to establish a state immediately, but to put British intentions to the test. Next came the application of mass popular pressure upon the British government through the famous "petition," and political activism in the international arena geared towards establishing "alliances" with other states as a public warning to the Mandatory government. The final manifestation, a product of political frustration, was the "plan" on the eve of the Second World War to stage a military demonstration. A few thousand armed youths would be landed on the shores of Palestine in order to capture the institutions of government and proclaim to the world the establishment of a Jewish state.

However, even this idea, which was more a figment of romantic imagination than a product of political, military and practical considerations, did not mean that Revisionism had totally abandoned its faith in renewing the alliance with Britain. The record shows that

following the outbreak of the war, Jabotinsky sought to revive the He-
brew Brigades and that the IZL, headed by David Raziel, volunteered
its service to His Majesty's government in the common struggle against
the Nazi foe. Paradoxically, at the start of the war the IZL demon-
strated greater political readiness and practical dexterity in collabo-
rating with the British than did the organized Zionist establishment
and its military arm, the Haganah. Thus, for example, the IZL did not
take part in the demonstrations organized by the Jewish community in-
stitutions in 1940 against the "Land Laws" which restricted settle-
ment.[14] The objection of the IZL to the nationwide protest organized by
the rival majority was of marginal importance politically, but was a
telling testimony to the difference between the two political concepts.
The Land Laws, which restricted Jewish rights to purchase lands, were
interpreted by constructive Zionism as a political stock which might
eventually strangle the Zionist project. To the Revisionists, disciples of
the "Jabotinsky School," the political accomplishment implicit in col-
laboration with the British overshadowed damage to the constructive
enterprise which they had always downgraded.

During the 1940s, the two political methods became defunct.
"Weizmannism" and "Jabotinskyism" were shunted from the stage. In
response to the war, the new policy of the British government as ex-
pressed in the White Paper, the Holocaust of European Jewry, and the
hostility of the Labour government after 1945, a new policy was taking
shape. Within the Zionist arena, the death of Jabotinsky, on the one
hand, and the weakening of Weizmann's political power following the
Biltmore Conference, on the other, facilitated the crystallization of
the new line. In Palestine, it was the defection of the Stern group from
the IZL and the formation of the Lehi, on the one hand, and the estab-
lishment of the Palmach and the schism within Mapai, on the other,
that generated the change in policy.

The three spheres — the international, the Zionist, and the Jewish
communal — shared a common orientation. All were prepared for de-
tachment from British protection and for the substitution of an
alternative political alliance. They could even contemplate ejecting
Britain from the region and facing an armed conflict with her. While
this was the new tendency, its pace, scope and timing aroused burning
controversy within the Zionist movement and within the Yishuv. This
conflict essentially counterposed two political methods: those of David
Ben-Gurion and of the IZL. Since it was the first which determined the
course of political Zionism, the entire era can be designated, from a po-
litical sense, as the "Ben-Gurion Period."

"Ben-Gurionism" shared a number of traits with earlier
"Weizmannism." It was a national phenomenon, and as a policy chan-
nel and a political method it enjoyed a number of prominent features:
imaginative personal leadership, far-sightedness and political

boldness. Weizmann of the "Balfour Declaration" was matched by Ben-Gurion of the "Biltmore Program." Through such initiatives, the political realism and historical sense of timing were enlisted by a charismatic personality and an elite supporting group devoted to public service. For Weizmann in the 1920s, this support group was the pioneer settlement movement, whereas for Ben-Gurion in the 1940s, the analog was the Palmach, which was likewise linked to cooperative settlement in the military sphere and to the Histadrut in the political arena.

Ben-Gurionism left its imprint on developments in three fields of activity: externally, it set the tenor of relations with Great Britain; internally, within Palestine, it defined the terms of the confrontation with the IZL; and in the intermediate sphere, it affected the workers' movement in general and Mapai in particular. It is possible to compare Ben-Gurionism to a tree whose roots were planted in the soil of the traditional constructivism of the Labor movement. Its trunk was the political realism of Weizmann and its foliage was the "Jabotinskyite pressure method." The combination of these three foundations in a specific historical progression is what distinguishes him from his predecessors.

An analysis of the political momentum of David Ben-Gurion from the Biltmore Conference onwards illustrates the similarity between his method and that asserted by Jabotinsky during the 1930s. This similarity deserves clarification. Ben-Gurion arrived in Palestine armed with the decisions of the Biltmore Conference and proceeded to force them on the Zionist Executive in the guise of the "Jerusalem Program." He thus transformed the Biltmore decisions into an open declaration regarding the "final goal" of Zionism, namely a Jewish state in Palestine. Externally, Ben-Gurion presented the plan as the very antithesis of partition, and his projects to absorb millions of European Jews in Palestine at the close of the European war buttressed this contention. It emerges, therefore, that, like Jabotinsky before him, Ben-Gurion transformed the slogan of a future Jewish state into a tool for the current political struggle. Henceforth, he believed, national goals would be served not by the concealment of Zionism's intentions, but by their publication. In order to transform a national slogan into a practical political course, Ben-Gurion required the "pressure theory" — a throwback to Jabotinsky. Contrary to the opinion of Chaim Weizmann, he supported the idea of applying the pressure of American public opinion upon the British government. Additionally, Ben-Gurion admitted the possibility that a violent struggle against British rule might be unavoidable.

So much for the similarity, which is superficial. The issue of the *time and the place* is what separated the two political methods in practice. Ben-Gurion's "pressure theory" (or to put it more exactly, the "pressure theory" of Abba Hillel Silver which Ben-Gurion supported) intended to exploit through means and methods that had hitherto been

considered unacceptable by the Zionist movement a postwar situation beneficial to the Jewish people. As opposed to the wartime situation, which bestowed a number of advantages upon the Jewish people, during the 1930s the Jews had been in a state of political helplessness. Hence, the pressure theory of Jabotinsky was doomed to failure in advance. Furthermore, not only was the time different, but so too was the place.

The method of democratic mass pressure through petitions was confounded and even ludicrous in Eastern Europe and in the international arena of the 1930s. But it became very efficient when transposed to the democratic system of the United States, both as a display of political power and as a legitimate public action, integral to the American value system. In this favorable context, Abba Hillel Silver, a talented and most attractive leader, managed to transform U.S. Jewry, with its myriad organizations, into a potent pressure group. Through action committees, the press, the radio, and through direct contacts with local representatives of the American Congress, American Jewry exerted its influence upon the U.S. president and the entire government.[15] It is noteworthy that the brunt of this activity fell on the shoulders of the local leadership, which enjoyed a large measure of autonomy in its political activity. This circumstance greatly contributed to their success, be it in the internal Jewish sphere or in the American political sphere, and subsequently in the international sphere.

The problem of timing, the demarcation between the two methods, had an additional significance. The slogan "the final goal," which Jabotinsky promulgated early in the 1930s, was not a demand for the immediate or proximate establishment of a Jewish state. It was intended for the distant future, when a Jewish majority would have been created in Palestine. Hence, the plan's opponents could counter that while its utility regarding the future was unclear, it would probably (perhaps certainly) prove detrimental in the immediate present. In contrast, the demand for establishing a Jewish state, which Ben-Gurion and his supporters raised during the war years, was logically an immediate demand. Therefore, even those who opposed it for various reasons, which will be explored below, regarded it as a tangible plan that involved difficulties and not merely as a figment of imagination that could only cause harm. It emerges, therefore, that the "foliage" of the tree that was ostensibly Revisionist differed from Revisionism in its choice of time and place and also in its sense of historical realism.

