

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

While it was not said in so many words, the general impression created by the [Passfield] White Paper was that the building of the Jewish national home had more or less ended as far as Britain was concerned; its continued growth was to depend on Arab consent. The Zionist executive, with rare understatement, said the White Paper was a reinterpretation of the mandate in a manner highly prejudicial to Jewish interests...

The publication of Lord Passfield’s statement of policy provoked intense indignation throughout the Jewish world. Weizmann tendered his resignation from the Jewish Agency, as did Felix Warburg and Lord Melchett. For the first time the Jewish leaders had not been kept informed of London’s plans, and while it was known that Passfield was totally out of sympathy with Zionism, they had thought that there was at a least a certain measure of goodwill among some of his colleagues. ...

When the White Paper was discussed in Parliament on 18 November, Passfield found the going rough. Conservative and Liberal spokesmen attacked it as a breach of trust and contract. ... Under pressure from all sides, the government decided to modify its policy. It could not, for obvious reasons, withdraw the White Paper but the bureaucrats knew a way out of the dilemma; just as the White Paper had been an interpretation of the Churchill declaration of 1922, it was decided to issue a new document to serve as an authoritative interpretation of the Passfield White Paper. A committee composed of members of the government and representatives of the Jewish Agency, after lengthy deliberations, reached agreement on essential points, and made the outcome public in the form of a letter from Ramsay MacDonald to Weizmann.

*Source: A History of Zionism, Walter Laqueur, Schocken Books, New York, 1976 (originally published 1972), p. 492-493.*

**Document B: “Excerpt of Letter to J.H. Thomas, British Secretary for the Dominions”, Chaim Weizmann (February 6, 1931)**

Were the government to stop at the point now reached, the work of the first cabinet committee would, at the very best, have served to rectify a mistake of the Colonial Office. And I say “at the very best” – for were the cabinet to leave the decision on problems of future policy to those responsible for the White Paper of October 1930, it seems certain that they would revert to their previous policy and methods, with results even more serious and more difficult to repair. They have been overruled by the cabinet and by the first cabinet committee; this has not made them feel any more friendly towards us, and we have had by now some unmistakable signs of what we have to expect from them in the future ...

“I beg you to use all your influence to secure a further cabinet committee to deal with the big problems of policy in Palestine.”

*Source: Lone Wolf: A Biography of Vladimir “Ze’ev” Jabotinsky Vol. 2, Shmuel Katz, Barricade Books, New York, 1996, p.1242.*

## Document C: *“The Rape of Palestine”*, William B. Ziff (1938)

The Administration's sympathy for 'landless' Arabs went an amazing distance. ...

Even when Jews bought areas on which the Government felt it had a lien, it exacted its pound of flesh. A case in point is the Huleh basin, consisting of 12,000 acres of miasmatic swamp. This suppurating area had polluted the country, for generations back, with malaria and dysentery. The job of draining it would ordinarily be regarded by any other government as a task incumbent on itself. Instead, the Palestine Administration granted concession rights for reclamation of the area to two Syrian merchants, renewing the concession in 1924 and again in 1927, though the Syrians made no attempt to proceed with the work and were evidently not in a position to undertake a development project of this magnitude. It was only after years of procrastination on the part of the Government that the Jewish Palestine Land Development Company was able to secure official approval to take over the concession rights. As the price of its consent the Government stipulated that when the work was finished, one-third of the new land would have to be handed over for Bedouin settlement. It was necessary to pay the original foreign concessionaires £200,000, a sum which could only be considered in the light of a gift. This was in 1935. In 1938 the Government was still quibbling over the text of the concession. It also has mysteriously withheld decision on a number of minor points arising from an engineering report made several years previously. These dilatory tactics have effectually prevented any progress being made in the work of reclamation, which is thus shunted into the indefinite future. ...

Having devised the 'landless Arab' thesis, it was only a short step to the principle that the Arab must be protected against himself and saved from exploitation by the Jew who would take his land away from him. For this purpose there was introduced a series of ordinances so plainly meant to prevent Jews from acquiring land in their National Home that were ten percent of them introduced into England, and directed at Englishmen, an armed revolution would follow.

But Zionist spokesmen had been used to the rope's end too long to be able to react with anything resembling normal indignation. They recognized helplessly that they were being victimized, but saw nothing else to it but to smirk ingratiatingly on their tor-

mentors. Once more it is grizzled old Menachem Ussishkin who growls like a lone wolf to the British Government : "Since you have given your consent to the establishment of a Jewish National Home, you must have realized that it is impossible to build on anything but on the land. We have paved every field and marsh with gold, but you, instead of helping us, have piled stones in our way and have made the country into a hell." [JTA News, January 27, 1937]

*Source: The Rape of Palestine, William B. Ziff, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1938, p. 259-261*

## Document D: “A History of Israel”, Howard Sachar (1976)

On July 1, 1937, when the general outline of the Peel Report was known, although before it was actually published, [German] Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath issued special instructions to German legations in the Middle East:

The formation of a Jewish state or a Jewish-led political structure under a British Mandate is not in Germany’s interest, since a Palestinian state would not absorb world Jewry, but would create an additional position of power under international law for international Jewry, somewhat like the Vatican state for political Catholicism or Moscow for the Comintern. ... Germany therefore has an interest in strengthening the Arab world as a counterweight against such a possible increase in power for world Jewry.

