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The Dispute in Mapai over “Self-Restraint” and “Purity of Arms” During the Arab Revolt

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ABSTRACT

*Two of the basic terms used in defining the principles, thought, and action of the Jewish side in the Jewish-Arab conflict are *havlagah* (self-restraint) and *tohar ha-neshek* (purity of arms). They became catchwords replete with ideological and political meaning in the Zionist movement in general and especially in the Labor movement during the 1936–39 Arab revolt in Palestine. This article intends to locate the precise historical context within which these terms emerged and to outline the political and ideological dispute associated with them.*

Key words: Palestine, Arab revolt, Jewish-Arab conflict, Labor movement

Two of the basic terms used in defining the principles and action of the Jewish side in the Jewish-Arab conflict are restraint (*havlagah*) and purity of arms (*tohar ha-neshek*). “Restraint” emphasizes political policies and military tactics aimed at the rational and limited use of force. “Purity of arms” means using force only for just causes and in self-defense, and it emphasizes the dimension of values and morality. These terms became catchwords replete with ideological and political meaning in the Zionist movement in general and especially in the Labor movement during the 1936–39 Arab revolt in Palestine.¹

According to accepted historical opinion, “restraint” vis-à-vis Arab violence characterized the policy of Mapai, the dominant party in the

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Yishuv (Jewish community in Palestine) and in the Zionist movement, from the beginning of the Arab revolt, an approach that continued, with certain modifications made necessary by the circumstances of the period, throughout those years.² Another broadly accepted convention identifies “purity of arms” with Haganah commander Yitzhak Sadeh and attributes its first use to Berl Katznelson at the 1939 Zionist Congress.³

In this article, I intend to question both of these views—regarding “restraint” as the accepted and declared norm among the Mapai leaders from the outset and regarding the source of “purity of arms” and the identity of its creator—in order to locate the precise historical context within which these terms emerged and to outline the political and ideological dispute associated with them. I argue that examining these terms can make a significant contribution to understanding the period of the Arab revolt and can shed light on the meaning of “restraint” and “purity of arms,” both then and today.

The Jewish historical tradition contains a variety of expressions regarding rules and courses of action in the sphere of war and military ethics. The complexity involved in determining suitable rules of behavior in wartime is, among others considerations, the result of two of the better known commandments of the Torah and the Talmud (respectively): “Thou shalt not murder,” and “If someone comes to kill you, arise early to kill him.” The tension between these commandments was clearly expressed in the story of Dinah, as told in Genesis 33:34, and is revealed in the rabbinical dispute over the meaning of the actions of Simon and Levi, who butchered the population of Shechem following the rape of their sister, Dinah, by Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, and the reason for Jacob’s furious reactions to them.⁴

The natural tension between the realm of morality and the realm of war, deriving from the desire to survive, on the one hand, and to adhere to principles of justic and right, on the other, is not, of course, exclusive to Judaism. For centuries, societies have debated the ethics of warfare without resolving any of its cardinal dilemmas: the justice in harming people not involved in military activity but related, in one way or another, to the arena of conflict or to the enemy side; the type of weapons that may be used to vanquish a foe; and the nature and weight of military concerns that prescribe specific fighting methods.⁵

In the Israeli context, the concepts of restraint and purity of arms take center stage in the ongoing academic debate on “just and unjust wars.”⁶ Such concepts are frequently used to define the extent and character of violence in achieving political objectives and to express moral values during combat, as manifested in the opinions of politi-

cal decision makers and in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) Code of Ethics.⁷ From time to time, the terms under discussion are also forced to the top of the public agenda and spark heated polemic. Prominent examples include the angry responses of former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon each time his policies regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were described as “restrained,”⁸ and the scandal in 2002 surrounding comments made by Brigadier General Dan Halutz, then commander in chief of the Israeli Air Force, who said, following the assassination of a senior Hamas leader: “As far as I am concerned, this term [purity of arms] is basically useless. Arms [weapons] are not pure. They are not meant to be pure. If weapons are pure they are not weapons.”⁹

Despite Halutz’s attempts at rationalization and the politicization of the term “restraint” by Sharon—who refused, in the reality of the Middle East, to be seen as “weak” or “cowardly”—restraint and purity of arms remain deeply rooted in the Israeli ideological and political consciousness.¹⁰ I argue that the durability and relevance of these two terms to Jewish life in the State of Israel derive from the historical context in which they were created during the Arab revolt. To bolster my claim, this article focuses on two main points in time: August 1936 and November 1937. During August 1936, a fierce debate took place within Mapai on the policy of restraint. In November 1937, the term “purity of arms” was publicly used for the first time. The policy of restraint and the value of purity of arms were components of broader trends in the development of the Yishuv during the years of the Arab revolt.¹¹

The main political figure responsible for instilling this approach in the political life of the Yishuv—and especially the two issues that will be discussed here—was David Ben-Gurion, at that time chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive. In his brilliant essay on Ben-Gurion, historian Israel Kolatt borrowed a term from Machiavelli that was made famous by Isaac Deutscher in his biography of Trotsky: “Ben-Gurion is one of the 20th century leaders . . . that are commonly described as ‘armed prophets.’”¹² As the leading Ben-Gurion biographer, Shabtai Teveth, explained, Ben-Gurion’s willingness to resort to violent struggle in the service of the ideal was accompanied by the principle of absolute and all-encompassing civilian authority, whose task was to guide, oversee, and restrain all military activity. To Ben-Gurion, this principle was fundamental to the existence of every organization and an overriding condition for achieving its objectives.¹³ Ben-Gurion’s efforts to implement this principle and apply it to Yishuv society were crucial for instilling the concepts of restraint and purity of arms into the actions of Mapai as the dominant party in the Zionist movement.

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The Internal Polemic in Mapai over the Policy of Restraint

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The word “restraint” appeared during the skirmishes in Jaffa on April 19, 1936, on the very first day of the Arab revolt. A manifesto published on behalf of the Tel Aviv municipality at 5:00 p.m. called on the public to refrain from irresponsible acts and declared that the “return of public security depends largely on the self-control and self-restraint [*havlagah*] of the Hebrew public.”¹⁴ The directive accorded with the desire of Mayor Meir Dizengoff to placate and reassure his fellow Jews in light of news about the murder of 19 Jews in nearby Jaffa.¹⁵ As the manifesto was being published, Yishuv leaders, including Ben-Gurion and Jewish National Fund president Menahem Ussishkin, were delivering speeches in a similar vein—though without mentioning the term “restraint”—at a meeting of the Zionist parties in Jerusalem.¹⁶ It is correct to say, therefore, that “restraint” became, spontaneously, the line taken by the heads of the Zionist offices vis-à-vis the first instances of Arab violence. This line was determined first by the leadership and later adopted by the general public in the Yishuv.¹⁷

The theory behind “restraint” was deeply rooted in the Yishuv’s history and culture. It derived from patterns of thought and action, some of which originated during the First and the Second Aliyot (waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine, 1881–1903 and 1904–14, respectively) and the traditions of the first Zionist armed force, Hashomer (The Guardsman, 1909–20). This theory, which was adopted despite internal dissent by Hashomer’s leadership headed by Israel Shohat, rejected bloody revenge and terrorism in favor of selective and focused attacks, carried out only as a last resort.¹⁸ This approach was based on the principle of adherence to the constructive objectives of the Zionist enterprise: immigration, land purchase, and settlement. Furthermore, it reflected the need for a gradual development of military capability for the purpose of self-defense and adherence to the declaration that the Yishuv was striving for peace with its neighbors and would go to great lengths to avoid falling into provocative traps that could lead to a bloody vicious circle.