From the foliage, let us pass to the trunk of this policy, which has been defined as "Weizmannist." True, Ben-Gurion, in close collaboration with Abba Hillel Silver and contrary to the majority in Mapai, managed to topple Weizmann from the presidency of the Zionist movement at the 22nd Congress in Basle. Underlying that action was the desire to demonstrate firmness to the British government, by removing Weizmann from the chairmanship of the delegation that was

to negotiate with Britain and appointing Ben-Gurion in his stead. Yet despite everything, Ben-Gurion's policy remained one of compromise in the Weizmann style. This was true for two reasons. First, his method was interwoven with the pluralistic democratic structure of the Zionist movement which necessitated internal compromise with political forces that were more politically moderate than himself. Moreover, the Zionist establishment, as opposed to the Revisionists, maintained civil supervision over the military arm. This imposed restraints on the military activism of underground bodies, who constituted an inseparable part of Ben-Gurion's method in this sphere.

Second, the previous historical tendency of Ben-Gurion and his movement led them to agree on a compromise that admitted the progress of the Zionist enterprise and a chance to utilize a passing and not necessarily recurrent historical opportunity. Therefore, the maximalist aspiration of the "Biltmore Days" was modified into the "Partition Plan" at the close of the war. The firmness demonstrated towards Britain regarding the negotiations on the future of Palestine at the end of 1946 and the start of 1947 did not contradict the last attempt at negotiation between Ben-Gurion and Ernest Bevin regarding a provisional settlement of the problem on the basis of the principles of the Mandate. Ben-Gurion's initiative did not prevent "a cessation of the struggle and the abandonment of the partners" (the IZL and the Lehi) after the bombing of the King David Hotel in July 1946.

Finally, let us survey the political roots of this method. It is correct that Ben-Gurionism, possessing activist boldness and a compromising nature, would alternate its allies within the Zionist movement. This flexibility and adeptness at political maneuver proved one of its most important talents. Those twin characteristics of Ben-Gurionism — boldness and compromise — were also the hallmarks of the Labor movement in Palestine from its inception until the period under discussion.

What, then, separated Ben-Gurion's political conception from that of the IZL, especially once the latter declared its rebellion against the British in 1944? Again, pursuing our method, we must identify the similarity prior to exploring the difference. With the outbreak of war, the political evaluations of the IZL and those of the organized Jewish community shared a great deal in common. Both bodies attached great importance to cooperation with the British armed forces, on the one hand, while they diligently preserved an independent military force, on the other hand. Therefore, with regard to enlistment into the British army, the political leadership of the two bodies — the Zionist Organization and the Zionist-Revisionist Organization — saw eye-to-eye and they even collaborated in recruitment methods and distributing funds to assist the servicemen's families.

Similarly there was scant difference on this matter between the

reservations expressed by the Palmach Command and those of the IZL Command regarding comprehensive enlistment, which they viewed as deleterious to the internal strength of the clandestine organizations.[16] With time, as the war ended, and especially upon the Labour government's ascent to power, a new political consciousness and spiritual preparedness matured and gradually intensified (albeit the pace among the supporters of Ben-Gurion differed from those of the IZL). The possibility of severing ties between the Zionists and the British government was now considered. Concomitant to these opinions arose the need to find for Zionism an alternative set of political ties with another superpower. This, of course, meant the United States. Against the backdrop of these developments, the conviction matured that a violent conflict between the Jewish community and the British government, either as an auxiliary method or as a political measure for attaining national goals, would prove inevitable.

Therefore, what distinguished Ben-Gurion's political concept from that of the IZL was not the perception of the era nor the choice of a site for the arena of political struggle. Both approaches believed that the time was ripe for a struggle to establish the state. They also assumed that in the future the United States would be the power that would determine the political fate of the Middle East. The difference lay in the pace of estrangement from Britain and the severance of political ties with her, in determining the political moment which offered the best chances for a struggle against Britain, and the scope which the armed conflict would embrace. In terms of the pace, it was the Lehi which believed in the maximal scope and continuity. Hence it initiated the conflict against Britain with the outbreak of the war and did not desist from it until the British had departed the country. The IZL adopted for itself the middle pace which grew in intensity from "the declaration of the revolt"[17] until the British decision to turn to the United Nations organization. The Zionist Organization, for its part, believed in a slow struggle that abated and renewed itself according to the dictates of the political considerations and tactics.

These questions were decided by the Second World War and the changes that its conclusion produced in the international political system. That is why the IZL split in 1940 and was persecuted by the organized community after it announced the revolt before the war had concluded. Similarly, the "Movement of Jewish Disobedience" was established due to disappointment with Labour following its rise to power, and similar reasons dictated its dissolution. The dispute between the two organizations which evolved from the Revisionist movement, and the Ben-Gurion method that matured within the Labor movement regarding the question of pace, scope and timing, transformed the issue of *quantity* into one of *quality*, i.e., practical considerations were transformed into basic differences. In summation, a new era had begun in the

history of Zionist policy as it confronted the cognitive, emotional, and practical-political process of detachment from Britain. This period is typified by the struggle between the political method of Ben-Gurion and both components of "Military Revisionism" — the IZL and Lehi.

The Struggle Against the British and Its Impact on the Political System of the Jewish Community

When we cross over from the external political sphere to the internal political spheres, involving the Jewish community and the party, we will be sensitized to the central problem which Ben-Gurionism had to contend with. This was the discipline of activity, or the obligation of individuals and groups to be bound by the rulings issued by the movement's institutions. In this respect, Ben-Gurion most consistently perpetuated the viewpoint which Achdut Ha-Avoda attempted to impose in the General Labor Confederation and which it later transmitted to Mapai. The latter, for its part, implemented this persuasion within both the Zionist Organization and the Jewish community in Palestine.[18] The assumption that discipline was the precondition for public and national action and the sole basis of a veritable unity rested at the heart of this viewpoint. For without the discipline of activity, unity was illusory. Instead of constituting an integrating national and social factor, unity would be transformed into an obstacle hindering that very same political and social activity.

In this regard, Ben-Gurionism fought an intra-movement clash with the viewpoint, enunciated by "Faction B," or, more accurately, by the Kibbutz Hameuchad, which argued in practice that unity preceded discipline. Opposing the Biltmore Program, the Kibbutz Hameuchad voiced its fear that the plan would lead to a division of the Land of Israel and the establishment of an Arab state in its territory alongside the Jewish state. Ben-Gurion, however, concluded that what was needed was a party capable of political action in the struggle for a Jewish state, and hence it had to be disciplined. Accordingly, he did not hesitate to sacrifice its unity on the altar of this issue. Indeed, it was due to heavy pressure from Ben-Gurion that a majority decision at the Kfar Vitkin conference of 1942 decided that membership in Mapai would be based on adhesion to its principles, freedom of thought and debate, and discipline of action. Likewise, the conference defined the party as the body which directs the activities of its emissaries in all the institutions of the Jewish community, the Histadrut, and the Zionist movement. Finally, the principles of disciplined action and the authority of direction denied members the right to organize as factions within the party. These vanguard principles in the political organizational sense deepened the split within the party so that all efforts to mend it during the next two years came to naught.

