

Herbert Samuel's Policy and Its Impact on Preparing for the Establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine 1920-1925

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Abstract

This study aims at highlighting the policy followed by Herbert Samuel in Palestine as one of the most important British Jewish leaders who played an important role in establishing the national homeland for the Jewish in Palestine, and as the first high commissioner for Britain in Palestine during the period (1920 - 1925) and the effect of this policy in paving the road for the suitable conditions to establish the national home for the Jews in Palestine which is seen through Herbert Samuel's early interest of Palestine during the period (1914-1915), and the laws which he used in different aspects during his rule in Palestine that went side by side with the British policy in Palestine and focused on two main things: opening the door for immigration to Palestine and enabling them to own the land there in preparation for the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine.

Keywords: Herbert Samuel ; Middle East ; Palestine ; British Mandate ; Jewish National Home.

Introduction

Britain was one of the most important countries that sponsored the establishment of the Jewish state on all political, economic and social levels. This has become clear and effective since it imposed its mandate on Palestine in 1920. The British Mandate policy on Palestine was the basis for the establishment of the State of Israel in occupied Palestine which was implemented with the arrival of Herbert Samuel to Palestine, who was appointed as the first High Commissioner to Palestine. He was considered one of the British Jewish personalities who played an important role in preparing the ground for the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine, and who stayed in this position from 1920 to 1925. The importance of writing about this period emerges as it represents the beginning of the official presence of the Jews in Palestine, and thus the beginning of the preparations for the establishment of the State of Israel through Herbert Samuel's issuance of many laws and legislations that ensured the establishment of this state in Palestine. This research dealt with the policy of Herbert Samuel, by first showing the British Mandate policy represented by him, which is seen in enacting laws and legislations that encouraged Jews to immigrate to Palestine, and granting them large areas of the state lands in it, as well as facilitating their arrival to the Palestinian Arab lands through the land laws that he issued for this purpose, so he confirmed for them the contracts of the land and the people and legalized their presence in Palestine, granted them the right to obtain Palestinian citizenship as original citizens, not as strangers in the country, and enabled them to obtain sources of wealth in it through the privileges that were granted to them.

Preface

It is known that before 1917, Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire, where part of which was subordinate to the Wilayat 'state' of Syria and the other part to the Wilayat of Beirut. As for Jerusalem and its environs, due to its religious position for the three religions, it is made Mutasarrifiya affiliated with the Sublime Porte (1) and after the British military forces, led by General Allenby, entered Palestine in July 1917 and occupied it, these forces entered the city of Jerusalem on 11/12/1917(2). All of Palestine was placed under the military administration, which had the name of the "Southern Administration of the Enemy Occupied Countries" and had a director residing in Jerusalem and was subject to Lord Allenby. The British pointed General Clayton to the position of the Director General of the Southern Administration in 1917 (2). After occupying the city of Jerusalem in December 1917, the Zionists increased their activity and decided to transfer this activity into Palestine as they were encouraged by the British Ministry to implement this practical approach from the point of view of the colonial and Zionist powers (3). On February 18, 1918, the British government announced, through a statement delivered by Balfour, the minister of foreign affairs in the House of Commons, that the British government responded to the request of the Zionist Organization in London to allow the Zionists to send a committee of Zionist experts to Palestine in order to supervise the implementation of the Balfour Declaration by themselves (4). The committee which was headed by the British Zionist Chaim Weizmann arrived in Palestine in April 1918. It received British care and attention, as this was represented by the meeting of the King of Britain to the chairman of the committee Weizmann before its leaving to Palestine(5), which made the British military administration in Palestine, and based on orders received by Allenby from the British Ministry of War in April 1918, which called for compliance with the wishes of the Jews and obeying the orders of the Zionist Committee to immediately provide all the necessary facilities and allow them to move within the country and carry out the necessary studies and investigations. The committee had become the reference for the ruling administration (6). The military administration also contributed to laying the foundation stone for establishing the alleged homeland, and to start implementing of what is known as the Balfour Declaration (7). It followed this approach until the fate of Palestine was decided at the peace conference in Paris.