Ben-Gurion, the dominant political figure in the Yishuv, based the policy of restraint on a number of considerations: the Jews’ numerical weakness and dependence on British military strength, which required the limited, cautious use of force; the fear of a brutal British response if the Yishuv dared to take independent military action against Arab villages and guerrilla groups, which would radically undermine the security situation in Palestine; an awareness that the West would never forgive the Jews if they adopted a policy of revenge

and that it would be hard to achieve Zionist objectives unless there was peace and security in the land; the desire to increase Jewish military power by enlisting the help of the British and ensuring the support of the Jewish political establishment for the British and the mandatory leaders; and emphasis on the moral element, based on Jewish tradition, according to which retaliation against the enemy should be limited only to those directly involved in attacks. From the Zionist point of view, the critical issue was that fanning the flames of conflict could present Zionism's adversaries with the chance to draw an explicit connection between Jewish immigration and the political situation in the country.¹⁹ There was consensus in Mapai on these considerations, although the policy of restraint was accepted in the party only after fierce debate.

The heated debate in Mapai on this issue preceded a head-on collision between Ben-Gurion and second-rank commanders in the Haganah. Ben-Gurion was forced to threaten to resign from his position as chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive in order to compel Haganah commanders in Jerusalem to refrain from reacting to the murder of five Jews in the city during May 13–16, 1936. (Three of them were killed as they left the Edison Cinema.) "For the rest of my life," he would say later, "I shall never forget those young men [Haganah commanders in Jerusalem] who came here after the Edison affair." A hint of the disagreement that was brewing behind closed doors among the Mapai leadership regarding the policy of restraint can be found in a letter in which he recalled "arguments with my dearest and most responsible friends."²⁰ The opinion of the junior commanders was shared by the upper command of the Haganah. Eliyahu Golomb, whose personal and political status gave him the greatest seniority in the organization, had reservations about vengeful retaliatory action, but he called instead for acts of self-defense that carried the risk of being taken prisoner or killed. This approach did, in fact, suggest a willingness to confront the British police forces. His approach enjoyed the support of Yitzhak Tabenkin, leader of the United Kibbutz movement.²¹ However, Berl Katznelson, Ben-Gurion's partner in the Mapai leadership, who at the time represented the "spirit of the [Labor] movement,"²² was closer to Ben-Gurion's line of thinking. The latter believed in complete adherence to the principles of restraint and self-control, although, like Tabenkin, he called for aggressive "self-defense." In practice, the similarities between these formulae, which were rooted in the Labor movement's defensive ethos, concealed different intentions, which I will clarify below.

August 1936 saw an unprecedented increase in Arab attacks on the

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Yishuv, including murder, assassination attempts, shooting incidents, bombing, burning of property, and uprooting of trees. Thirty of the 80 Jews murdered during 1936 died in August. The words of an August 12 editorial in *Davar*, the daily newspaper of the Histadrut, edited by Katznelson, that “[t]he war . . . declared on the Land of Israel appears to have reached its peak”²³ seemed to prophesy the events of the following 10 days. The Yishuv was inflamed by a series of murders between August 13 and 16 in Safed (a man and his three children), in the Carmel hills (four travelers), and in Tel Aviv (a laborer and a youth). An editorial in the daily *Ha-arets* cried out: “In the south and in the north—throughout the country: [people] are being butchered.”²⁴ A *Davar* headline warned, “[I]f we despair of our fellows [i.e. the British security forces], we shall know how to lean on ourselves.”²⁵

The Arabs had incurred some 900 casualties—killed and wounded—since the beginning of the rebellion, but the prevailing Jewish view that the British were not applying full force to quell the rebellion and stop the damage to Jewish life and property was well founded. The British policy set at the time by the high commissioner, General Arthur Wauchope, preferred to contain the rebellion by using controlled military force rather than defeat the rebels outright. It aimed to preserve British prestige in the area and to restore stability and order in Palestine without incurring animosity and bitterness among the Arab majority.²⁶

From the Jewish point of view, the rift in the policy of restraint was the murder of two nurses, Martha Fink and Nehama Tsedek, as they were leaving the Government Hospital in Jaffa on August 17. There was also a series of attacks by the Haganah and Haganah B organization (Irgun Tsvai Leumi [IZL], identified with the Revisionist movement) in Jerusalem and Haifa, in the course of which several Arabs were killed.²⁷ Katznelson, who informed a meeting of the National Council on August 17 that he would soon “tearfully abandon [the principle of] restraint,” used his newspaper as a mouthpiece to permit the Haganah to change its tactics.²⁸ On August 20, an editorial in *Davar* stated: “If the situation deteriorates, notwithstanding all the Jewish restraint, and chaos takes hold, we should not be surprised if people become disappointed in principles and lose their patience.”²⁹

This, then, is the background to the Mapai Central Committee meetings on August 22 and 24, which generated the only comprehensive and documented clarification of the policy of restraint during the Arab revolt. Probably due to the secrecy of the Mapai Central Committee discussions on the policy of restraint, the speakers are referred to in the minutes (which run to more than 80 pages) by num-

ber, rather than by name. The minutes are accompanied by a key to identifying the 21 speakers in the meeting.³⁰

Golomb, who announced at the beginning of the debate that he was “responsible for leading the Haganah” and whose speech was based on decisions that had been passed by Haganah headquarters, informed the assembly that it was not a matter of Yishuv security that headed the agenda at that moment but “the question of our existence in the country.” The time had come, he said, to withdraw from the policy of restraint, since “a war was being fought between two peoples over the future of the country.” The Jews would lose this war if they were not wise enough to discover the “talent for self-sacrifice” possessed by the Arabs. With the support of his fellow Haganah leaders, Shaul Meirov (Avigur) and the expert on Arab affairs, Reuven Zaslani (Shiloah), Golomb proposed “group punishment for the village of a perpetrator [of a crime].” As an example, he suggested that in response to the murder of three Jews the day before in the vicinity of Kfar Sava, hundreds of armed Jews should have been recruited to wage an attack on the nearby Arab village of Kalkilya. Admitting that this kind of act did not conform with the education and values nurtured by the Labor movement, Golomb was convinced that this was the only way to instill in the British the realization that the Jews, too, were a force with the potential to rise up against them, so that their (the Jews’) security needs and defense should also be a matter of consideration. Golomb and Meirov did not hide from their colleagues the fact that the action they were proposing—attacks on Arab villages—would also affect innocent people. They were convinced that launching attacks on the places from which it was known that Arab attackers had set out was more effective and moral than the acts of terror and blind revenge of the previous few days.

Among the small circle of operational decision makers, Moshe Shertok was the most eloquent supporter of continued restraint. Formally, according to the Yishuv’s institutional hierarchy and in the absence of Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann, Shertok was the one responsible for approving operations. Well aware of events in Arab circles, he did not underestimate the importance of the claim that continued Jewish restraint was seen by the Arabs as a sign of cowardice, that Jews were conceived as people “in whose veins flows milk and not blood.” But he did not believe that the proposed change of tactics would solve the issue; rather, it would hasten the regression into a cycle of bloodshed. Following the murder of the nurses, Shertok told the Mapai Central Committee that he had been approached by friends who warned that “if no organized action is taken, many unor-

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ganized acts may take place instead.” In other words, if the Haganah did not receive permission from the authorities to act, its members might decide to take matters into their own hands. Shertok pointed out that, even in difficult circumstances, there was a need to distinguish between different degrees of reaction, and he therefore supported attacks on Arab settlements (buildings and influential figures) but insisted that no harm must come to innocent bystanders. However, in the retaliatory actions in Haifa and Jerusalem, some women had been hurt as they walked in the street. At the committee meeting, Shertok read aloud Ben-Gurion’s letter regarding continued restraint and stressed that Eliezer Kaplan, too, supported this position. According to Shertok, if the Jews attacked Kalkilya at a time when the British had adopted a policy of air raids, that policy could be directed against the Jews, not only the Arabs, and they might order the evacuation of Kfar Sava within 24 hours and then destroy it from the air.