In July, the Mufti visited the local German consul-general in Jerusalem to declare his own admiration for the new Germany, and to solicit German friendship in return. In September, Syrian nationalists approached Franz Seiler, the German consul in Beirut, with a request for German weapons to be shipped to the Arab rebels in Palestine. ... These appeals did not go unanswered. Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, chief of German military intelligence, allocated limited subventions to the Mufti. Quantities of weapons from the Suhl and Erfurter Gewehrfabrik works were dispatched to Palestine by way of Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

### **Vocabulary**

Subvention: the furnishing of aid.

Source: *A History of Israel From The Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, Howard Sachar, Alfred A. Knopf, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New York, 2007 (First published 1976), p. 210-211.

**Document E: “Orde Wingate: Father of the IDF”, Michael Oren (2006)**

[Capt. Orde] Wingate urged Britain to “advance the foundation of an autonomous Jewish community with all the means in its power,” adding portentously: “For pity’s sake, let us do something just and honorable before it [world war] comes. Let us redeem our promises to Jewry and shame the devil of Nazism, Fascism, and our own prejudices.” ...

With [Gen. Archibald] Wavell’s approval, Wingate set up the Special Night Squads, a mixed force of British officers and Jewish supernumeraries. Headquartered at Kibbutz Ein Harod in the Jezreel Valley, close to the spring where the biblical Gideon – Wingate’s hero – had his camp, the SNS succeeded in all but ending Arab attacks in the north. An entire generation of future IDF commanders would learn their tactics from Wingate...

For the British army, though, it was not Wingate’s excesses that proved insufferable but his advocacy of, and success with, the Jews. Thus, when Wingate requested home leave to London a few weeks after he was wounded at Dabburiya (and in the wake of narrowly escaping assassination at the hands of Arab assailants), his superiors were only too happy to comply. It was October 1938, the time of the Munich Conference and Britain’s sellout of Czechoslovakia, and of the beginning of Britain’s final retreat from the promises of the Balfour Declaration. Wingate took advantage of his time in London to lobby tirelessly for the Zionist cause. He urged the Zionist leadership to present Britain with an ultimatum – either honor its pledges or forget the Jews’ loyalty – and argued the Zionist case in the press and before Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald. Returning to Palestine in December, he found himself barred from further contact with the SNS, which was disbanded soon thereafter, and transferred back to Britain.

*Source: New Essays on Zionism, Edited by David Hazony, Yoram Hazony and Michael B. Oren, Shalem Press, Jerusalem, 2006, p. 395-396.*

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

The White Paper, published on 17 May 1939, consisted of a preface and three main sections dealing with constitutional issues, immigration and land respectively. It repeated that it was the objective of H.M. government that an independent state should come into being within the next 10 years. Some 75,000 immigrants were to be admitted over the next five years. After that, from 1 March 1944, immigration was to be permitted only with the consent of the Arabs. Moreover, Jewish settlement was to be prohibited altogether in certain parts of Palestine and to be restricted in others. In all essential points the White Paper thus followed the British plan communicated to the Zionist leaders during the St James conference. Reacting immediately, the Jewish Agency said that the White Paper was a denial of the right of the Jewish people to rebuild their national home in their ancestral country, a breach of faith, a surrender to Arab nationalism.

*Source: A History of Zionism, Walter Laqueur, Schocken Books, New York, 1976 (originally published 1972), p. 344.*

## Document G: “Chaim Weizmann”, Norman Rose (1972)

Ever since the German absorption of Austria in March [1938], the Germans, through their surrogates, the Sudeten German Nazi Party, had been threatening the unity of Czechoslovakia by demanding greater autonomy, in fact annexation to Germany, for the Sudeten areas of Czechoslovakia, which bordered on Germany and which contained some three million ethnic Germans. The danger that the Czech crisis might spill over into a European war was uppermost in the minds of the [British] cabinet, and to avert that catastrophe they had not hesitated to pressure the Czech government into making concessions to the Nazis. Within this context, the Palestine problem was more than just a minor irritant, for the British were holding down almost as many troops in Palestine as they could offer to France in the event of European war. Moreover, in the Mediterranean the Italians were undermining the British position, while in the Far East the Japanese, now at war with China, were threatening vital British interests. British resources were stretched dangerously thin. The imperatives of imperial policy dictated cutting obligations outside Europe to a bare minimum at the least political cost. Naturally, the British would have preferred to reach an agreement with their disputatious partners, but if this should prove impossible – and by now it was clear that the obstacles were virtually insurmountable – they would not balk at behaving toward the Zionists as they had behaved toward the Czechs. ...

[The Zionists] suffered no illusions as to the intentions of the British government, and they comprehended fully the motives pushing it forward – though they rejected them outright. They argued cogently that the British consistently exaggerated the Arab threat to their security and underestimated the contribution the Zionists could make to imperial defence.

*Source: Chaim Weizmann, Norman Rose, Elisabeth Sifton Books, Viking Penguin, New York, 1986, p. 337-351.*