First. Appointing Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner in Palestine

The Zionist demands were presented to the peace conference in Paris, where the fate of Palestine was decided in it by turning it into a British colony and then into a mandated entity. In the interest of the Allied countries to be committed to implementing the Balfour Declaration and establishing the national home for the Jews, these countries entrusted at the San Remo conference in Italy on April 25, 1920, Britain, the holder of the promise, to run Palestine and place it under the British mandate (8). Immediately after obtaining the approval of the allied powers on the mandate, the British government, under the pressure from the Zionist organization, represented by its president Chaim Weizmann, offered Herbert Samuel, who attended the San Remo conference, the post of High Commissioner in Palestine (9), who, after hesitating, announced his acceptance of the position after consulting Weizmann, who advised him to accept that (10), and immediately the British government began the procedures of transforming the military administration in Palestine into a civil one (11). In

line with the Zionist goals, Lloyd George issued a decree appointing Samuel at the head of this administration as the supreme delegate in Palestine in mid-June 1920(12) provided that he works sincerely in order to achieve the real purpose of the mandate and implement the policy of Judaization and the eliminate the Arab identity of Palestine in preparation for the establishment of the national home for the Jews, which he was proud of while he was in London (13). Samuel, a Jew who was biased to Zionism, took over the responsibility of government there as the first British High Commissioner to Palestine on the first day of July 1920, and continued there until 1925 (14). Weizmann commented on Samuel's appointment by saying, "We who appointed him as a High Commissioner, and I am responsible for appointing Herbert Samuel in Palestine, this Samuel is our Samuel" (15). The mandate project was announced by the League of Nations on July 6, 1921, ratified on July 24, 1922, and put into execution on September 29, 1923 (16). Thus, Britain gained a legal and international right in the country and became able to exercise all the powers conferred upon it by the virtue of the mandate instrument (17), which came to express the colonial conspiracy which aimed at eliminating the Arabism of Palestine (18). The British policy in Palestine went in contrast to the traditional policy followed by the colonial countries, including Britain in the colonies and countries that were subject to its mandate, that was based in the first place, according to the texts of the other mandates' instruments, on developing the institutions of self-governance for those countries and making them in conditions that enable their peoples to declare their independence which was already done in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Transjordan (19). Britain began to implement its drawn policy for Palestine after the announcement of the decisions of the Supreme Council of the Allies in San Remo 1920(20), which was primarily the implementation of the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of the Jewish national home through the civil administration headed by the English Jew and one of the leaders of the Zionist movement "Herbert Samuel" as a sublime delegate to His Majesty King George V in Palestine (21). It is worth noting that Samuel participated in most of the Zionist projects that were put forward since the beginning of the First World War (22) and he was a Zionist inclination and tendencies where these tendencies undoubtedly were a major reason for his appointment, according to what Herbert Samuel recorded in his memoirs (23). He played an important role in drawing British policy upon assuming various positions in successive British governments, where he previously submitted a memorandum to the British government represented by Foreign Minister Edward Gray, whom he met in November 1914 about the future of Palestine, in which he proposed the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine under the supervision of Britain that would be close to Egypt and supportive of Britain there. In 1915 he repeated this again with Prime Minister Asquith through a new memorandum he prepared on the 28th of January 1915 bearing the name "the future of Palestine" (24) in which he tried to entice the British authorities to accept his proposal, and pointed out the colonial, economic and political benefits which Britain will gain from its control over Palestine, and from the Jewish state that is proposed to be established there (25). This memorandum was considered the first project to establish a Jewish state in Palestine under the British protection. Accordingly, those interested in the Jewish question attributed the credit to Herbert Samuel who raised the question of Palestine at an early period and at the highest levels of the British government, and linked its solution to the Jewish question. They also consider this memorandum to be the prelude to the issuance

of the Balfour declaration in which Samuel played a major role (26) as well as his role in placing Palestine under the British Mandate, through his chairmanship of the special committee for formulating of the Zionist wishes, and writing a draft of the Zionist proposals, which was submitted to the peace conference in Paris on February 3, 1919, after which Palestine turned into a crown colony and then into an entity under the British mandate (27). Before Samuel left London for Palestine to carry out the burden of responsibility he was assigned to, he published a statement in the English newspapers explaining the general features of his policy in Palestine (28).

Second: Herbert Samuel in Palestine

Samuel arrived in Palestine on June 30, 1920, to take over on the first day of July 1920, the responsibility as the first High Commissioner for Britain in Palestine, although the peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire was not signed until August 10, 1920 in Sevres), as well as the Mandate for Palestine, which was delayed and was not put into effect until September 29, 1923 (29).