Katznelson, the Yishuv’s dominant politician on military affairs at that time, began his speech in characteristic fashion: “I am extremely confused on this issue; perhaps because I unite two opposing positions, and hesitate between them.” Katznelson described how difficult it had been for him to accept the policy of restraint during the bloody events of April 19–20, 1936. He admitted that the Arabs had declared war on the Yishuv, but he rejected Golomb’s suggestion for fear of a full-scale conflict with the British army. He did agree, however, that under extraordinary circumstances the Haganah should follow an “important, justified, and heroic plan of action.” Its actions would deviate from the usual line of restraint without requesting the prior agreement of Mapai authorities. He did ask, though, for the “line of conduct” to remain that of defense.

Prior to the vote, Shertok once again took to the podium and firmly opposed any further reprisals (as authorized by Katznelson). Unable to hide his discomfort at having to confront his close colleagues Golomb and Meirov (who were also his brothers-in-law), Shertok pointed out that they did not understand that their proposals meant “suicide for us and the destruction of all we have built.” He admitted that Golomb’s words had made him feel as though he were witnessing “the destruction of the Second Temple.” Shertok summed up his position by saying that sacrifice did not create strength: “[W]e are a people that aspires to become a force, and the way of a people that aspires to become a force is different from that of a people that is already a force.”

In the August 24 Mapai Central Committee debate, Golomb was outvoted seven to four, and a decision that combined elements put forward by the more moderate participants with Katznelson’s posi-

tion was adopted. The basic line of restraint was accepted, the previous days' acts of revenge were rejected, and the Haganah was given permission to "resort to special means" where necessary. Golomb, who had long held the view he had expressed and now wanted to bring it to the vote, asked to make a personal statement. Because he was convinced that it was wrong to practice restraint but was unable to implement his belief, he announced that he was resigning from his command positions. Meirov, who also considered resigning, said that he would continue with his work until the end of the revolt. Katznelson, in response, said that there had always been arguments over defense issues and that the organization's leaders should not be determined in accordance with their approval or rejection of a particular policy. Expressing the general consensus, he urged his colleagues not to release Golomb from the Haganah, concluding: "Each of us is fighting for his ideology, but the [Zionist] enterprise exists in its own right and comes before everything else."³¹

Responses to this debate were heard in the Kibbutz Ha-artzi movement of Hashomer Hatzair, where the consensus was in favor of continuing the policy of restraint, and the Mapai leadership, including *Davar*, was accused of relaxing the policy.³² The feeling that this breach in policy had not been closed was exacerbated when members of Haganah B killed two Arabs in Tel Aviv on August 27. The editors of *Davar* refrained from reporting the incident. But that same day, the Histadrut Executive issued clear instructions to *Davar*, as the Labor movement's official publication, to take a public stand against acts of revenge.³³ And, indeed, the breach that had been opened in the wall of restraint on August 20, with the help of *Davar* and certainly with the backing of Katznelson, was closed with the help of the same organ on August 28, when the editorial strongly condemned any attack on innocent Arabs and demanded that a distinction be made between the "lists" (the term used at the time for Arab attackers) and the hundreds of thousands of members of the Arab people.³⁴

Also on August 28, Katznelson embarked on a personal mission to save the shaky restraint policy. He did this by appearing before the Tel Aviv branch of Mapai and facing Secretary Itzhak Ben Aharon's challenge at the Party Central Committee. Many branch members were affected at the time by the growing unemployment figures, and their financial problems made them more receptive to militant views regarding labor relations and methods of running the party. This mood obviously seeped into other spheres of life. Under these circumstances, Katznelson tried to calm overheated passions while presenting a way for coping with the security situation. According to him,

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“Over those four months [since the outbreak of the events in April], a single short word has been brought to the front: restraint.” Restraint was not a word borrowed from Christianity in order to forgive, apologize, or capitulate, but a term deriving from Jewish culture that celebrated human life and recoiled from bloodshed, which was essential if the Jews were to live in this country with a “clean conscience.” Nonetheless, Katznelson made clear that it was not the moral-cultural aspect that determined his preference for a policy of restraint. Most important to him were the political considerations of a national movement, for which quiet and stability were essential conditions for its continued activity, and whose actions, in a war that was forced on it, must be the defensive acts of the side that was attacked and not the military moves of the attacker.³⁵

It should be noted in this connection that an action such as the one proposed by Golomb to the Mapai Central Committee in 1936, involving an attack by hundreds of armed Jews against an Arab village the size of Kalkilya, did take place in Emek Izrael Valley in 1948, during Israel’s War of Independence. Had it happened in 1936, the entire balance of relations among the three parties in British Mandate Palestine could have been undermined, and the British would have had a justification for taking severe steps against the continued development of the Jewish Yishuv. Mapai’s decision to adhere to the policy of restraint expressed the Yishuv’s willingness to be patient and absorb attacks until there was a change in political circumstances.

Between April and October 1936, there were 1,996 attacks on Jews, as compared with 795 attacks on British security forces and government officials. Eighty Jews were murdered, and hundreds were wounded. These data do not include hundreds of incidents of damage to Jewish property.³⁶ The heads of Mapai, however, drew some comfort from the increasing numbers of Jews who had been recruited and armed, with British backing, since the beginning of the Arab revolt in April. The fact that around 3,000 Jews were given permission to openly bear arms, while thousands more were involved in defense activities, wrought a fundamental change in the situation of the Yishuv. Katznelson declared that “this is an extraordinary event in Jewish history.” Shertok regarded the Jewish recruits to the British police as a basis for founding a Jewish militia under British command, which would also be available for “military action against the Arabs,” and Ben-Gurion boasted, “This is already a little army.”³⁷ Although the Mapai leaders regarded this development as an achievement, in reality it indicated the Yishuv’s military weakness and almost total dependence on the British forces. One of the main expressions of this

weakness and dependence was their fervent adherence to the policy of restraint.

The months from October 1936 to July 1937 were quiet as a result of overt British military activity, the intervention of Arab states (which put an end to the Arab strike), and the endeavors of the Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel sent by Britain to Palestine. During this period, the poet Shaul Tchernikhovsky published “Parashat Dinah” (The Dinah Affair), in which he came out in support of revenge. In this poem, instead of the curse that Jacob laid on Simon and Levy, Dinah blesses her two brothers while condemning the vengeful and cowardly behavior of her other brothers, who did not rally to slaughter the population of Shechem. Tchernikhovsky, who was idolized equally in the Yishuv’s right- and left-wing camps, expressed in this poem the ideological and psychological tension between the mentality and habits of the “Diaspora” and the “Sabra-like” willingness for unreserved struggle that gripped the Yishuv in the first wave of the Arab revolt.³⁸

In July 1937, the Peel Commission published its recommendation to partition Palestine into two states. Whereas the Zionist movement exhibited a reserved willingness to adopt the proposal, albeit with changes, the Arabs rejected it out of hand and renewed the revolt. These circumstances, when the barriers that guarded against Jewish terrorist activity were ruptured, created a need for the ideal of “purity of arms” as a binding ethical code.