The division was therefore a political fact in the year 1944, when the majority in Mapai decided on a test of strength between itself and the "rebellious" minority and announced the holding of elections to the Histadrut convention. The political accomplishment of the split in Mapai did not comprise a political risk. If anything, the split unified the ranks of the party and transformed it into an efficient political tool under Ben-Gurion's leadership without leading to a disintegration of the political system. The Histadrut, the Zionist Organization and the Haganah continued as before. Disintegration did not occur thanks to that very same principle which the party had in fact rejected — unity based on autonomous groups through whose sole agency and intermediacy discipline of activity would be attained. This concept was responsible for maintaining the unity and capacity for action of the broader frameworks. The "autonomism" of the minorities had turned into a precondition for the activity of the political institutions, such as the General Labor Federation, and within the Zionist movement. This principle also applied to the status of the Palmach within the Haganah, where the former indeed enjoyed autonomy, but nonetheless observed exemplary discipline vis-a-vis the command of the Haganah.

As opposed to the political achievement which it scored within his movement, Ben-Gurion's method suffered a moral failure in the Jewish community arena when it embarked on a violent struggle against the "defector" organizations, the IZL and Lehi. The traumatic experience of the "Season" can properly be understood and evaluated only if it is examined in its three temporal dimensions: past traditions, present apprehensions, and future intentions. At stake was the authority of the democratic majority to govern a voluntary society as if it enjoyed the prerogatives of an official state body. The minority arrogated to itself the right to coerce upon the majority, by means of its violent activity against the British, a national policy that it, the minority, deemed correct. It was most difficult to arrive at a compromise solution or an agreement between the authority of the majority, whose logic and justification were rooted in history, and the right of revolt whose morality was justified by the struggle itself and a readiness for personal sacrifice. The voluntary framework responsible for the internal and external affairs of the nation was threatened with the wholesale loss of the prerogative to enforce its authority on the public.[19] The internal logic of the situation compelled a voluntary organization to act in paradoxical contradiction to its essentially voluntaristic principle and to resort to coercive violence in order to realize its aspirations.

Furthermore, since it possessed neither the organizational tools nor the official powers of coercion, it was forced to employ coercive measures that were at times crueler and more degrading than those employed by the state. The embarrassing and degrading pressure tactics that were employed with the quiet blessing of the national institutions

against those who ignored the draft notices and were thus considered shirkers by society should attest to this. Therefore, the "Season" should not be considered solely in terms of the force exerted amidst a struggle for maintaining leadership of the community or setting Zionist policy. More deserving of attention is the "Season's" tragic dimension, which forced a voluntary society to carry out a mission that demanded authority and discipline. This tragic situation is further accentuated given the two attempts — the first on the eve of the war, in 1938, and the second immediately after war had erupted, in 1940 — to create a planning and organizational framework for collaboration between the minority and the majority. But in both instances the efforts came to nought because of Ben-Gurion's opposition, which was motivated by a combination of conviction and politics. The element of conviction stemmed from the refusal of the minority, in this case the IZL, to obligate itself to the inclusive discipline of the voluntary organization, i.e., to return to the fold of the Zionist Organization. The political reason in 1938 was Ben-Gurion's fear that military collaboration with the British against the Arab revolt could be damaged. In 1940 he apparently wished to avoid jeopardizing the prospects of the political struggle to establish Hebrew units in the British army. In order to place the tragic dimension of the affair into further relief, one should not forget that the IZL rejected Haganah proposals that it refrain from struggle against the British while the war was still in progress and chances for a political success had not yet been exhausted.[20]

Fairness demands that a discussion of the political significance of the "Season," as an attempt by the organized community to break the power of the "defector" organizations and especially the IZL, should distinguish between two components of this policy. The first concerned the bona fide right assumed by the majority to impose its authority on a defecting minority. The second was the decision to cooperate on this issue with the British Mandatory authorities. In terms of the first element, this behavior was by no means historically novel. During the 1920s, the majority within the Histadrut had waged a series of difficult struggles against "defectors" from the left wing. For example, one can mention the traumatic affair of the relations between the Gdud HaAvoda and Achdut Ha-Avoda, and the similar case which pitted the Haganah against the Hashomer group in Kfar Giladi (which in practice had defected from the Haganah). One should add to these struggles the attitude adopted toward the Communists by the Histadrut. During the 1930s, a violent struggle against the Revisionists had also taken place. Given the essential practice of voluntarism in the social and political spheres, and given the tradition of applying violent pressures within the Labor movement, the attempt to neutralize the power of the IZL was thus not a new departure. Therefore, on this issue Ben-Gurion won the support of the left wing of

the Labor movement — Hashomer Hatzair, Poalei Zion, and Achdut Ha-Avoda. Circles outside the Labor movement in the Yishuv's institutions and the Zionist Organization did not forcefully reject it and even concurred with it. Thus, from a moral political standpoint, a broad common denominator had been created.

This was not applicable to the second element of the "Season" policy — collaboration with the British by divulging information regarding the hiding places of the heads of the IZL and turning over kidnapped IZL members to the authorities. This feature of the "Season" was considered by the majority of the Jewish community to be inequitable — from a general moral-ethical standpoint, a practical political standpoint, and a traditional-Jewish standpoint. Even the more activist circles in the Labor movement, concentrated in the Kibbutz Hameuchad, who were horrified by the irresponsible terror activity, recoiled from collaborating with the alien authority in order to suppress the defectors. Other circles in the community, affiliated to the General Zionist and religious public, viewed this policy as a negation of Jewish tradition, since it fomented internecine war among Jews, and comprised an abhorrent resort to non-Jewish courts. Nonetheless, one must emphasize that in the Zionist tradition dating from the Balfour Declaration and until the close of the Second World War, when it became clear that there was no chance of reaching any sort of agreement with the British government, the British rule never was regarded as an alien and hostile authority.

For the Zionists, Britain's publication of the White Paper in 1939 constituted a clear betrayal, and a cognitive process regarding the need for separation from Britain began to mature. Yet the hope that prospects for future political cooperation with Britain remained had not yet abated. Hence, the IZL hastened to express its desire to support the British war effort and was not deterred from collaboration with the Criminal Investigation Division in order to minimize the damage which the activities of the Lehi could have wrought to the fabric of these relations. And even at the moment when the IZL announced its "revolt" against Britain, it was careful not to burn all its bridges because it hoped for possible cooperation in the future.[21] This attitude was even more pronounced among the majority of the community and its leadership. In the special atmosphere of World War II, amidst the apprehension surrounding the fateful struggle against the Nazis, and the hopes that were encouraged by rumors and assessments that Jewish statehood would enjoy British endorsement at the end of the war, the "Season" was not an entirely illicit national action. Various circles did oppose this policy. They included the activist Achdut Ha-Avoda movement, the moderate center of the General Zionists, religious circles (and especially Y. Greenbaum, Y.L. Fishman, and Peretz Bernstein), and unaffiliated intellectuals such as Hugo Bergmann and Rabbi

Binyamin. But their case was not directed at the actual attempt to en-
force the majority's will, but focused on cooperation with the British
Criminal Investigation Division. This act was illicit in their opinion
from an ethnical standpoint, as it was tantamount to informing. From a
different perspective they viewed it as a reversion to the diaspora
psychology. Fear of the non-Jewish master produced a compulsion to
serve him. From the national standpoint they believed that
collaboration with a political force that was becoming increasingly
hostile to the goals of Zionism was fundamentally mistaken.[22]

Nevertheless, the basic conviction that the majority enjoyed the
prerogative to coerce remained intact. The wartime atmosphere and
anxiety over the political repercussions of the "revolt" also exerted
their effect. Hence, the reservations entertained by the Palmach Com-
mand, the protests by rabbis and intellectuals, and even the
demonstrative resignation of Yitzchak Greenbaum and Yehuda Leib
Fishman from the Executive of the Jewish Agency did not provoke a se-
rious political crisis in the political system of the organized Jewish
community.