Upon his arrival, he announced the end of the military rule (1917-1920) in it and the establishment of a civilian government headed by him that affiliates directly to the British Colonies Ministry. It was called the "Palestine Government" with its headquarter in Jerusalem (30). After that and on the seventh of July 1920 in Jerusalem and in the presence of representatives of the different sects, Herbert Samuel delivered the official statement issued in the name of George V, King of Britain, in which he affirmed the "absolute integrity to be followed by the Mandatory Powers" and the determination of "his government to respect the rights of all races and all faiths represented in Palestine"(31). Then he pointed out his intention to take the necessary measures to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine in stages, and claimed that these measures would help in reviving the country and developing it economically. Then, he talked about the projects that he intends to carry out in the country, which cannot be implemented without other people coming from abroad, and accordingly, ports and borders will soon be opened for a limited number of immigrants who are suitable for the work they need, and he promised to soon issue an order to put the immigration status under the government control, and set the conditions under which immigrants are allowed to enter the country (32). In order to facilitate the implementation of Zionist plans, Samuel began enacting many laws and regulations, and also laid the administrative and legislative foundations that ensured the establishment of the foundations of the Jewish national home (39). The first statement issued by him was made upon his arrival in front of senior British government officials, in which he said, "The policy of his government that he came to implement is to encourage the Jews to have control over the country in order to be able to establish a Jewish state. (33)"

Second: Herbert Samuel and his Judaization policy

1- Judaizing government institutions

Herbert Samuel has worked since he arrived in Palestine in accordance with the policy set for him, as he became a civil ruler of Palestine, and began to take measures that facilitate the declaration of the Jewish state in it, and thus the Jewish state in Palestine actually exists, because the supreme authority always ends with this High Commissioner (34). In order to

enhance the Jewish control over Palestine, he worked to establish a government system on the basis that it was the system of a British colony that is prepared to be governed by the Jews to take over its ruling and to have full participation in this preparation as well(35), according to item two of the Mandate for Palestine (36). Accordingly, Samuel sought the assistance of a civil administration system that satisfies the Jews, implements their purposes and achieves their goals, so he appointed persons at the head of its main branches of the Zionist Jews who hold British citizenship or are British Christians who are known to be enthusiastic of Zionism and who believe in (the right of the Jews in Palestine) and who are keen to implement Britain's policy in Palestine and work to give it the Jewish-Zionist shape (37). This was also the case with the police force, which consisted of Englishmen, Jews and Arabs (38). Of the most prominent people who worked with Herbert Samuel in his new government, which was called the Government of Palestine, and helped him in implementing this policy, the Judicial Secretary (later Attorney General), the English Zionist Jew Norman Bentwich, who was specialized in judicial and legal affairs which included for a period of time the supervision of the Sharia courts. Bentwich was also the legislator of state laws, and was considered one of the most dangerous Jewish figures appointed by Samuel, who, according to Chaim Weizmann, was the representative of the Zionist Union in London in 1916 (39) as he mentioned in his memoirs. Samuel gave him the freedom to set laws and regulations and to enact and implement the necessary legislation for Palestine (40). It is worth mentioning that Samuel made Hebrew an official language alongside English and Arabic, ignoring the majority of the country's Arab and Muslim population (41). As for the executive council, headed by Herbert Samuel, it was initially composed of three secretaries: the general secretary, who is the vice president and handles administration and county affairs, headed by the Zionist Jew, General Wyndham Deedes, the financial secretary, who is responsible for financial and economic affairs, headed by Somlod, and the judicial secretary, who was specialized in judicial and legal affairs and headed by Norman Bentwich. Accordingly, it is noticeable that all members of the executive council were Zionists, and it did not stop at this point, but that many government departments and under the direction of the High Commissioner were also headed by English Jews. Thus we could notice that Samuel has set up a system that the Jews were satisfied with and implemented the wishes of most of his employees, as we explained previously by the British Jews Zionists, especially the sensitive and important positions. Many of these employees admitted that they did not work in the administration as neutral employees, but as Zionists serving the Zionist purposes (42), while Samuel did not employ any of the Muslim and Christian Arabs in the important positions and made low and minor jobs available for all Palestinians without distinction (43).

2- Employing the laws of the country to serve the Jewish national home

Hundreds of laws were enacted during the reign of Samuel that limited the activity of the Arabs, protected the Jews, facilitated their immigration to Palestine, put the main sources of wealth and exploitation in their hands, and granted them facilities and privileges. This Jewish-Zionist colonial administration proceeded in its prescribed path, which provided the opportunity for the Jews to work on preparing Palestine administratively, politically, economically and legislatively in preparation for the success of the idea of establishing the Jewish national home and to make it the greatest possible success (44). During the era of