Emergence of the Term “Purity of Arms”

The violent attacks resumed toward the end of August and in early September 1937. But, this time, they were somewhat different. Following the murder of three Jews, eleven Arabs were murdered in various acts of retaliation, which were carried out in accordance with clear-cut orders—“[I]f riots are renewed . . . show no restraint”—issued by Zeev Jabotinsky on April 30 to the commanders of the IZL, when the organization came under sole control of the Revisionist movement.³⁹ When news of events in Palestine reached Ben-Gurion while he was aboard a ship on his way from France to the United States, he noted in his diary, “[I]t is not out of the question that the hooligans [code name in the Labor movement for the Revisionists] are planning to use these outrages to foil the establishment of a Jewish state.”⁴⁰ What he meant was that these were planned attacks on the part of the Revisionists, who opposed the partition plan and hoped to rekindle the hostilities between the two peoples, so that the resulting climate

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would force the British to abandon their political plans. And, indeed, most of the Arabs killed in early September were attacked by the IZL, which wanted to make its presence and prowess felt after the return of Haganah B members back to the mainstream Haganah, leaving the IZL as a rump.

In the absence of Ben-Gurion and Katznelson, who were abroad, Shertok stood at the forefront of the struggle for restraint in a series of speeches between September and November, delivered both at large public gatherings and to smaller forums of Yishuv or Zionist movement activists. Shertok exhibited extraordinary courage in standing unequivocally behind the principle of restraint, not only in order to present the Yishuv leadership's political stance vis-à-vis the British but as the one who bore the entire weight of ensuring the sources of the Yishuv's military strength. (Since the beginning of the Arab revolt, and thanks largely to Shertok's efforts, 3,000 Jews had received weapons and permission to carry them openly.) Although Shertok enjoyed the support of his party on the issue of self-restraint, he, more than anyone else in the Mapai and Yishuv leadership, was identified by the general public with that policy.⁴¹ At a gathering in Tel Aviv on September 3, 1937, which was attended by several thousand people, Shertok warned the IZL that the organized Yishuv's security forces would fight them if they did not cease their terrorist activity and attacks on innocent Arabs. He warned against allowing patterns of revenge to take root and announced that such acts were disgracing the Hebrew tradition of combat from the days of the First Aliyah and would not be included in the annals of Zionist heroism exemplified by the 1920 battle of Tel Hai. Instead of indulging in emotional outbursts, Shertok declaimed, Jews should act with restraint and resort to arms only against "rioters and attackers." He was particularly concerned to dampen the atmosphere that openly justified terror, to which rabbis and intellectuals contributed alongside right-wing leaders. His objective was to isolate the IZL in the public arena. As a result of his efforts to put an end to Jewish terrorism, Shertok was accused of treason, and threats were made on his life.⁴²

The British acting governor of the Galilee region, Louis Andrews, was murdered by Arabs on September 26, 1937. Britain's reaction was to outlaw the Higher Arab Committee that led the Arab revolt and to launch attempts to capture Grand Mufti Haj Amin al Husseini, who succeeded in escaping to Lebanon. Against this background, the Arab revolt was renewed in full force and, with it, the mutual bloody attacks between Jews and Arabs.⁴³ The cycle of violence reached a peak on November 9, when five Jews were ambushed and murdered

in the Jerusalem hills on their way to work. The five had been members of the “Ba-maaleh” group of the Gordonia youth movement from nearby Kibbutz Kiryat Anavim. News of the attack shook the Yishuv, and 50,000 people participated in the funeral procession the following midday in Jerusalem. Shertok, who eulogized the youngsters on behalf of the national leadership, announced that “if dozens, or hundreds, or even thousands fall, thousands and hundreds of thousands and even millions will come in their place.” He called on the mourners to practice restraint and refrain from vengeful attacks on innocent Arabs, since such vengeance would neither harm the murderers nor put an end to terror. Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Halevy Herzog cried out against the spilling of innocent blood in retaliation and wondered if “such a cry could also be heard on the other side, from the leaders of the Islamic religion, against the spilling of innocent blood.”⁴⁴ The Muslim leaders did not respond to Herzog’s rhetorical demand, which the editor of the daily *Ha-arets* joined, boasting that “the people of Israel know more than any other people to respect the religion of Muhammad and the Muslim culture.”⁴⁵ But a call to end all violence was eventually heard throughout the Arab camp. The daily *Al-jam’a al-Islamiyya*, which was published in Jaffa, demanded an end to attacks on innocents, because such attacks would hasten the implementation of the partition plan, to which the Arabs were opposed. Notwithstanding the reason, the mere fact of the call was welcomed by the Jews, and *Ha-arets* even published it as a leading headline, together with a full translation of the article.⁴⁶

To provide a creative way to curb anger and the desire for revenge, as well as to conform with the goals set forth in Shertok’s eulogy, the Hever ha-Kibbutzim movement (of which Kibbutz Kiryat Anavim was a member) and the Gordonia youth movement affiliated with it announced the establishment of a forestation project to be called “Forest of the Five.” This was an expression of solidarity between Jewish youth and the Ba-maaleh group and in support of the Jewish National Fund’s forestation enterprise. As Herzog asked rhetorically, “Is there a response more suitable to our constructive and liberating endeavor, or an enterprise that is more appropriate to our lives, than covering this land with trees?”⁴⁷ By the time this call was issued, however, the land was already drowning in another wave of bloodshed. On November 14, 1937—“Black Sunday” as it was named in Mapai vernacular, or “the day restraint was broken” as the IZL and subsequently the Herut Party chose to call it—groups of IZL fighters launched vicious attacks throughout Jerusalem. The series of coordinated terrorist attacks were carried out under the command of the local branch and its leader, David Raziel.

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According to the announcement, the attacks came in reprisal for the “murder of the five.” Six Arabs were murdered (another two had been murdered two days previously), including two women; others were wounded.⁴⁸ The magnitude of the rift caused by the IZL’s attacks was acknowledged by *Ha-arets*’s report of the horrors in Jerusalem: “Even to people of experience and those who have witnessed terrible things over the past years, months, and weeks, yesterday in Jerusalem was a terrifying and horrible experience.”⁴⁹

The first recorded debate on the IZL’s acts of retaliation was held at the Jewish Agency Executive the same day. In the jargon of the period and even in its historiography, these acts became known misleadingly as “responses” or “acts of reprisal,” whose content was in reality as multifaceted as their counterpart: “restraint.” At the crux of the debate stood the important question of whether to embark on a public campaign regarding the legitimacy of using violence and, consequently, which body within the Jewish camp had the authority to decide on the objectives and means of struggle. This issue would accompany the history of the Jews in Palestine from that time and up to the murder of the United Nations Security Council mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, in September 1948 in Jerusalem. The issue had two aspects: Jewish-ethical, and political-military. Because of the unique position of the former in Yishuv discourse, and since citations from the Jewish canon and its commentaries could easily be cited to provide religious authority for every conceivable political position, the Jewish-ethical aspect was emphasized within the internal debate and, at times, given equal weight to the other, political-military aspect, which was more critical from a practical point of view.⁵⁰

In the wake of Herzog’s eulogy for the five murdered Jews, at a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive on November 14, Ben-Gurion asked rhetorically, “Where are the wise [men] of the Jewish religion?” and wondered if the Jewish moral commandment “Thou shalt not kill” was still valid. Mizrahi Party leader Rabbi Yehuda Fishman (Maimon) responded that, though the Jewish religion was opposed to murder and bloodshed, according to the Rambam “everyone who is a member of the [group] from which the criminals came, should be considered the criminal.” Moreover, he continued, were he still a young man, he, too, would have set out to avenge spilled Jewish blood. According to him, the youngsters carrying out anti-Arab activity were “sacrificing their lives” and should not be referred to as “murderers.” The moral debate reached a peak when a Jewish Agency member affiliated with the General Zionists, Dr. Fischel Rotenstreich, recalled seeing a group of children dancing beside the body of a murdered