Nonetheless, one must note that the protest and the reservations
which led to the moral invalidation of the "Season" as it was imple-
mented also caused the political failure of Ben-Gurion's method in this
matter. The national-ethical defect inherent in the "Season" was fur-
ther underscored by the decision of the IZL's commander, Menachem
Begin, to enforce a policy of restraint upon those serving under his com-
mand towards their persecutors in order to prevent the shedding of
Jewish blood. Justice requires us to state that this decision, which mer-
its historical recognition, further generated the moral invalidation of
the "Season" policy.

To sum up the "Season," one can say that there were three aspects to
the matter: a policy gambit, a political risk, and an educational public
activity. The first meaning which reflected both the Zionist leader-
ship's intention and sense of political urgency was to demonstrate to the
British government after the murder of Lord Moyne that a reasoned and
balanced leadership was in control of the Jewish community in Pales-
tine. This policy was motivated by the expectation that, following the
war, the British government would alter the policy of the White Pa-
per, thereby leading to the establishment of a Jewish state in Pales-
tine. This rationale for the "Season" policy, even if it did not yield the
expected fruits, cannot be said to have proven a total failure. The
"Season" demonstrated that a distinction existed in practice, and not
only in theory, between the leadership of the Yishuv and the Ha-
ganah, on the one hand, and the defecting organizations, on the other,
and it was this distinction which tied the hands of the British gov-
ernment in its struggle against the Jewish community in Palestine.[23]

The element of political risk in the "Season" proved minor.

Apprehensions concerning the outbreak of civil war and the shedding of Jewish blood were not vindicated. However, the political goal — breaking the power of the defector organizations — also remained unrealized. Nonetheless, an important internal political lesson was imparted, namely that the democratic majority within the Jewish community would not be deterred from using far-reaching violent methods in order to impose its authority on rebellious minorities. Therefore, even though this intention had not succeeded for the present, it carried a message that alluded to what could transpire in the future, and the matter was important both for the organized Jewish community and for the defector organizations. The psychological and political boundary between a "civil struggle," such as the "Season," and a "civil war," that had been averted at this juncture, was a very thin one.

With respect to the third aspect, the educational one, it has already been noted above that the "Season" incurred a crushing moral failure because of its collaboration with the British Criminal Investigation Division. This failure possessed an educational significance. After the dissolution of the Hebrew Disobedience Movement, when tension between the Haganah and the IZL revived and what has been dubbed the "Little Season" began, the institutions of the Jewish community refused this time to collaborate with the British authorities. This lesson, in its political sense, cannot be comprehended without ascribing it, to a large extent, to the basic national consensus which constituted one of the characteristics of the political system. The principles of that system and its national code of values could, in the end result, restrain political impulses and even political calculations whose intention may have been worthy but whose actions were invalid.

To what extent did the "Season" accord with Ben-Gurion's concept of Zionist policy and its political method within the Jewish community? In order to respond to this question we must return to the distinction between the twin foundations of the "Season" policy. One was the authority of the majority to suppress the activities of a rebellious minority; the other was collaboration with alien authority in order to accomplish this task efficiently. The first foundation belongs to the voluntary Zionist political system; given the voluntary nature of that system, its only recourse was to suppress the defector organizations; otherwise it courted the loss of authority and even disintegration. A national leadership responsible for the entire system could not ignore such a danger.

The second foundation, collaboration with the British, can be totally ascribed to Ben-Gurion's method. It coincided with it and was an essential part of it. In the decade spanning the outbreak of war and the establishment of the state, Ben-Gurion understood how to force upon the Zionist leadership a pace of political activity to which it was unaccustomed. He would shock the leadership from time to time with

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plans of soaring vision and broad scope and would literally astound it
each time anew with his political zigzags. The impulse for this be-
havior was the sense of urgency and the cognizance that the historical
moment had to be exploited for national purpose. Imbued with the
feeling that time was "passing through the fingers" of the nation, and
that the political opportunity was transient, he arrived at the conclu-
sion that only vigorous activity which attained its objectives in a brief
moment could result in political achievements. Hence, aggression and
intrigue, directed inwardly and externally, found their moral
justification and were in his eyes ends which justified the means.

Furthermore, if the suppression of the defectors was a national ne-
cessity in his opinion, then the policy had to be implemented even at
the price of collaboration with the British. Pursuant to the same prin-
ciple, Mapai was split, the Biltmore Program turned into the Partition
Plan, the excommunicated and persecuted defectors transformed into
allies during the Movement of Hebrew Disobedience and, in the wake
of the bombing of the King David Hotel, to be again abandoned. All
were part and parcel of that very same concept of policy, and identical
political method, which viewed perfidious political methods and the
tools of the power struggle as handmaidens to the national goal.

Between the autumn of 1944, when the "Season" began, and the au-
tumn of 1945, when the formation of the Movement of Hebrew Disobe-
dience as a vehicle for common struggle against the British was de-
cided upon; between respectively tottering on the brink of a civil war
and expanding efforts to heal the rifts within the national body politic
— but a single year had elapsed. This reversal, which did not conclude
the vagaries of the political struggle, can serve to shed light upon Ben-
Gurion's method.

When in his famous telegram from Paris he ordered the initiation
of an armed struggle involving the "rival wings," Ben-Gurion brought
his method to the height of perfection. Here it displayed itself in all
its majesty with bold spirit, sharp turns, pragmatic policy, political
flexibility, and a talent for simultaneously galvanizing both the public
and the official political system and the clandestine framework of the
underground organizations. Furthermore, with the initiation of Hebrew
Disobedience, Ben-Gurion's method approached, more than on any pre-
vious occasion, the IZL's concept of revolt. It employed violent means to
apply pressure on Britain and struck at her authority by demonstrative
armed opposition. Hence, one of the salient questions that can con-
tribute to an understanding of Zionist political history during that pe-
riod is what constituted the difference between Ben-Gurion's
"disobedience" and Begin's "revolt"? Before we turn to an elucidation of
the various positions associated with the Disobedience Movement, let
us at first attempt to clarify for ourselves the very meaning of the term
"struggle."

The assignment of the concept of "struggle" to the 1940s and espe-
cially to their latter half, in the sense of a struggle against the
Mandatory authorities and the British government, is not sufficiently
precise. The Zionist movement had been fated to struggle in order to se-
cure its goals in Palestine ever since the Balfour Declaration. The
vicissitudes of the British government, the constant struggle against
the Mandatory authorities for immigration quotas, the indefatigable
effort to acquire lands, the heroic act of settlement within the bound-
aries of Mandatory Palestine, the stubborn maintenance of defense
forces in the underground, the risks attendant upon illegal immigration
— all these were components of the Zionist struggle even prior to the
1940s. Without them, it is doubtful whether the struggle of the 1940s
could ever have taken place. What was unique to the postwar period
was the readiness to enter into an armed struggle against British au-
thority.