Samuel and his deputy, Bentwich, and with their efforts, the Jews bought the largest deals from the Palestinian lands at low prices, and the landmarks of dozens of Arab villages were removed and thousands of farmers were displaced from them under the knowledge of the English (45). During their reign, the Jews were granted economic and other privileges in the field of exploitation of natural and industrial resources, most notably that the Jew Pinhas Rothenberg, in February 1920, was given the privilege of generating electric power and lighting all over Palestine (46). The immigration department was also controlled and used to serve them, as the country's doors were opened wide for the Jewish immigrants so that they would become the majority and thus achieve what they aspired to (47). Then, Samuel presented the first gift to these invaders, the most fertile lands of Palestine, which has an area of (175,000 acres) of state-owned lands as a first payment without a price which were on the Palestinian coast between Haifa and Jaffa (48). They also supervised trade, and in this way, Samuel worked to put obstacles in the face of every progress of the Arabs, and with these laws he fought their economic progress, and deliberately impoverished them and fought by various means their national entity or their attempt to build it (49). Palestine, as we know, is an agricultural country, and the farmer is its mainstay. Most of the laws came against him with the aim of exhausting him and thus pushing him to give up his land. In this context, Samuel worked to deprive the Arabs of agricultural banks, as he issued on the first of March 1921 an order to liquidate and close the Agricultural Bank (50), which was the only bank in Palestine, which used to lend farmers long-term loans, which was established by the Ottoman government in 1863 for this purpose with capital collected from the peasants themselves, and Samuel had demanded that the peasants repay the loans they owed to the bank (51). This prompted these farmers to sell part of their lands so that they could pay their debts (52). This liquidation came with the aim of restricting the Arab farmer, and subjugating him to the Jewish banks that offered loans with very high interest rates (53). The Jews were eager to buy these lands from their owners, because they were the only ones who had money and were able to buy those lands, so the Mandate government gave them the justification for their presence in Palestine, where they became owners of the lands there (54).

Third. Jewish immigration in the era of Herbert Samuel

The Zionist invasion of Palestine, which began at the end of the nineteenth century, and which took the form of (waves of immigration), relied on the human element as one of its basic pillars. After Palestine became under the British Mandate, Britain began to implement its drawn policy for it, which was the preparing for the establishment of the national home for the Jews in Palestine. The mandate government prepared all the conditions for a large and orderly Jewish immigration and worked to open the door of Palestine to them. It also issued laws to encourage Jews to reside in Palestine and to obtain its nationality, and provided the necessary protection for immigration operations in accordance with article VI of the Mandate decree (55). The era of Samuel witnessed two waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine, the third and fourth between 1920-1925. In implementation of what was promised by Herbert Samuel in his speech in Jerusalem on July 7, 1920, in the same year, he granted the Zionists 175,000 acres to be exploited for the settlement of Zionist immigrants. On the first of September 1920, Herbert Samuel issued a decree establishing an immigration department, headed by the Zionist Jew, Albert A. Hayamson (56). Then he ordered the issuance of the first

immigration law on August 26, 1920 known as (The Immigration Law of 1920), according to which the Zionists were granted a passport and a certificate of being free of contagious diseases, thus immigration became under the supervision of the government. This law stipulated general rules, according to which the High Commissioner was given the right to identify immigrants from time to time based on the conditions and requirements of the country. Samuel issued an order specifying the number of needed immigrants at about 16,500 Jews annually, under the supervision of the Zionist Organization and based on the conditions and needs of the country. The law also specified the categories of those who are allowed to enter Palestine into the following categories (57):

- 1- Those whose maintenance is guaranteed by the Zionist Organization for a period of one year.
- 2- Those who have independent resources, and showed evidence of their ability to support themselves.
- 3- Clerics whose means of subsistence are available in Palestine.

Several amendments to the immigration law have been issued, which were not to restrict immigration, but rather to expand it (58).

Since Herbert Samuel, the prominent British Jewish political figure, was most interested in the idea of establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine, it is natural that this project requires a manpower capable of carrying out this matter. Therefore, Herbert Samuel worked to open the doors of immigration wide which led to an increase in the rates of Jewish immigration to Palestine during his reign where these percentages were constantly increasing. In 1921, it was 5.9%, then this percentage rose in 1922 to 10.1%, and in 1924 it reached 16.4% (59). On June 3, 1921, Herbert Samuel amended the immigration law of 1920, where this law opened the door broadly of immigration to the Jews. The members of the third wave of immigration played a major role in changing the social structure of the Zionists, who were able, at the end of this wave of immigration, to establish 23 new Zionist settlements including kibbutz, moshav, town, and a city (60). The fourth wave, was named Grabsky immigration, where its beginning was in 1924, was numbered 13,000 Zionist immigrants in that year, then the number increased to 33,800 in 1925, who were mostly of the middle class Polish Jews, and the officers of that wave exploited the capital which they brought with them in the establishment of small private projects, where this increase in the number of immigrants to the spread of unemployment in Palestine and the emergence of the economic crisis (61). From here we see that the Jewish immigration during the reign of Herbert Samuel was inversely proportional to the global Jewish immigration figures, while the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine increased during that period from 8,294 in 1921 to 66,34 in 1925 (62).