Arab in Jerusalem's Rehavia neighborhood.⁵¹ This incident, which was described time and again in political meetings at that time, demonstrated that the notions of "permitted" and "not permitted" behavior had become undermined. Although there were those among the more respectable right-wing circles who dismissed it as childish mischief, the overall impression was that this was no isolated incident but, rather, that it expressed a pattern of thought which had taken root among the youth. On another occasion, Yosef Baratz talked of "children who were counting murdered Arabs, as they would the marbles [they played with] and rejoicing at every Arab murdered, as at every goal in a football game."⁵²

On the political-military level, there were fears that the British would stop arming the Jewish side—3,500 weapons had thus far been given to Jews serving in various security and police forces—and abandon the distinction they had been making between the attacker (the Arabs) and the attacked (the Jews). To the leaders of Zionist policy in the Yishuv, Ben-Gurion and Shertok, this double threat jeopardized the two main achievements of the restraint policy since the beginning of the conflict in April 1936: continued immigration, in spite of the political and security tensions (unlike earlier periods of bloodshed between Jews and Arabs in the 1920s), and Britain's recognition of the Jews' right to defend themselves by force, a key result of which was their willingness to help with arms and military training.

In order to cope with the new reality created by IZL terrorism, the Jewish Agency Executive accepted Ben-Gurion's and Shertok's demand for an announcement "forbidding" terrorism and a call for all loyal public institutions to use all means at their disposal to uproot terrorism in the country. Although the call was not accompanied by any concrete steps, it should not be seen as mere rhetoric, because it established a public basis for real action against acts of terror perpetrated by Jews. The debate also defined the lines that were not to be crossed in the endeavor to end domestic terror: abetting the deportation of the perpetrators, and direct and open cooperation with the British in order to stop Jewish terrorism. Ben-Gurion admitted that, despite his support of such steps, there was not, at that time, the public or political backing necessary to authorize them.⁵³

Thus, in meetings of the Jewish Agency Executive during the first half of November 1937, basic outlines were drafted for coping with those elements that resorted to violence in order to undermine the authority and policies of the Yishuv's institutions. It is no wonder, therefore, that a striking result of this debate was the emergence of an important expression that, to this day, is cited repeatedly by politicians,

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the military, and educators when addressing values and principles relating to the use of force: “purity of arms.” A manifesto published on behalf of the Jewish Agency Executive in the local press on November 16 declared, among other things:

The Jewish Yishuv was severely tested during the period of bloodshed—and withstood it. With courage and tenacity, it defended all our positions—but also maintained a *purity of its arms* of defense; out of moral recognition and political maturity, the Yishuv meticulously adhered to boundaries of self-defense and, by overcoming elemental impulses and exercising national discipline, managed to avoid harming innocent Arabs.⁵⁴

The manifesto was composed by Ben-Gurion and based on drafts provided by Shertok and Yitzhak Greenbaum. Instead of the words “purity of its arms of defense,” the two earlier drafts had said “cleanliness of its arms of defense.”⁵⁵ Contrary to common belief, therefore, the term “purity of arms” was not coined by Katznelson at the 1939 Zionist Congress as a reflection of the mood and patterns of behavior in the field among the officers and men of the Haganah in their struggle against the Arabs. It was created during the fierce conflict between the Labor movement and the Revisionists over the issue of who was authorized to use violence and over its role in the effort to promote Zionist objectives. From the outset, “purity of arms” was designed to make a clear distinction between the types of military action used by the Haganah and those used by the IZL, which persisted in carrying out indiscriminate attacks on Arabs. Such attacks peaked in July 1938 (following the hanging of Shlomo Ben Yosef). According to IZL statistics, the movement’s fighters murdered 140 Arabs that month. Their activity included laying powerful bombs, designed by their “engineer” Binyamin Zironi, in Haifa (twice), Jerusalem, and Jaffa.⁵⁶

Although the term emerged amid strife with the IZL, the entrenchment of “purity of arms” as a fundamental value in the Haganah’s military actions stemmed mainly from security needs. It was all the more necessary starting in December 1937, following the setup of the Haganah’s field squads (known as the Fosh) headed by Yitzhak Sadeh. The Fosh was a professional, mobile, military strike force that sought to initiate violent skirmishes with the Arabs. It would be an exaggeration to describe the setup of the Fosh as a distinct manifestation of the militaristic spirit sweeping the Yishuv. It was, rather, a constitutive layer in the military ethos of a people fighting under the leadership of the Labor movement. This ethos stressed defensive aspects and was animated by the most prosaic goal of collective survival. Faced with Arab

attacks, the Yishuv endorsed cultivating the fighter as an ideal figure who realizes national yearnings through force. The Fosh undertook military actions under circumstances in which the practical, on-site translation of the rules of “dos” and “don’ts” was more than once the upshot of the actual situation on the battlefield and of the combatants’ skills. As Anita Shapira has noted, the tactical complexity and moral ambiguity associated with the Fosh’s operations honed the importance and relevance of complying with “purity of arms” as an ideological-pedagogical rule and as a gauge to distinguish between the IZL and the Haganah, even if practically “there was no little, and even intentional, vagueness regarding the limits of dos and don’ts.”⁵⁷ There were occasional deviations from the principle of “purity of arms,” among others in the unconventional and at times excessively harsh activities of the night squads commanded by Captain Orde Wingate. However, these deviations were usually censured, officers were court-martialed, and the educational-political message that they had committed an unsuitable act was made clear through the internal command channels as well as publicly. On one occasion, following one such deviation toward the end of the Arab revolt, Shertok determined:

If, on the basis of some estimation that something . . . has been done by some villager, [Jewish] forces enter the village and kill any random villager—this is an act that is unacceptable and forbidden, it is not justified, it does not achieve the objective. . . . [I]t is possible, too, that members of the organization [Haganah] fail by committing an infringement; who says that the organization is made up only of righteous and pure people. The question is whether [we] maintain discipline against [such behavior], or not.⁵⁸

This ruling, which demanded that the acts of war necessitated by the situation should not include attacks on women, children, bystanders, or innocent Arabs as a whole and which utterly rejected placing bombs in busy Arab thoroughfares, became, on July 2, 1939, a special order that was published on behalf of the Haganah⁵⁹ command and laid the foundations for the Haganah’s principles of military action and, later, for those of the IDF to this day.

Conclusion

At the 1939 Zionist Congress, on the eve of the outbreak of World War II, Katznelson declared in one of the more inspiring speeches in

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the history of these congresses that “the meaning of restraint is: let our arms be pure. We study arms, we bear arms, we face those that rise up against us, but we don’t want our arms to be stained with the blood of the innocent.”⁶⁰ The close connection that Katznelson indicated between “restraint” and “purity of arms,” as concepts that complement and evolve from one another, became one of the fundamental political principles of Mapai and a central, ideological-educational, but primarily military-political component in the effort to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.