We would therefore be more precise in utilizing the term "armed
struggle" in preference to the term "struggle" alone. During the debate
which erupted between the partisans of the various approaches, no one
voiced opposition to "struggle" in its historical sense. Rather, three
models of action were advocated. The first was apparently influenced
by the theory of non-violence popularized by the Indian national
leader, Mahatma Gandhi. The second was the constructive model,
whose roots lay in the tradition of the Labor movement in Palestine.
The third, the "Irish" model, sought to imitate the liberation struggles
waged by European national movements, and was particularly influ-
enced by the war of the Irish people against the British enslaver.

The first model, as influenced by Gandhi's method, was supported
by the moderate leaders among the General Zionists headed by Moshe
Smilansky. They were joined by pacifist intellectuals, including those
who belonged to the Labor movement and by the Aliyah HaChadasha
party, which primarily represented immigrants from Western Europe
and particularly Germany. Moshe Smilansky warned the youth
against the ethos of Masada, whom he exhorted to aschew sacrifices
and destruction in preference to the continued construction of the Jewish
community. The Aliyah HaChadasha party, headed by Pinchas
Rosen, opposed acts of violence but supported an unceasing political
struggle against the policy of the White Paper, whose purpose, in
Rosen's opinion, was to transform Palestine into an Arab state. Accord-
ing to his viewpoint, the non-violent political struggle, because of its
moral nature, could undermine Britain's anti-Zionist policy much more
effectively than an armed struggle. Hence, he recommended adopting
the method of passive resistance and its implementation by placing a
boycott on British manufactured goods, staging prolonged hunger strikes
by leaders of the Jewish community, and demanding free immigration
for the denizens of the refugee camps in Europe. For the advocates of

non-violence, the deliberate violation of the Mandatory laws in all
matters pertaining to settlement of the land, and the illegal transport
of immigrants to the country's shores, constituted the apogee of the
struggle. All this implied a readiness to be imprisoned by the authori-
ties. This approach, which was embraced by a minority of the Jewish
community, preached public opposition that would be illegal but non-
violent.

   At the opposite pole stood the approach of the Lehi and the IZL,
which we will term the "Irish" model. The inclusion of these two
organizations within a single framework is justified. Differences be-
tween them existed, but by the close of the war the disparity between
them over methods of struggle and aims had blurred. Nonetheless, it
would still be appropriate for us to distinguish these differences at the
outset because it is doubtful whether they were totally nullified prior
to the actual establishment of the state. One can term the struggle of
the Lehi as total, in both the military and political senses. Lehi was
the first to declare the Mandatory government an alien authority and
to demand its removal from Palestine. Its armed struggle was contigu-
ous, without taking account of the war effort against the Nazis, and it
had no moral qualms about taking the lives of persons who represented
authority. It shook off the traditional political calculations pertain-
ing to the allies of Zionism and was prepared to initiate approaches to
both Nazi Germany and to Communist Russia if these would promise to
provide some benefit and assistance to the liberating national struggle.
In contradistinction to the total struggle of the Lehi, the IZL was re-
strained by political calculations.

   First of all, as we have already noted above, the IZL's detachment
from Britain was a gradual one. Lehi believed that the force of blows
alone could compel the British to abandon Palestine; the IZL believed
that the purpose of the blows was to awaken political pressures within
Britain or within the international arena, as a result of which Britain
would be forced to modify its anti-Zionist policy. Hence, even when the
IZL (following Lehi's example) demanded that the British leave
Palestine, it assumed that their departure would result from political
changes produced by military pressures. Regarding the political aspect
of its armed struggle, the IZL was wary (at least until the close of the
Second World War) of employing personal terror. From the standpoint
of its political principles, it remained steadfastly behind the Western
democratic world, as is shown by the resonant wartime activity con-
ducted by the Kook group in the United States.

   Despite these differences, and the ugly relations between the two
organizations, which were plagued by violence and even informing in
the period immediately following the schism, what the two shared in
common surpassed what divided them. First of all, the common Revi-
sionist past in an organizational and ideological sense linked their

leaderships. Furthermore, the commander of the IZL, Menachem Begin, was not far removed from the activist oppositionist views enunciated by Yair Stern in the late 1930s. It is worthwhile to note in this vein that already at the 1938 Betar Convention in Warsaw, Begin demanded that Betar youths should be educated in anticipation of a war of liberation in Palestine. In Begin's opinion, there was no hope for realizing Zionism without such a war. In order to illustrate the new approach articulated by Stern and himself, he demanded an amendment to the fourth of the Betar Oath's seven commandments which had been composed by Jabotinsky. The text "I will prepare my arm for the defense of my people and I will not raise my arm, save in defense" would be changed to read "I will prepare my arm for the defense of my people and for the conquest of my homeland."

In addition to the common historical path, they also shared a basic agreement, namely that national revolution took precedence over democratic principles. This conviction justified flouting the authority of the majority. It also awarded to the minority an ethical authority to impose its will upon the majority without its having received the majority's prior sanction for this purpose. The authority extended even to the event that the activity of this minority caused suffering and endangered the existence of the general public. In this manner, the members of the IZL and Lehi inflicted the results of their acts of courage and their readiness to bear a sacrifice upon an unwilling general public, and they thus engaged in measures of national coercion.

Beyond the fundamental aspect, the point of departure for the two organizations in promoting the national revolution was the armed struggle. They excluded the possibility that political independence could be attained other than by force and war against the alien authority. The demonstrative element of the struggle was very important to both of them. Therefore, what they considered consequential was striking at the trappings of authority, such as the murder of Lord Moyne and the break-in to Acre prison. Symbolism was important both internally and externally, as in the proud stand before the British courts and the upright march to the gallows. From this perspective, death, both as a blow against the alien ruler and as an act of personal sacrifice, was transformed into the greatest and most impressive demonstrative exploit of these two organizations.

The resemblance between this method of struggle and the war conducted by the members of the Irish underground against the British does not seem to require further elaboration. Britain was the common enemy and similar measures were employed in the war against her. It would be worthy only to note that among the three models of struggle that were mentioned above, this model was the least political because these underground movements were not affiliated to a party. Likewise, this method of struggle was the least unique in terms of Jewish national

conditions. For even the method that drew its inspiration from
Gandhi's theory of non-violence recommended the use of special Zionist
methods of struggle such as immigration, settlement, etc. This attempt
at uniqueness was even more applicable to the constructive method of
struggle.

The third approach, the one pursued by the workers' movement,
which we termed above "the constructive model," was more complex
than the two preceding ones because of the variety of nuances which it
encompassed. This compels us at the very outset to address the question
whether constructivism was indeed the common denominator for all.
Ostensibly, "an armed struggle" is the antithesis of constructivism be-
cause the latter is essentially concerned with building and preserving
that which exists, whereas the former connotes destruction and imper-
iling what has already been obtained. Hence, it would be proper first
to clarify the concept of constructivism in its ideological context as it
emerged from the tradition of the Labor movement.

In the debate within the Labor movement regarding the question of
"the armed struggle," it is possible to distinguish four conceptions: one
negated acts of violence and the use of arms in toto; a second was pre-
pared for violent and armed defense of the constructive activities
within the Zionist struggle; the third favored a controlled struggle
that would be tied to events and political considerations; and the last
preached a contiguous struggle as a necessary means to achieve politi-
cal goals. When these approaches are viewed against the ideological,
personal and political traditions of the Labor movement, we conclude
that this debate between the activists and the moderates introduced
new formulas but was essentially an historic debate. The debate had
already begun during the halcyon days of the Labor movement in
Palestine during the Second Aliyah. Its original incarnation concerned
the activities of the Hashomer organization and the public furor re-
garding enlistment in the Hebrew Brigades towards the end of the First
World War. The protagonists then were Joseph Sprinzak and his com-
panions from Hapoel Hatzair, on one side, and David Ben-Gurion and
Yitzchak Tabenkin, on the other.

