

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

Yet there were those who knew there was cause for misgivings. Samuel had after all held office as British home secretary, and something could be learned from his performance there. The weekly *Spectator* expressed doubts about his capacity as an administrator. It described him as “timid and weak-hearted.” The *Jewish Chronicle*, though it welcomed his appointment with great enthusiasm, recalled and warned Samuel against a significant failing:

So anxious was Mr. Samuel when he was Home Secretary to show that he did not favor his fellow Jews that, as it fell to our lot to point out at the time on more than one occasion ... he went out of his way where Jews were involved to act rather to their prejudice than in strict justice.

Another keen observer who did not receive the appointment with unmixed pleasure was the novelist Israel Zangwill. He knew, he later revealed, “what a weak man” Samuel was and wrote to him urgently before he went out to Palestine “that the line of least resistance was not the right line for a great people.”

Source: Lone Wolf Vol. 1, Shmuel Katz, Barricade Books, New York, 1996, p. 667-668.

**Document B: “*Diary Entry*”, Col. Richard Meinertzhagen
(April 27, 1921)**

When in the Colonial Office I heard that Herbert Samuel had appointed Haj Amin al Husseini as Mufti of Jerusalem. His predecessor died last February. I had trouble with the man when I was in Jerusalem for with the connivance of Ronald Storrs [Military Governor of Jerusalem] and [Col.] Waters-Taylor [financial adviser to the Palestine administration] he was conducting violent anti-Zionist propoganda and during the Easter riots of 1920 he delivered incendiary speeches not only against the Jews but against the British, fled to Transjordan and was sentenced during his absence to ten years imprisonment, but later returned to Jerusalem on receiving an amnesty; I had much documentary evidence against Storrs and Waters-Taylor proving up to the hilt that he was receiving encouragement from these two highly placed officials, but [Military High Commissioner Edmund] Allenby declined to use it. And now he is in a position where he can do untold harm to Zionism and to the British; he hates both Jews and British. His appointment is sheer madness. I am particularly annoyed about this as before I left Palestine in 1920, I left a memorandum with Samuel warning him of appointing the man when it was obvious his predecessor was in failing health and also warning him that Storrs would press for his appointment purely on the grounds of hostility to Zionism.

Haj Amin is a strong character and if given a chance could do great harm; he is very ambitious, quite unscrupulous and grossly dishonest; sooner or later his appointment will be bitterly regretted by us.

Source: Middle East Diary 1917-1956, Col. Richard Meinertzhagen, Thomas Yoseloff Publisher, New York, 1959, p. 97.

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

Herbert Samuel had been High Commissioner for about a year, but there was already noticeable, in the Congress discussions, the beginnings of the disappointment, and even bitterness, which his regime was to inspire. I myself felt that he had not had a real chance yet, but three things had happened which gave rise to uneasiness.

First there had been his handling of the riots of May 1921, which I have already mentioned. Desirous of starting his work as peaceably as possible, Samuel’s reaction to the riots had been to stop immigration, and this decision had been announced at a gathering of Arab notables in Ramleh. Both the decision, and the form of its announcement, came as a severe shock to Jews everywhere. Immigrants already within sight of the shores of Palestine were not allowed to land.

Source: Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann, Chaim Weizmann, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1949, p. 275.

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

[Herbert Samuel] needed no briefing on the known enemies of Zionism and the Balfour Declaration. He knew them all. He was certainly acutely aware of the experience of the Jewish community with those officials, and he was privy to all the information in the hands of the Zionist Organization on the subject. He himself had been so outraged by the anti-Jewish behavior of the most senior of them, Ronald Storrs, governor of Jerusalem, that already in 1919 he had gone to Sir Ronald Graham in the Foreign Office to complain about him.

Now, without even a word of admonition, he reinstated him as governor of Jerusalem – eliciting from an astonished Storrs fulsome phrases of thanks for the trust and confidence Samuel was reposing in him. Storrs, however, a resourceful and subtle man, at once exploited the advantageous relationship he was being granted by this timid Jewish chief. ...

To Storrs and indeed to all the echelons of the administration, Samuel’s acts in the first weeks of his office made it plain that he would not enforce the principle that servants of His Majesty’s Government were expected to act in harmony with the government’s policy. On the contrary, hostility to Zionism and anti-Jewish conduct would be no bar to the confidence of superiors or, presumably, to promotion. ...