After the mid-1940s, along with the increasing military strength of the Jews in Palestine and, subsequently, establishment of the State of Israel, a growing militarism emerged in the intellectual, cultural, and social climate. As a result of the military struggle for the state, military considerations, which Hashomer had championed in the early 1910s but had often been shunted aside, were perceived as vital for guaranteeing Israel’s security and were given priority in molding public consciousness and in determining the principles governing the building of the Jewish state.⁶¹ At the same time, there was a tendency to blur the borders between defensive military actions designed to reduce the conflict and those in which considerations of restraint and “purity of arms” were viewed as less important than arguments in favor of the effective and professional use of operative military capabilities. Actions of the latter type were sometimes characterized by the desire to deter the enemy by, for example, indiscriminate attacks on civilians.⁶² The massacres in Deir Yassin in 1948, Qibya in 1953, and Kafr Kassem in 1956 are prominent examples that have become inscribed in the collective memory as deviating from established conventions both among the Israeli Jewish public and in the IDF and security forces on what was permissible and what was forbidden in military action.⁶³ In Israel, the issue of the relevance of “purity of arms” to contemporary warfare continued to be fiercely debated, such as during the reprisals in the 1950s against Palestinian infiltrators and in the book *The Seventh Day*, published after the Six Day War.⁶⁴

The Labor movement had long fostered the self-image of the Jew as a moral person who did not give into the instinct for revenge. In the 1930s, Mapai leaders Ben-Gurion and Katznelson perceived these principles as a vital element in the Zionist movement’s ability to make rational political decisions.⁶⁵ Although the unique value attributed to “purity of arms” has its source in Jewish tradition, its emergence in this particular context and time can be attributed to the distinctive nature of the circumstances created by the Labor movement in Pales-

tine. The restrained use of force and the ability to prevent the resort to force from becoming the prime mode of action—ideologically, educationally, socially, and politically—transformed restraint into the basis of the Labor movement’s political activity. It is no coincidence that, in the first significant military test imposed on the Yishuv—the 1936–39 Arab revolt—the two principles of restraint and purity of arms became guiding and binding concepts.

Like other values and principles created by the Labor movement, those of restraint and purity of arms did not emerge as abstract theoretical or ideological slogans but were formed by practice. Moreover, the moral aspects of restraint and purity of arms were not the determining factor behind the making of policy by Mapai’s leaders. Although, both in public and in private, Ben-Gurion made it clear that he considered the Yishuv’s moral code to be a powerful source of strength in its struggle with adversity,⁶⁶ he continued to limit the operative weight of the moral aspect. Just before the decision on restraint, at the August 1936 meeting of the Mapai Central Committee, he asserted, in typically blunt fashion, that the moral aspect should not determine whether or not to continue the policy of restraint, adding, “[T]he cold and cruel calculation that knows about the existence of emotions and recognizes their enormous importance in the lives of man and society, but knows how to control them, only this kind of calculation is capable and worthy of directing a dangerous campaign.”⁶⁷

As a decisive factor in setting policy, “controlling emotions” for political considerations might have seemed to be empty words were it not for the essential shift in British policy in 1938. The British decision to exert military pressure on the Arab population while brutally quelling the rebellion was part of an overall strategy of coping with a deteriorating international situation and drift toward a world war.⁶⁸ Under these circumstances, the Zionist policy of restraint allowed controlled pursuit of conflict with the Arabs while developing and expanding Jewish settlement under the aegis of “British bayonets.” Though acknowledging that violence was essential to survival in the Middle East, Mapai leaders came to understand that the extent and degree of violence had to be regulated in accordance with the particular circumstances of the time and within the constraints of the Yishuv’s international situation. In this context, the terms “restraint” and “purity of arms” became formative principles in the Yishuv’s military thinking and operations.

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- 1 On the Arab revolt, see John Marlowe, *Rebellion in Palestine* (London, 1946); J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York, 1976), 67–93; Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate, the Making of British Policy, 1936–1945* (New York, 1978), 10–49; and Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–1999* (London, 2001), 121–60.
- 2 Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948* (New York, 1992), 234–57, esp. 247–50; Yaakov Shavit, *Mavo: Havlagah o tgvah*, in *Havlagah o tgvah (1936–1939)* (Ramat Gan, 1983), 7–35, esp. 11–13, 23–24. The book *Sefer toldot ha-haganah* is less clear on this issue as it relates to the military level, in part because two members of the editorial board, Shaul Avigur and Israel Galilee, senior members of Haganah, openly opposed this policy to the extent that it is described in the book as “the restraining decree.” Yehuda Slutsky, *Sefer toldot ha-haganah*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv, 1973), 833–50, quotation on 841.
- 3 With regard both to connecting the term “purity of arms” to Katznelson and to the origin of the term, see, e.g., Shabtai Tevet, *Kinat David: Ish riv*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem, 1976–2004), 4: 390; Dan Yahav, *Tohar ha-neshek: Etos, mitos u-metsiut (1936–1956)* (Tel Aviv, 2002), 23; and Meir Pail, *Hamefaked: Manhigut be-darkhei noam* (Tel Aviv, 2003), 167–68.
- 4 On rabbinic disputes about the Dinah affair, in particular the argument between the Rambam and the Ramban, see Erella Yedger, “Parasht va-yishlah: Ha-shiput ha-musari be-iyuneiha shel Nehamah Leibovitch: Maaseh ha-ahim bi-shkhem ke-mikreh mivhan,” in *Hogim be-farashah: Parashat ha-shavua ke-hashraah la-ytsirah vela-hagut ha-yehudit le-doroteha*, ed. Naftali Rothenberg (Tel Aviv, 2005), 102–16; Menahem Finkelstein, “Tohar ha-neshek ba-yamim ha-hem ba-zman ha-zeh,” in *Gilyonot be-farashat ha-shavua* (Department for Hebrew Law, Ministry of Justice), no. 235 (2006). See also Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York, 1993), 107–11.
- 5 See, e.g., Robert L. Holmes, *On War and Morality* (Princeton, 1989), 183–213; Paul Christopher, *The Ethics of War and Peace: An Introduction to Legal and Moral Issues* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1994); Richard Norman, *Ethics, Killing and War* (Cambridge, Engl., 1995); and Anthony E. Hartle, *Moral Issues in Military Decision Making*, 2nd ed., revised (Lawrence, Kans., 2004), 76–100.
- 6 Michael Walzer, *Milhamot tsodkot ve-lo tsodkot* (Tel Aviv, 1984), 8–9; Michael Walzer, “War and Peace in the Jewish Tradition,” in *The Ethics of War and Peace: Religious and Secular Perspectives*, ed. Terry Nardin (Princeton, 1996), 107–10.
- 7 See, e.g., the *Ha-arets* headline “Rosh ha-memshalah ehlit: Namshikh ba-havlagah al af yeri ha-kasam,” Dec. 21, 2006, and the headline in *Maariv*, “Hatsi kabinet neged Ulmert biglal hemshekh ha-havlagah,” Dec. 22, 2006. The IDF Code of Ethics, which was drafted by Professor