The members of Hapoel Hatzair opposed volunteering for the He-
brew Brigades as they feared that those enlisting would abandon set-
tlement points and positions attained in the struggle for Hebrew labor.
Hapoel Hatzair included people with a pacifist orientation, who in
principle opposed redeeming the land through bloodshed. However,
the activists of Poalei Zion and unaffiliated activists emphasized
that the very establishment of the brigades and their participation in
the liberation of the land from the Turkish yoke had political signifi-
cance. This camp included people who explicitly viewed the armed
conflict as a tool for the redemption of their homeland. The sequel to
this debate occurred at the foundation of the General Labor

Confederation, and focused on the question of the Haganah organization. The moderates objected to the organization of an independent military body by the workers either because they denigrated its importance or because they feared that a militaristic spirit would permeate the youth. For their part, the activists countered with both national and political considerations. The Zionist movement, they argued, would require an independent military force at its disposal which could protect its constructive projects and guarantee the existence of the entire Jewish community.

During the 1930s, this debate was transposed primarily to social spheres without losing its political significance. It cropped up in the tortuous discussions regarding the means to be adopted in the struggle for Hebrew labor on the *moshavot*. It was then replayed in the penetrating debate over the use of violence in the struggle against the Revisionists. The internal debate provoked by the policy of "restraint" during 1936-1939, the years of the Arab disturbances, again raised the issue. Finally, the argument recurs in discussions surrounding illegal immigration and the debate which we are presently discussing, namely "the armed struggle" against the Mandatory government.

This brief survey of the struggles between the moderates and the activists in the Labor movement resolves the issue explicitly. Both concepts were indigenous to Labor's ideological and political tradition. There were also two types of activism: the one preoccupied solely with construction and with the political means that would guarantee it, and the other which saw no contradiction between construction and the necessity to employ violent force in order to advance it. Both positions originated in the aspirations of the Labor movement for hegemony within the Zionist movement. This hegemony could be construed as an ideological one which derived from the pioneering role of the movement while it was still the "opposition" within the Zionist movement. The hegemony could also be political, appropriate to the period when the Labor movement had already attained political leadership within Zionism. In either case, constructivism — as a national policy — could not escape power struggles, nor did it attempt to. It prepared for these struggles in advance, fully aware that armed violence was an inseparable part of these struggles and their historic outcome, given the conditions reigning in Palestine. "Moderation" and "extremism" were integral to the outlook and political tradition of the Labor movement, which justifies our including various shades of opinion regarding the "armed struggle" under the constructive model.

Constructivism during that period spawned three main approaches toward the question of the armed struggle against the British. The first believed in a "linked" struggle, its antithesis advocated a "continuous struggle," while the intermediate approach favored a "controlled struggle." Before we attempt a clarification of the obvious and subtle

differences between them, let us observe what they had in common. For all three approaches the struggle was but an adjunct to policy and an auxiliary to it. In other words, even the most extreme approach negated the view exemplified by the IZL and the Lehi that struggle was the principal or exclusive method on the road to political independence. Additionally, none of these approaches had decided to sever the link with Britain. This accounted for the three approaches' determined, principled and practical opposition to acts of personal terror and their policy of scrupulously and even chivalrously avoiding casualties to innocent victims. Finally, they all shared a concern for the existing Zionist enterprise and a doctrinal loyalty to constructive activity, immigration and settlement as the preferred methods for political struggle.

Beyond this common denominator, they were in disagreement. Those favoring "linked struggle," a minority within Mapai, particularly former members of Hapoel Hatzair and the independent Hashomer Hatzair movement, opposed armed struggle as a method or political tool. They were prepared to acquiesce in limited acts of violence which would be *linked* to measures of the constructive struggle and even to the protection of the Jewish Defense Force. Hence they advocated opposition to weapons searches conducted by the British military. Subtle differences existed between the moderates in Mapai and Hashomer Hatzair regarding relations with Britain.

Hashomer Hatzair, which believed for many years in the idea of a binational state, was prepared to sever the tie with Britain, whereas the moderates of Mapai opposed the extreme demand to eject Britain from the region. They believed, as did Weizmann during that same period, that the solution to the problem of Palestine would be reached via an agreement between the United States and Britain. Regarding the struggle itself, Hashomer Hatzair, many of whose members served in the Palmach and whose kibbutzim served as training bases for its units, was prepared to go further in terms of violent struggle than were the former members of Hapoel Hatzair within Mapai. However, they both agreed that stepping up armed pressure against the British Empire would provoke extreme retaliatory measures of a totalitarian and even brutal nature, which the Jewish community in Palestine could not for long withstand.

There were those who adduced the historical lessons of the Boer War and the Irish Rebellion to cast strong doubt on the political wisdom of the "armed struggle." They warned that an armed struggle could result either in cruel repression, as occurred in Africa, or in the division of the country as in Ireland. But in the latter case, the English constituted a minority whereas in Palestine the Arabs constituted a majority. Therefore, the political damage incurred by the Disobedience Movement could prove critical in the political sense.

Furthermore, they contended, world public opinion could be sensitized to the justice of the Zionist case. The Holocaust refugees sitting in the D.P. camps were raising the issue; the moral drama of illegal immigration provided it with public exposure; and the determined decision of the pioneer settlers provided substantiation. In their opinion, only such a course, which addressed the conscience of the world through non-violent actions, would bring Zionism its political achievements. The ethical issue was important to them not only as a political tool but as an educating factor internally. They feared what they considered to be the corrosive influence of *machtpolitik* upon Jewish youth in Palestine. Scant differences existed between this interpretation of the constructive struggle and Gandhi's method, which was proposed by the Aliyah HaChadasha party. The members of the Labor movement, and especially members of Hashomer Hatzair, were ready to expand the struggle. They would stick to constructive measures and use force only to protect these constructive measures, a formula to which even the moderates in Mapai could assent at the conclusion of the debate.

Opposing this group were members of the Achdut Ha-Avoda movement and especially its affiliate, the Kibbutz Hameuchad, as well as activists in Mapai who preached the notion of *continuous* struggle. They viewed the continuity of the struggle as a conduit which paralleled political activity. They were prepared to use force of arms, not only to protect the constructive enterprises but in order to undermine the self-confidence of the Mandatory authority and strike at its international position until it would be prepared to abandon its anti-Zionist policy or decide even to quit Palestine. The partisans of the "continuous struggle" advocated this policy because they had concluded that not only was British rule in Palestine harmful to Jewish interests but was becoming enfeebled.

Hence, the continuous armed struggle had its risks and could inflict suffering upon the community, and was burdened by the self-imposed ethical constraints; but it could nevertheless accelerate the British decision to leave Palestine. In addition to the political issue, one cannot ignore the socio-psychological dimension. The activist Labor circles were predominantly young, and this increased their attraction to activist, pugnacious approaches. The example of the "defector organizations," which were fighting by force of arms, aroused no small measure of jealousy. The continuity preached by this approach to armed struggle and the continuity advocated by the IZL and Lehi organizations differed. The former approach recognized a number of postulates: 1) the political calculus superseded the military calculus; 2) the authority of the civilian branch took precedence over achievements in the field of armed conflict; 3) the fighting methods had to be tailored to the possibilities and special circumstances of the community and its constructive

projects; and 4) one could not ignore the ethical moral dimension, even if that consideration jeopardized the lives of the combatants themselves. Nonetheless, it is necessary to concede that consciously or unconsciously, armed struggle became an imperative political road for those who believed in "continuous struggle."