Fourth. Herbert Samuel and Palestinian Nationality

The Mandate government worked to provide the appropriate conditions for extensive Jewish immigration and residence in Palestine, as it worked to put in place a law that encourages Jews to do so. It also wanted these invaders to gain Palestinian citizenship, so it issued citizenship laws to facilitate the acquisition of the Palestinian citizenship for these immigrants, so that the Jews enjoyed the Palestinian citizenship in order to give them the right to buy Palestinian lands on the basis that they were citizens and not foreigners. The

issuance of citizenship laws came in fulfillment of the items of Article VII of the Mandate decree (63), which did not mention what is non-Jewish, and that what is intended is to grant the Jews residing in the country the Palestinian citizenship, and that all of this is related to the Government of Palestine, which was administered at that time by Herbert Samuel. The efforts of Herbert Samuel were a key factor in the issuance of the Palestinian Nationality Law of 1925. In some cases, the High Commissioner was empowered to grant citizenship even if the period of residence of the naturalization applicant in the country was not available (64).

Thus, the law opened wide and multiple doors to obtain Palestinian citizenship, which led to an increase in the number of Jews in Palestine. Therefore, it was not surprising that the report of the Royal Committee indicated that the “Jewish National Home” became manifest in 1925 in all the basic features that distinguish it (65), which made Mr. Amery, the Minister of Colonies, praises Herbert Samuel and his deeds in Palestine in the speech he delivered on 27/7/1925 before the British House of Commons, on the occasion of the end of his service in Palestine where Plumer assumed the post of High Commissioner instead of him (66).

Fifth. Herbert Samuel's policy of land acquisition

The Mandate Authority issued a series of laws and made a number of measures with the aim of encouraging the Zionist colonization of the lands of Palestine and to reduce the size of ownership for the Arabs and worked to displace them from their lands. When looking at the departments of interest and relationship to lands, which were responsible for providing the second component of the homeland, which is the land, we find that Samuel has appointed the British James Stubbs in charge of the lands department (67), while the Lands Settlement Department which was responsible for sorting out the lands and the registration of their ownership was headed by the Jew Frederick Soulmon. Britain has linked to the head of the settlement department and its members the future of the Arab lands of Palestine (68).

The first step taken by Herbert Samuel regarding the transfer of lands was the abolition of all Ottoman laws and regulations that prevented the Jews from owning immovable property in Palestine and replacing them with new laws that help the Zionists to achieve their goals and ambitions, the most important of which are:

1.Land Transfer Law No. (39) of 1920.

Herbert Samuel issued this law in September 1920, which was issued to apply its items to all immovable property covered by the items of the Ottoman Land law issued in the year 1858 (69). This law stipulates the necessity of obtaining the approval of the government for anyone who wishes to dispose of immovable property, and that is stipulated should be in written text. The sixth article of the law stipulated that whoever wants to own real estate in Palestine must be the owner or the tenant residing in it, and that the area of the land he wants to own should not exceed three hundred acres outside the cities, but inside the cities it must not exceed 30 acres, regardless of its value (70). As for what exceeds that area, the conditions mentioned above do not apply to it. Therefore, Article 8 of the law granted the High Commissioner the power and authorities to exempt those conditions, as it allowed him to agree to the transfer of a land whose space exceeds what may be transferred, especially if he is convinced that such transfer is for the public interest, or fulfills another purpose for the public interest (71) ,and

accordingly article eight, with its exceptions, was in favor of the Zionists, so Samuel did not hesitate to agree to the transfer of lands to them.

2. He issued what is known as the law of correcting Tabu records, which was issued in its initial form immediately after the establishment of the Civil Administration on September 23, 1920, which was represented in canceling the orders issued in February 1918 during the military administration (72), where those orders related to stopping the registration and closing the "Tabu" department (73). Samuel ordered the opening of the Tabu Department to carry out its tasks under the supervision of the Jew Norman Bentwich, which made a gain that the Jews were able to obtain through it the right to supervise the ownership of Palestinian lands, as well as giving them the power to exchange land ownership records for whoever wanted them (74).