- Asa Kasher and adopted in 1994, declared “purity of arms” to be an IDF moral value, defining it thus: “The IDF servicemen and women will use their weapons and force only for the purpose of their mission, only to the necessary extent and will maintain their humanity even during combat. IDF soldiers will not use their weapons and force to harm human beings who are not combatants or prisoners of war, and will do all in their power to avoid causing harm to their lives, bodies, dignity and property.” For a detailed definition of “purity of arms,” see Asa Kasher, *Etikah tsvait* (Tel Aviv, 1996), 52–60.
- 8 See, e.g., Sharon’s sarcastic and provocative questions to the Knesset Likud faction: “When the Palestinians hear descriptions on ‘Voice of Palestine,’ of how one ambulance takes off one part of a Palestinian suicide bomber’s body and another ambulance carries off another part—that is not restraint, it’s policy of another kind. . . . Taking out a Hamas activist in Tulkarem, that’s restraint? Taking out two terrorists on their way to blowing up the opening ceremony of the Maccabi Games, that’s restraint? An entire terrorist cell destroyed, that’s restraint?” Menahem Rahat and Ron Levin, “Artsot ha-brit mitkarevet la-aravim,” *Maariv*, July 27, 2001.
- 9 Vered Levi-Barzilai, “Yefei nefesh nimastem,” interview with Dan Halutz, *Ha-arets*, Aug. 23, 2002. The assassination was carried out on July 22, 2002.
- 10 See Asa Kasher and Amos Yadlin, “Military Ethics of Fighting Terror: An Israeli Perspective,” *Journal of Military Ethics* 4, no. 1 (2005): 13–23; Mira Sucharov, “Security Ethics and the Modern Military: The Case of the Israel Defense Forces,” *Armed Forces and Society* 31, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 169–99, esp. 180–81, 185–86.
- 11 Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Origins of the Israeli Polity: Palestine under the Mandate* (Chicago, 1978), 49–52.
- 12 Israel Kolatt, “Ben-Gurion: Ha-ish vеха-gdulah,” *Avot u-meyasdim* (Tel Aviv, 1975), 24–26.
- 13 Teveth, *Kinat David*, 3: 108, 4: 386, 396.
- 14 Tel Aviv Municipal Archive, announcement no. 4, 4–161a.
- 15 See M. Dizengoff, “La-aravim,” *Davar*, Apr. 27, 1936.
- 16 David Ben-Gurion, *Zikhronot*, 6 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1971–87), 3: 122–29.
- 17 Shapira, *Land and Power*, 234–35.
- 18 Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley, 1976), 32–70; Yaacov Roi, “Yahasei yehudim-aravim be-moshvot ha-aliya ha-rishonah,” in *Ha-aliyah ha-rishonah*, 2 vols., ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem, 1981), 1: 265–66; Yaakov Goldstein, *Ba-derekh el ha-yaad: Bar-giyora ve-hashomer, 1907–1935* (Tel Aviv, 1994), 32–33, 78.
- 19 Letter from Ben-Gurion to the Ihud (world organization of Mapai) council meeting in Geneva, Aug. 18, 1936, *Zikhronot*, 3: 388–89; David Ben-Gurion, “The Security Question and Topical Matters,” speech given at a meeting of Yishuv leaders, Tel Aviv, Aug. 3, 1938, Ben-Gurion Archives (BGA), Kiryat Sde Boker, Speeches and Articles.

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- 20 Letter from Ben-Gurion to Zalman Robashov (Shazar), May 31, 1936, *Zikhronot*, 3: 223; Minutes of the Jewish Agency Executive, May 15, 1936, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem (hereafter, CZA); Minutes of a discussion between representatives of the League for Jewish-Arab Cooperation and the Jewish Agency Executive, Oct. 25, 1939, CZA, S25/3104; Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion ve-arviyei erets yisrael: Me-hashlamah le-milhamah* (Jerusalem, 1985), 285.
- 21 Minutes of the Histadrut Executive Committee, May 11, 1936, Labor Archives, Tel Aviv; Minutes of the Mapai Central Committee, June 4, 1936, Labor Party Archives, Beit Berl; Minutes of the Mapai Political Committee, July 6 and July 28, 1936, *ibid.* Tabenkin disagreed with Golumb and Moshe Shertok, who, he felt, tended to rely too much on legal forces rather than focusing on the development of a system of self-defense not dependent on the British. This argument became sharper during the debate over recruitment into the Palmah, the British armed forces, or the Jewish Brigade in World War II.
- 22 Anita Shapira, *Berl: The Biography of a Socialist Zionist* (Cambridge, Engl., 1984), 254–55.
- 23 M. D., “Dvar ha-yom” (editorial), *Davar*, Aug. 12, 1936; Slutsky, *Sefer toldot ha-haganah*, 648–50.
- 24 A. D., “Mi-yom le-yom” (editorial), *Ha-arets*, Aug. 11, 1936; K-B, “Mi-yom le-yom” (editorial), *Ha-arets*, Aug. 16, 1936.
- 25 *Davar*, Aug. 16, 1936.
- 26 Tom Bowden, “The Politics of the Arab Rebellion in Palestine, 1936–39,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 11, no. 2 (1975): 160–61; Ygal Eyal, *Ha-intifadah ha-rishonah: Dikui ha-mered ha-aravi al yedei ha-tsava ha-briti be-erets yisrael, 1936–1939* (Tel Aviv, 1998), 94–96, 153–57.
- 27 Slutsky, *Sefer toldot ha-haganah*, 671–72; David Niv, *Maarkhot ha-irgun ha-tsvai ha-leumi*, 6 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1965–80), 1: 274–76.
- 28 Minutes of meeting of National Council, Aug. 17, 1936, CZA, J1/7212; Shaul Avigur, “Havlagah, tgvah ve-B. Katznelson,” Apr. 12, 1951, Haganah Archives, Tel Aviv, 76.15.
- 29 M. D., “Dvar ha-yom” (editorial) *Davar*, Aug. 20, 1936.
- 30 Minutes of the Mapai Central Committee, Aug. 22 and 24, 1936, BGA, Department of Minutes of Meetings. The minutes of these two meetings do not exist in the Labor Movement Archives, which contain only the informative report delivered by Shertok at the opening of the debate on Aug. 22. These minutes were previously filed in the Archive of the History of the Haganah and were referred to once in the writing of the *History of the Haganah*, but the way in which the book chose to present their content is questionable. See Slutsky, *Sefer toldot ha-haganah*, 844–45. Three of the Mapai leaders who adhered to the policy of restraint—Ben-Gurion, Eliezer Kaplan (treasurer of the Jewish Agency), and Yosef Sprinzak—were out of the country at the time, participating in the Zionist Executive Conference.
- 31 Minutes of the Mapai Central Committee, Aug. 22 and Aug. 24, 1936,