A post that had to be filled was that of political advisor. The Foreign Office official recommended by [Wyndham] Deedes was found to be unavailable; whereupon Storrs instantly proposed to Samuel the appointment of one Earnest Tatham Richmond.

Richmond was not a political officer; he was an architect by profession, and his only experience in public service was in the field of restoration of ancient buildings. He was, however, an old friend of Storrs; they had shared an apartment in Egypt, and in Jerusalem they again shared a house. Samuel promptly recommended Richmond’s appointment to the Foreign Office, and by October 1920, he was installed in the post.

Richmond lost no time in promoting his ideas ...

The year after his appointment, Richmond was involved in a quarrel with the Colonial Office over his status; and the Colonial Office officials reacted

brusquely by urging that this was an excellent opportunity of getting rid of him – on the grounds both of professional inadequacy and of his hostility to Zionism, to the Balfour Declaration and to Jews in general. Samuel, however, defended him stoutly as being of great value in his relations with the Arab community; and it was only late in 1923 that he finally admitted, after reading a characteristically virulent memorandum composed by Richmond, that he found it “difficult for Richmond to remain in the administration.”

When Richmond finally resigned, after playing a major role, together with Storrs, in shaping Samuel’s policy during the first three-and-a-half crucial years of the mandate, he wrote Samuel a letter in which he declared defiantly that the Zionist Commission, the Middle Eastern Department of the Colonial Office and Samuel’s administration were “dominated and inspired by a spirit which I can only regard as evil” and that his opposition to these policies was “not merely political, but moral or even religious.”

Source: Lone Wolf Vol. 1, Shmuel Katz, Barricade Books, New York, 1996, p. 716-718.

Document E: “A History of Zionism”, Walter Laqueur (1972)

But there was another aspect to the 1922 White Paper. While not explicitly opposing the idea of a Jewish state, it ‘redeemed the Balfour promise in depreciated currency’, to quote a contemporary British source. Its aim was to appease both the Arabs and the opposition in Westminster, made up largely of right-wing Tories. It stated that His Majesty’s government had no intention of Palestine becoming ‘as Jewish as England is English’ and that the special position of the Zionist executive did not entitle it to share in any degree in the government of the country. Immigration, moreover, was not to exceed the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals. Churchill promised that the mandatory government would move towards representative institutions and self-government. A legislative council with a majority of elected members was to be set up immediately, but full self-government was a long way off; ‘Our children’s children will have passed away before this is completed.’ Lastly, and almost unnoticed at the time, Transjordan was separated from Palestine and became a semi-independent state under Emir Abdullah.

The White Paper placated the opposition at home, but the Arabs were not appeased, and continued to refuse to cooperate with the mandatory authorities.

Source: A History of Zionism, Walter Laqueur, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1972, p. 454-455.

**Document F: “A History of Zionism”, Howard M. Sachar
(1976)**

“It must be realized once and for all,” declared the [Passfield] White Paper, “that it is useless for Jewish leaders ... to press His Majesty’s Government to conform to their policy in regard ... to immigration and land, to the aspirations of the more uncompromising sections of Zionist opinion. That would be to ignore the equally important duty of the Mandatory Power towards the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine.” While observing that “it is equally useless for Arab leaders to maintain their demands for [majority rule],” the document proceeded to skewer virtually every Zionist hope for the future. “There remains no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by the new immigrants,” it asserted, “with the exception of such undeveloped lands as the various Jewish agencies hold in reserve.” Jewish immigration must be suspended, too, as long as extensive unemployment in Palestine continued.

The Passfield White Paper went much further than the Churchill White Paper of 1922, for it appeared to repudiate the very purpose of the Balfour Declaration and the terms of the San Remo award. It foreshadowed serious immigration restrictions and threatened the Jews with an embargo on additional purchases of land. More significantly yet, it commented upon the work of the Jews in Palestine in disparaging terms, omitting altogether to credit the Zionists for the benefits they had conferred upon the country and all its peoples.

Vocabulary

San Remo: The San Remo Conference where Allied Powers agreed to put Palestine under British Mandatory rule during discussions held in San Remo, Italy in April 1920.

Source: A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time, Howard M. Sachar, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1976, p. 176-177.