3- In April 1921, a law was issued known as the Amended Land Transfer Law No. 2, where the first article of it permitted the courts to order the sale of immovable property in fulfillment of a mortgage (75), and the amended law removed restrictions on the maximum area and value of the sold land, and on the purchasing by people who live outside Palestine. The danger of that law lied in the fact that many Arab lands were mortgaged to Zionist moneylenders, and as a result of the Palestinian farmer's inability to repay the loans he owed, the Zionist moneylenders would take the matter to the courts which order the expropriation of the mortgaged lands (76).

4- On May 1, 1921, Samuel ordered the issuing of a law for land courts and the establishment of "land courts," which were entrusted with looking into the ownership of land and the disputes arising from it. Supervision was assigned to the Zionist Judicial Secretary (Norman Bentwich) (77). The role of these courts was limited to expropriation, especially in the mortgaged lands (78). The courts played a large and important role, especially since large areas of Arab lands in Palestine were mortgaged to Jewish moneylenders.

On the eleventh of October 1920, within the framework of general legislation on land, Samuel issued the law of Dissolved Lands (79) in response to the demands of the Zionists at the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919, in which he affirmed that all lands that acquire the status of dissolved lands are transferred in their ownership to the state and it is the owner of first and last decision regarding it (80). On February 16, 1921, Herbert Samuel issued the dead lands law (81) which was issued to amend Article 103 of the Ottoman lands law. The British law on dead lands stipulated in its second article that "everyone who excavates in dead lands or cultivates them without obtaining the approval of the land administrator" who was at that time Abramson 'a well-known Zionist Jew' (82) he would not have the right to obtain a certificate for the land and would expose himself to trial for trespassing on the land. The government has taken this law as a means to deprive the Arab farmers of reclaiming the lands they used to occupy and granting them to the Jewish Agency free of charge, in implementation of Article VI of the Mandate Deed. (83), and Article Thirteen of the Palestine Constitution issued in August 1922 (97). At the end of the reign of Herbert Samuel in 1925, the Jews owned 1,019,574 acres of Palestinian land, compared to an area of 650,000 acres before 1920, that is, the period before Samuel took power in 1920. This indicates that the Mandate administration during the reign of Herbert Samuel worked to seize Arab lands in Palestine and facilitated the seizure of them by the Jews. Despite these measures, during the period of Herbert Samuel's delegate, the Jews were not able to buy more than 7% of the

agricultural lands in Palestine (85), as the lands that were sold to the Jews and transferred to them were not owned by Palestinian farmers, but were owned by some non-Palestinian Arab families (86).

Sixth. Herbert Samuel's policy of controlling the Palestinian economy

After Herbert Samuel finished his mission in the policy of Judaization that he followed in Palestine, through which the feet of the Jews were established, he worked to put the country in economic conditions that facilitate the economic control of the Jews over the resources of Palestine, through the issuance of laws protecting the Jewish industry and granting it different privileges and exemptions, in addition to high taxes that were imposed on imports from abroad which the Jews used to produce in their factories in Palestine, so a strong, protected Jewish industry emerged that soon controlled the markets of Palestine, then filled the markets of other Arab countries and crowded out or stifled their local industries (87)

While Samuel facilitated investment for the Jews, he sought every method to impoverish the Arabs and drive them away from the land, as he realized that the majority of farmers are interested in seasonal cultivation of grains or are concerned with olives and oil production. He encouraged the farmers to borrow from moneylenders, as they depend on high remunerative prices, whether in the trade of wheat or oil. Therefore, the British administration worked to flood the markets with the same goods from abroad, which led to cheap prices and consequently the farmers' inability to pay their debts, which led to the establishment of many reservations in which the farmers' crops were sold and then their lands were sold to pay the debts (88). The administration also increased customs duties on oils imported from abroad and allowed the import of external sesame into Palestine in order to protect the Jewish plant (Shemen) for extracting oils in Haifa (89), which harmed the Palestinian farmers, as the imported sesame crowded out the sesame produced by them, where this protection had adverse results on the Palestinian Arab economy. In this context, and based on the powers of the High Commissioner in the Mandate deed for Palestine and in accordance with article 11 of it (90), Herbert Samuel sought to enable the Jews to access the sources of wealth in Palestine, as he granted great economic privileges to Jewish-Zionist companies, where the most prominent of them was the privilege of generating electricity 'Rothenberg project' (91).