Alongside this approach and tangential to it lay the position of the majority in Mapai which believed in the *controlled* armed struggle. This position viewed struggle as a tool which served political measures. It totally rejected the method of the "defectors" who had substituted military struggle for political negotiation, opposed the position of the moderates because it lacked political firmness, and did not agree with the conclusions which the supporters of "continuous struggle" had drawn. This school's approach to armed struggle excelled in its flexibility, and it attempted to initiate it or halt it in accordance with political circumstances. The actual demonstration of an option to use force furnished a political bargaining card.

In this respect, the initiation of the Disobedience Movement and the termination of its activities after the bombing of the King David Hotel were part and parcel of the same method. In the framework of the "controlled struggle," Ben-Gurion's method in Zionist policy and in the Jewish community's internal political system attained its optimal exploitation.

David Ben-Gurion attached a triad of meanings to his demand for a controlled struggle. The first was tied to internal Jewish political considerations. One had to conduct "a competition for the hearts and imagination of the youth" who were impressed by the armed struggle of the defector organizations. He expressed his forebodings lest the defector organizations by winning over public opinion in the street would eventually assume political control over the Jewish community. He therefore desired to combat this political danger by a dual strategy. He condemned defection as an act which undermined the essence of democracy and displayed a lack of national responsibility; at the same time, he demonstrated that the organized community was capable of conducting an armed struggle.

The second significance attached to the method of controlled struggle was political. It assumed the possible failure of both the direct and the indirect negotiations with Britain regarding the establishment of a Jewish state in part of Palestine or, alternatively, a return to the Mandate in its literal sense, which would allow for mass immigration. Such a failure meant that there would be no escape from armed struggle as a catalyst to arriving at a favorable political solution for Palestine. Hence, it was impossible to foreswear this tool in advance. Additionally, Ben-Gurion referred to the thousands of Holocaust refugees who were sitting in displaced persons camps and were at the limits of their patience. They were liable to resort to extreme measures which would

bring them under the leadership of the defector organizations. Another justification which Ben-Gurion advanced in an attempt to persuade others of the need to use armed struggle for accelerating the political process touched upon the fate of Jews in the Arab world and in North Africa. He believed that the process of granting independence to countries in these regions would be accelerated following the war. Facing intensifying Arab nationalism, the Jewish masses would desire to leave these countries. A Jewish state that would arise in Palestine in the near future would therefore provide them with the sole and most suitable place of refuge.

The third significance touched upon the international status of the Jewish people and the Zionist movement. Discussions were then in progress regarding the establishment of the United Nations organization. Ben-Gurion contended that the status of the Jewish people would only be recognized by the nations of the world with the establishment of a Jewish state. Israel would be accepted as a member enjoying equal rights in this organization. The controlled armed struggle, hence, was intended to serve the pressing need for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. This need arose from the recognition that time was pressing in each and every historical arena: Palestine, the diaspora, and the global international arena.

This crisis outlook yielded political repercussions in the internal party sphere. Ben-Gurion, as opposed to the majority of opinion within Mapai, worked to remove the moderate Weizmann from the presidency of the Zionist movement. He led his party to the brink of a severe crisis which threatened to conclude with an additional schism. However, the political developments from the 22nd Zionist Congress onwards, as the British government decided to return the Mandate over Palestine to the UN organization, finally quelled the internal struggle and assuaged opinions within the party.

This is perhaps the opportunity to raise a purely hypothetical question which can still contribute to an understanding of Ben-Gurion's method and those who supported it. Had the British government not decided to abandon Palestine due to anti-Zionist political motivations, would Ben-Gurion have been persuaded to adopt the method of total conflict practiced by the IZL during that period? It would appear not. This assumption primarily derives from the overriding concern for the fate of the constructive enterprise of the Palestinian Jewish community. Secondly, political considerations would corroborate it. Both the methods of contiguous as well as controlled struggle were essentially rooted in a similar assumption. International conditions would compel Britain to modify her Palestine policy, and hence the struggle was intended to prod her through controlled armed pressure to arrive at such a decision. If, contrary to such expectations, Britain furnished proof of her determination to maintain an anti-Zionist policy, this would have

undoubtedly led the activists in the Labor movement to examine their approach and submit their concept to a critique. For everyone understood that a difference existed between preparedness for a short term struggle and the necessity to sustain long-term confrontation.

In the latter circumstance, the "constructive struggle" which the moderates proposed was the effort which the Jewish community could best withstand for the long term, and it was the method most aptly suited for dissemination and influencing world public opinion. None of the activists denied or minimized these two assumptions. Hence, had the political situation altered, there is no doubt that rational calculations would have led them to the method of the constructive struggle in its traditional sense, albeit accompanied by a more vigorous and encompassing activist surge.

In summing up the history of the system, one can state the following for both the Yishuv and the Zionist movement: In the decade between the Second World War and the establishment of the State of Israel, external events and developments which could not have been predicted or imagined in advance subjected the system to an historical test. While the Zionist litany foresaw the destruction of diaspora Jewry, it did so in a metaphorical sense. An abyss of horror yawned between this concept and the actual extermination of European Jewry, a process that could not be fathomed by human beings of limited historical experience. The struggle against the British was incorporated into a preexisting tradition of political confrontation between the Zionist leadership and the British government dating from the Balfour Declaration. But a chasm existed between this routine struggle and the preparedness for political detachment from British protection in the course of an armed struggle against Britain. The gap was traversed by a number of factors: the Jewish community's accumulated political and military boldness; its recognition of the moment's urgency; and the gathering feeling that the transient political opportunity had to be exploited quickly.

The Jewish-Arab national confrontation was also inseparable from the saga of Zionist construction and settlement in Palestine, from the beginning of the century until the eve of the Second World War. However, a vast difference existed between a Jewish-Arab military confrontation occurring within the framework of the British Mandate, when the armed forces of the ruling power effectively nullified the threat of the Jewish community's extermination, and the necessity to withstand a war with the Arab world without any external protection. The former circumstance provided for the defense of what *existed*, while the latter was literally a *war for existence*.

In view of these changes, we observed the workings of a democratic political system. Despite the fact that it encountered potent external pressures and suffered from difficult internal tensions, it managed to

withstand all these and did not disintegrate. In the process, it displayed an organizational capacity for action and an ability for political decision, while it simultaneously bequeathed its political democratic tradition to the Jewish state at its conception. There were undoubtedly a few reasons for this phenomenon, some of which derived from the ability of the leadership and its political sagacity, and some of which emanated from the democratic upbringing and deportment of the public. To all these I wish to add an additional reason, namely the *conservative* nature of the political system. Thanks to this nature it managed to preserve historical continuity, in the sense of both political culture and a system of democratic values.

In order to corroborate this contention regarding the fecund contribution of political conservatism, let us adopt the method of comparing the two political systems that operated within Zionism during that era. The reference is to the old Zionist Organization, whose modus operandi can be characterized as revolutionary-conservative, and the New Zionist Organization, founded by the Revisionist movement, whose political method was revolutionary and innovative. The former implemented the Zionist revolution while preserving historical continuity in internal development, while the latter, in its revolutionary thrust, shattered it. The one realized a parliamentary regime on the basis of the principle of voluntarism; the latter sought its authority from direct popular democracy which operates through public opinion polls or plebiscites. The one managed to preserve within it ideological pluralism, the other crystallized within it a quasi-monist world outlook. The old Zionist Organization combined constructivism with policy, whereas the new one was zealous about maintaining its political purity. The political fate of these two organizations attests also to their political methods.