- BGA, Department of Minutes of Meetings. Golomb had already presented his position in principle; see his response at a meeting of the Mapai Central Committee on June 4, 1936, Labor Party Archives, Beit Berl.
- 32 Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Kibbutz Ha-artzi, Aug. 26, 1936, BGA, Department of Minutes of Meetings.
- 33 Minutes of Histadrut Executive, Aug. 27, 1936, Labor Archives, Tel Aviv; Niv, *Maarkhot ha-irgun ha-tsvai ha-leumi*, 1: 274.
- 34 M. D., “Dvar ha-yom” (editorial), *Davar*, Aug. 28, 1936.
- 35 Berl Katznelson, “Havlagah ve-hitgonenut” (from a speech at a meeting of the Tel Aviv branch of Mapai, Aug. 28, 1936), in his *Ktavim*, 12 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1945–50), 8: 209–26. On the economic hardships in the period under discussion and their influence on the organizational situation in Mapai, see Meir Avizohar, *Be-rei saduk: Idealim hevratiim u-leumiim ve-hishtakfutam be-olamah shel mapai* (Tel Aviv, 1990), 293–309.
- 36 The data are based on a memo of the Jewish Agency Executive. Bracha Habas, ed., *Meoraot tartsa”v* (Tel Aviv, 1937), 254.
- 37 Katznelson to the plenum of the National Council assembly, Aug. 17, 1936, CZA, J1/7212; Letter from Moshe Shertok to Chaim Weizmann, July 5, 1936, in Moshe Sharett, *Yoman medini*, 5 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1968–79), 1: 184–85; Ben-Gurion at the Zionist Executive Committee, Aug. 26, 1936, BGA, Speeches and Articles.
- 38 Shaul Tchernikhovsky, “Parashat Dinah” (June 24–26, 1937), in his *Shirei Shaul Tshernihovski* (Tel Aviv, 1968), 213–15; Ehud Luz, *Maavak be-nahal yabok: Otsmah, musar ve-zehut yehudit* (Jerusalem, 1999), 344.
- 39 “Haraot le-inyenei ha-irgun” (Apr. 30, 1937), in *Ha-irgun ha-tsvai ha-leumi be-erets yisrael: Osef yeudot ve-mismakhim, april 1937–april 1941*, 6 vols., ed. Itzhak Halfasi (Tel Aviv, 1990–96), 1: 15–16; Niv, *Maarkhot ha-irgun ha-tsvai ha-leumi*, 2: 22–23; Arye Naor, *David Raziell: Ha-mefaked ha-rishon shel ha-irgun ha-tsvai ha-leumi be-erets yisrael, hayav u-ukufato* (Tel Aviv, 1990), 95–99.
- 40 Ben-Gurion’s diary, Aug. 31, 1937, BGA.
- 41 “M. Shertok kore le-havlagah u-mishmaat,” *Davar*, Sept. 5, 1937; “Ha-itonut maalimah et kariat ha-shisui shel Shertok,” *Ba-maarakhah* (published by the Revisionists instead of in their banned organ, *Ha-yarden*), Sept. 10, 1937; “Ha-shilton ha-mapaii she-hukah be-genevah mevakesh hatsalah be-milhemet ahim,” *Be-hazit ha-am* (also published here instead of in *Ha-yarden*), Sept. 24, 1937; Shertok’s eulogy on behalf of the national offices at the funeral of five Jews murdered on Nov. 9, *Davar*, Nov. 10, 1937; Minutes of the Jewish Agency Executive, Nov. 14, 1937, CZA; Shertok at a meeting of the National Council with the representatives of local authorities, Nov. 16, 1937, CZA, J1/7237.
- 42 See sources in note 41 as well as Sharett, *Yoman medini*, 2: 290, 294–96, 426.
- 43 Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to*

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- Rebellion* (London, 1978), 231–36; Niv, *Maarkhot ha-irgun ha-tsvai ha-leumi*, 2: 30.
- 44 “Parashat ha-meora ha-mahrid,” in M. Mandel, ed., *Kovets le-zekher ha-hamishah* (n.p., 1938), 7–8.
- 45 Moshe Glickson, “Al ha-perk: Hearot le-inyenei ha-yamim,” *Ha-arets*, Nov. 12, 1937.
- 46 “*Islamiya* doresh: Hidlu lirtsoah anashim hapim mi-pesha,” *Ha-arets*, Nov. 11, 1937.
- 47 *Igeret*, pamphlet C, Dec. 28, 1937.
- 48 Slutsky, *Sefer toldot ha-haganah*, 803–4; Niv, *Maarkhot ha-irgun ha-tsvai ha-leumi*, 2: 35–42; Naor, *David Raziell*, 102–7. On the expression “Black Sunday” with regard to the events of Nov. 14, albeit with an opposing connotation—Black Day—for the Arabs, see Niv, *Maarkhot ha-irgun ha-tsvai ha-leumi*, 2: 29, 37, 41.
- 49 “Yom damim ehrid et Yerushalayim,” *Ha-arets*, Nov. 15, 1937.
- 50 In this connection, see Eliezer Don-Yehiya, “Dat ve-teror politi: Hayahadut ha-datit u-peulot ha-tagmul bi-tekufat ha-meoraot,” *Ha-tsiyonut* 17 (1993): 155–90 (esp. 173–75), and Hilda Schatzberger, *Meri u-masoret be-erets yisrael bi-tekufat ha-mandat* (Ramat Gan, 1985), 41–46.
- 51 Minutes of Jewish Agency Executive meeting, Nov. 14, 1937, CZA.
- 52 Anita Shapira, “Bein havlagah le-teror: Ha-kinus ha-yishuvi be-yuli 1938,” *Ha-tsiyonut* 6 (1981): 390; A. Steinman, “Al parashat ha-yamim,” *Davar*, Aug. 5, 1938.
- 53 Minutes of Jewish Agency Executive, Nov. 14 and 15, 1937, CZA. Ben-Gurion managed to obtain support for the arrest of IZL members only in Nov. 1944, after the murder of Britain’s colonial minister, Lord Walter Moyne, by two members of the Lehi Organization (the splinter group that broke off from the IZL in 1940).
- 54 “La-yishuv ha-yehudi ba-arets: Hodaat hanhalat ha-sokhnut ha-yehudit,” *Davar* and *Ha-arets*, Nov. 16, 1937 (my emphasis).
- 55 Minutes of Jewish Agency Executive, Nov. 15, 1937, CZA.
- 56 Slutsky, *Sefer toldot ha-haganah*, 801; Niv, *Maarkhot ha-irgun ha-tsvai ha-leumi*, 2: 90; Naor, *David Raziell*, 121–22.
- 57 Shapira, *Land and Power*, 252; Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (Bloomington, Ind., 1998), 23–25.
- 58 Minutes of the limited Zionist Executive Committee, June 27, 1939, CZA. Emphasizing “purity of arms” also helped to draw a clear distinction between the Haganah operations and those used by the British Army in order to crush the Arab Revolt. For the brutal British tactics, see Jacob Norris, “Repression and Rebellion: Britain’s Response to the Arab Revolt in Palestine of 1936–1939,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (2008): 25–45, esp. 33–37.
- 59 Slutsky, *Sefer toldot ha-haganah*, 849–50.
- 60 Berl Katznelson, “Protokol ha-kongres ha-tsyoni ha-kaf-alef,” *Ktavim* (Tel Aviv, 1948), 65–66.

- 61 Baruch Kimmerling, "Militarizm ba-hevrah ha-yisreelit," *Teoryah u-vikoret*, no. 4 (1993): 123–40 (esp. 127–30).
- 62 Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars, 1949–1956* (Oxford, 1993), 173–77, 261–62, 420.
- 63 On Deir Yassin, see Benny Morris, "The Historiography of Deir Yassin," *Journal of Israeli History* 24, no. 1 (Mar. 2005): 79–107. On Qibya, see Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, 244–62. On Kafr Kassem, see Ruvik Rosental, ed., *Kafr Kassem: Eruim u-mitos* (Tel Aviv, 2000).
- 64 Avraham Shapira, ed., *The Seventh Day: Soldiers' Talk about the Six Day War* (Harmondsworth, 1971); Moshe Dayan, *Avnei derekh* (Tel Aviv, 1976), 115.
- 65 Shapira, *Land and Power*, 235–42.
- 66 Compare Luz, *Maavak be-nahal yabok*, 346–47, and Zvi Zameret, "Hinukh ha-lohamim ve-hasheifah le-shalom al pi David Ben-Gurion," in *Shalom u-milhamah ba-tarbut ha-yehudit*, ed. Avriel Bar-Levav (Jerusalem, 2006), 328–29.
- 67 Ben-Gurion letter to Moshe Shertok, Aug. 18, 1936, Ben-Gurion Diaries, BGA. Shertok read this at a meeting of the Mapai Central Committee on Aug. 24, 1936, BGA.
- 68 Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate*, 3–7; Bowden, "Politics of the Arab Rebellion," 166–69; Eyal, *Ha-intifadah ha-rishonah*, 386–99, 408–18.

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*The Dispute in
Mapai*



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