1- Privilege of the Palestinian Electricity Company (Rothenberg Electricity Generation Project)

The thinking of granting this concession dates back to 1920, when a British-French agreement was concluded "to settle certain issues related to the mandate over Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Mesopotamia." Article 8 of this agreement, which was held in Paris, refers to "appointing experts who will have complete freedom to discuss the use of the waters of the Yarmouk river and its tributaries and the upper Jordan river for the purposes of irrigation and electricity generation, after meeting the needs of the areas under the French mandate and using the surplus for the benefit of Palestine." Hence, the agreement shows the intention to allow Palestine to benefit from the waters of the Jordan River, Yarmouk river and its tributaries outside its borders (92). In an important step, in order to strengthen the Jewish economy in Palestine and give it the Zionist character, and in an important economic facility, Herbert Samuel granted in February 1921 (93) the great Jewish financier,

PinhasRothenberg(94), the right to exploit the waters of the Auja River near Jaffa to generate electric power. On September 21, 1921, about eight months after obtaining the first concession, Rotenberg obtained another privilege (95) to benefit from the waters of the Yarmouk River and the Jordan River and their tributaries to generate electric power from the power that is extracted from the water and distributed within Palestine and eastern Jordan for a period of seventy years (96), and he was allowed to build an electric station on the Al-Majami' bridge at the confluence of the Yarmouk river and southern Jordan river, with the aim of exploiting the largest amount of water flowing from the two rivers (97). He was also allowed to use Lake Tiberias as a water reservoir, and was also allowed too to use what he saw fit and necessary to implement his project and carry out his obligations under this privilege, whether from buildings of different types such as dams, water basins, power stations, transformer stations, offices, homes, warehouses and other requirements, or the acquisition of land (98). According to this privilege and in article 10 of it, we see that Samuel guaranteed the project the right to usurp property and lands under the claim that this is in the interest of electricity and the public benefit, which the Mandate government made as a means of plundering Palestinian lands and presenting them to Zionist institutions (99). This is what was done through the acquisition of an amount of 18,000 acres by the project of Arab lands (100), which made this project with bad effects that caused great harm to the Arabs in Palestine, especially the farmers who reside around Lake Tiberias, due to the low level of the lake water as a result of establishing projects that were linked to the project on it(101), which made this project a tool to expel Arabs from their lands, because it prevented water for them and their lands, and did not allow any of the residents to use this water for any industrial and agricultural purposes, based on article 3 of the privilege contract that gave the project the right to monopolize the most important source of water in Palestine (the Yarmouk and Jordan rivers) (102), in addition to the usurpation of property and land under the claim of the Electricity Authority (103). This project also constituted an effective and quick tool to Judaize Palestine, by taking advantage of it in building Jewish settlements on Arab lands that were expropriated from their Arab owners, and building many Jewish factories that run on electric power, which entails the need for more Jewish labor to operate them in these factories, which required an increase in the number of Jewish immigrants (104), which led to the decline of Arab industries and their dissolution (105). Thus, the Rothenberg project was one of the major main pillars on which Zionism relied in controlling the future of Palestine and made it able to absorb hundreds of thousands of immigrants. And it became one of the sources of the driving force necessary for the industry at the disposal of Zionism (106). In the light of this British policy, Herbert Samuel took another step in preparing the Jewish national homeland, and inflicting damage on the Palestinian Arab economy, so he put in place a new Palestinian monetary project in April 1924.

2. Herbert Samuel and Palestinian Monetary

Money is the vital artery that feeds the state and on which its economy is based. Therefore, the Zionist movement was concerned from the beginning with supervising the money use in Palestine, and determining the type and value of currencies. Then, under the guise of the British Mandate, it minted a Palestinian currency, knowing that there were several European currencies that were used during the Ottoman rule of Palestine along with the Turkish