The revolutionary-conservative method had to manage a welter of nuances, in the ideological, class, and cultural sense. It also had to contain the personal tensions, political struggles, and political crises which bubbled inside. Yet it managed to preserve its organizational integrity and capacity for political action while maintaining the democratic supervision of the civilian authority over its military arm. In contradistinction, the revolutionary method in its Revisionist guise, despite its nearly unitary world outlook and its narrow scope from an organizational standpoint, totally disintegrated. It ended up lacking the ability to function as one body with a political and military system. From here one can draw the lessons. Political capacity can go hand in hand with flexibility and democratic compromise, while dogmatic intransigence can produce powerlessness. Strength lies in maintaining historical continuity; weakness results from severing it.

Notes

1. See Dan Horowitz, Moshe Lissak, *Miyishuv Limedinah* (From a Community to a State) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1977), Table IV, p. 117. For example, there is no basis for the contention that Revisionism in Palestine was politically weakened by the liquidation of Eastern European Jewry, and especially of Polish Jewry, where the major strength of that movement was concentrated. For in 1931 when the Revisionists were at the zenith of their power in Palestine, they obtained 16.8 percent of all the votes cast in the elections to the 17th Zionist Congress. When they returned to the Congress in 1946, they received 13.7 percent of the votes, that is to say, a decline of only 3 percent. On the other hand, the Labor movement, which was also built on Polish Jewry, received 62 percent of the votes in 1931, and following the war, despite having held the reins of leadership for 15 years, it declined to 60.5 percent. The truth of the matter is that the relative decline of the Revisionist movement was much steeper, but it did not proportionally undermine the position of the Revisionist movement in the Yishuv.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 75-80.

3. Regarding the connection between constructivism and politics, see this author's *"Achdut Ha-Avoda," 1919-1930, Hayesodot Ha-Ra'ayoniim Vehashita Hamedinit* (Achdut Ha-Avoda, 1919-1930, the Ideological Foundation and the Political Method) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1973).

4. This refers to the members of Nili who operated on their own initiative in the name of the general political interests; members of Hashomer who defected in the 1920s from the authority of the Haganah, Gdud Ha-Avoda (labor battalion), named after Yosef Trumpeldor (a decisive part of its members broke with Zionism and emigrated from the country); the defection of the ultra-Orthodox groups from the national organization, Knesset Yisrael, a short while after its establishment; and finally the defection of the Irgun Zvai Leumi (National Military Organization) and the Revisionist movement from the Zionist Organization and the representative framework of the Jewish community in Palestine during the 1930s and until the Lehi bolted from the IZL.

5. For example, see the wide public reverberations which the activity of Hillel Kook and his compatriots on behalf of a Hebrew Army aroused in the United States in the war years. On this matter, see the study by Zvi Gannin, *Truman, American Jewry and Israel, 1945-1948* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1959).

6. Testimony to this can be found in the words of Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir in internal discussions on the eve of the 22nd Zionist Congress in 1946. See Yosef Gorny, *Partnership and Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1976), pp. 177-178.

7. A major portion of this author's *Shutfut Vemaavak, Chaim Weizmann Utnuat Hapoalim Be'erets Yisrael* (Partnership and Struggle, Chaim Weizmann and the Workers Movement in Israel) (Tel Aviv, 1976), Part II, pp. 112-212, is devoted to this topic.

   Even if we appended the personal dimension to this gamut of ex-planations, i.e., the flawed personal relationship between Chaim Weizmann and Zeev Jabotinsky, then this too is not an extraordinary phenomenon. As much is evident from the chronicle of the ugly rela-tions between Weizmann and Ben-Gurion during and immediately af-ter the Second World War.

8. The difference between the two organizations in this respect found expression in the attitude adopted towards Weizmann's plan for es-tablishing the Jewish Agency at the end of the 1920s. Both rejected it for democratic principles and both feared that its political character would tend towards appeasement, given the cooption of representa-tives of Jewish capital from Western Europe. However, the workers' movement changed its position and from antagonists they became sup-porters of the idea (because of the possibility that the Jewish Agency would aid the constructive projects with such capital), whereas Revi-sionism continued to oppose the plan in a consistent manner.

9. See footnote 4 above.

10. See Joseph D. Schechtman, *Zeev Jabotinsky—Parshat Hayav* (Zeev Jabotinsky—A Life's History) (Tel Aviv: Karni, 1959), Book II, pp. 16-21.

11. Menachem Begin, *Hamered* (The Revolt) (Tel Aviv: Achiasaf, 1978), p. 190.

12. Yisrael Galili, *Rishonim Tamid—Sefer Hapalmach* (Always the First—The History of the Palmach) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1956), p. 56.

13. See Yehuda Bauer, *Diplomatia Umachteret* (Diplomacy and Under-ground) (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim, 1963), pp. 260-265.

    Moreover, the IZL's decision to cast off the political discipline of the Revisionist movement was connected with the death of Zeev Jabotinsky, its ideological and moral authority. In contradistinction, the Palmach retained authoritative leaders even after the deaths of Berl Katznelson and Eliahu Golomb. These included first and foremost Yitzchak Tabenkin and David Ben-Gurion (who retained his leader-ship despite all the criticism levelled at him).

14. See *Sefer Hahaganah* (A History of the Haganah) (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1972), Book III, Part 1, p. 471.

15. A sweeping and interesting description of this affair is included in Ganin's work (see footnote 5 above).

16. Yaakov Shavit, *Onat Hatsayid* (Open Season) (Tel Aviv: Hadar, 1976), p. 50.

17. The assumption was that despite the announcement of "The Revolt," the IZL still wished to maintain the possibility for renewing

political contacts with Britain. See *A History of the Haganah*, Part I,
pp. 520-551; see also Y. Shavit, *Open Season*, pp. 65-71.

18. See this author's *Achdut Ha-Avoda, 1919-1930*, Chapter IV, p. 169ff.

19. The intention was to undermine the internal public order of the Jew-
     ish community by such actions as collecting money through violent
     measures, confiscating arms from Haganah caches, etc.

20. The reference is to the two meetings which took place between emis-
     saries of the Haganah and representatives of the IZL. The meeting
     between Moshe Sneh and Menachem Begin took place on 9 October
     1944. The meeting between representatives of the IZL and the Ha-
     ganah took place on 31 October 1944. See Shavit, *Open Season*, pp.
     150-174.

21. In the aforesaid meetings between Moshe Sneh and Menachem Begin,
     according to Sneh's account, Begin emphasized the fact that the armed
     struggle was intended to generate international pressure on Britain
     and thus force a change in policy.

22. See Yaakov Shavit, *Open Season*, Chapter V.

23. A perusal of the documents of the British Cabinet pertaining to dis-
     cussions on the appropriate British response to the activities of the
     Hebrew Disobedience Movement, and especially following the bomb-
     ing of the King David Hotel, validates this assumption. The Atlee
     government rejected the extreme emergency plans of the military
     command because the distinction between the moderate Zionist
     majority and the extremist minority had an international significance
     and the government was careful not to blur the distinctions between
     the one and the other.