currency, noting that the commercial circles preferred to deal with the French currency, especially the Napoleon gold coin '20 francs' (107). After the armies of Britain and its allies entered Palestine with Egyptian money, the military occupation authorities announced on November 23, 1917 that the Egyptian currency was legal one, and it was also considered an official currency in addition to the money of the allied armies, along with the Ottoman currency in all its gold and paper denominations (108). On November 28, 1917 the occupation forces set the "official tariff" for Egyptian cash and currency rates and ordered the money changers to carry out their business. On December 2, 1917, after the British forces completed their occupation of all of Palestine, they ordered to stop trading in Ottoman currencies, and allowed the Egyptian paper and coins to circulate as well as the English gold coin, and ordered that financial transactions be recorded in the laws of Palestine in Egyptian currency instead of the Ottoman (109). On February 21, 1921, after the establishment of the Civil Administration in Palestine, Herbert Samuel issued an official statement specifying the type of currencies used in Palestine, as of February 22, 1921, which were the "Egyptian gold lira, Egyptian paper money, Egyptian nickel and silver coins ", in addition to the English lira golden which the price of which was set at 97.5 Egyptian piasters, and he announced the confiscation of currencies that were not mentioned in the decree (110). Because the Egyptian currency was available to the population more than the British pound, it became more dealt with than dealing with the British pound, and because of Britain's desire to establish a (national home) for the Jews in Palestine, as it was mentioned in the Balfour Declaration, Britain started thinking of replacing the Egyptian currency with a Palestinian currency. To achieve this, it spread its propaganda among the people, that Palestine does not receive from the issuance profits that Egypt achieve from the amount circulated in Palestine, so Herbert Samuel decided in April 1924 to establish independent a banking system of the Egyptian currency, linked to the pound (111), so the High Commissioner set a special committee to study the possibility of minting Palestinian cash and to develop the appropriate plan for implementation. The committee included four foreign bank managers, three Jews, three government employees and two Arabs, without allowing the Arab Executive Committee to choose them, although the government authorized the Zionist committee to choose its representatives. The Islamic Society of Haifa submitted a protest to the High Commissioner and considered the government's project to establish a currency for circulation in Palestine a fatal blow to the country's economies for many reasons, the most important of which are: 1- Opening the door for banks to manipulate the country's money in a way that leads to urgent loss and bankruptcy, as is the case in northern Syria.

2- There is no guarantee for this project (112).

The Arab Executive Committee also submitted objection memorandum to the High Commissioner in which it stated that the Zionist project was developed by the director of the Anglo-Palestinian Zionist Bank, and was submitted by the Palestine Economic Zionist Association (113). It warned of the damages that would result from the implementation of the project, but despite the Arab protests which were based on logical economic foundations and rules, the High Commissioner Herbert Samuel met it with rejection and disregard, so the committee continued its work, and submitted its report in June 1924 by recommending issuing a Palestinian currency based on the sterling pound (114). But the first executive steps

to introduce the new currency were two years late, when the Palestinian Currency Law No. 907/53 was issued on 9/10/1926 (115).

Seventh. Herbert Samuel and his policy in employment

The discontent of the Arab intellectuals in Palestine increased because of their limited opportunities for appointment to government jobs and high-ranking jobs, as they were flooded with English employees and Jewish settlers. According to the report of the British administration in Palestine in June 1921, it was found that 179 British occupied senior positions, of whom 14 are Jews, while the Arabs occupied 145 of these positions and the Jewish settlers occupied 50 of them (116). As for the medium and regular jobs, the British occupied 89 of them, including 13 Jews, while the Arabs occupied 1,488 positions, and the Jewish settlers occupied 566 positions. This percentage is unfair to the Arabs to a large extent, and Herbert Samuel opened public jobs to the Jews until they became four times the Arab employees, who were left with secondary and minor jobs (117). He also ended the services of a large number of Arab employees and employees who were sympathetic to them in the departments of the Mandate government. The cheap Arab labor was also prohibited to Jewish industrialists because of the political Zionist goals. The Jewish Agency was emphasizing that "Jewish projects in Palestine should be the natural center for the absorption of Jewish labor," and he was putting pressure on Jewish industrialists to use Jewish workers regardless of the cost (118).

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it can be seen that

- 1- Herbert Samuel has played an important role in shaping British policy through holding several important positions in successive British governments, which had a great impact on British decision-making and in directing British policy in service and support of the Zionist project in Palestine.
- 2- Herbert Samuel is considered the first to draw attention to the future of Palestine, and he is credited with raising the question of Palestine at an early age at the highest levels of the British government and linking its solution to the Jewish question.
- 3- Samuel played an important role in placing Palestine under the British Mandate, by chairing the special committee for drafting the Zionist aspirations, formulating a draft of the Zionist proposals, and then participating in the Zionist delegation to represent the Zionist movement at the peace conference in Paris and presenting these proposals to the conference.
- 4- Herbert Samuel had a major role in preparing the ground for the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine and working to Judaize it during his reign as Britain's High Commissioner to Palestine 1920-1925, by opening the doors of immigration to the Jews, and allowing them to acquire lands, and also he worked to link Jewish interests with British interests.
5. Herbert Samuel, after being appointment, set out to place the country in political, economic, administrative and social conditions lead to the establishment of the Jewish national home. This was evident in the 1925 report of the Royal Committee, which indicated that the Jewish national home had become manifest in all the features that distinguish it, in addition to the admiration and praise that Samuel received from the British Colonial

Secretary in the statement he delivered to the British House of Commons on the occasion of the end of his service in Palestine.

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