



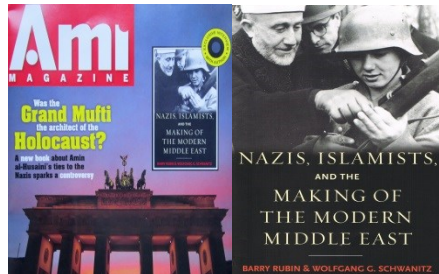
## Zionism, the Grand Mufti and the Holocaust

*A new book about Amin al-Husaini's ties to the Nazis sparks a controversy - a talk with the co-author Wolfgang G. Schwanitz*

By

Rabbi Yitzchok Frankfurter

What triggered my interest in the newly-released [book](#) “Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East,” by Barry Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, was a February 3, 2014 [review](#) of it in Tablet Magazine. The [provocative](#) title read: “Did Zionism Cause the Holocaust? A New Biography Says Yes.” That was more than enough to pique my curiosity.



Any claim that Zionism may have even indirectly caused the Holocaust is highly inflammatory and subject to almost universal Jewish condemnation. Could there actually be a scholarly work, particularly one co-authored by the late Barry Rubin, considered one of the leading Middle East scholars of his generation, advancing such a controversial thesis?

The reviewer, David Mikics, concedes that “the authors of a new history of the Grand Mufti Amin al-Husaini’s ties to Nazis fail to carry their logic to its flawed conclusion.” However, he argues that “if the British hadn’t made al-Husaini Grand Mufti in 1921 in reward for his espionage work for them, no Final Solution.

“Yes,” he continues, “you heard right. Rubin and Schwanitz make the astonishing claim that al-Husaini is nothing less than the architect of the Final Solution. Rather than being a garden-variety pro-Nazi, they say, the Mufti had so great an influence on the Fuehrer that he might as well have authored Nazi Germany’s most demonic project, the mass murder of European Jewry... They want to show that eliminationist anti-Semitism animates the Islamic Middle East, and so they paint al-Husaini as so devilishly anti-Semitic that he can contend with Hitler himself.”

“Yet Rubin and Schwanitz’s claim also has serious, troubling implications. Where did al-Husaini’s passionate hatred of Jews come from? Indisputably, from the Jewish colonization of Palestine. So, if you follow Rubin and Schwanitz’s logic—as they themselves fail to do—Zionism is responsible for the Holocaust. No Zionist colonization of Palestine would mean no Arab anti-Semitism, which means no al-Husaini, which means no Final Solution.”

Mickics charges the book’s authors with gross insensitivity. “The authors use a historical life to advance their political reading of the Arab-Israeli conflict—without thinking through the risks of loading their political agenda onto historical analysis.”



In Berlin [Hitler](#) strikes an anti-Jewish Pact of Genocide with M. Amin [al-Husaini](#) on November 28, 1941. That night, Hitler made his Fifth Decision by ordering the Wannsee Conference for “managing the Final Solution.” To obscure this context, he delayed news on his meeting with al-Husaini to December 9, [1941](#).

“That al-Husaini was a radical anti-Semite is not the real news in Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East. We knew that already. Though al-Husaini was put in power by Britain, he eagerly embraced Nazism and rivaled Hitler in his fanatical anti-Semitism—and frequently proclaimed that the Middle East needed to rid itself of its Jews. Al-Husaini spent the war years in Berlin enjoying the high life: The Nazis put him up in luxurious fashion, with the equivalent of a \$12 million a year salary. Hitler, who admired the Mufti for his manly ardor and his ‘Aryan’ blue eyes, promised him that extermination would occur in Palestine as soon as Rommel’s tanks broke through the British lines in Egypt and rolled into Zionist territory.”

“Al-Husaini met often with Eichmann and Himmler during his tours of occupied Poland, and he helped Eichmann escape to Argentina after the war. His most important wartime mission was recruiting for the SS in Bosnia. He almost certainly visited the gas chambers in Auschwitz, a sight that seems likely to have gladdened his heart. But for the most part, he remained a man of vile words rather than vile deeds.”

Yet Mickics claims that these scholars went too far in blaming the Mufti for the Final Solution.

“Where Rubin and Schwanitz depart from the known historical record is in their dubious causal assertion that Hitler’s commitment to al-Husaini to keep Jews out of Palestine was in turn a major motivation for the Fuehrer’s decision, sometime in 1941, to exterminate European Jewry. It’s true, as Rubin and Schwanitz make clear, that the Mufti advocated genocide against the Jews even before Hitler did. Like Hitler, he thought of

Jews as subhuman and evil parasites. But the notion that al-Husaini played a key role in Hitler's settling on the Final Solution is based on one piece of thin hearsay evidence: comments that the controversial Hungarian Jewish leader Rudolf Kastner attributed to Eichmann's subordinate Dieter Wisliceny. (Rubin and Schwanitz oddly credit the comments to Eichmann himself.)"

"As Christopher Browning has argued, Hitler's opting for genocide can much more plausibly be traced to his exultation over what looked like a blitzschnell conquest of Russia in midsummer 1941. The Fuehrer dropped his earlier vague notion of getting rid of millions of Jews by shipping them 'beyond the Urals'; in the joy of what he thought was victory, he set about to make his new Eastern empire Judenfrei in the most direct and terrible way imaginable."

"Al-Husaini may not have given Hitler the idea for the Holocaust, but his actions and words were vile enough. In his memoirs he boasted that he had prevented thousands of Jewish children from emigrating to Palestine in 1942 and 1943 and expressed satisfaction that they instead headed to Poland and death. The Muslim Brotherhood founder Hasan al-Banna lauded al-Husaini after the war: 'What a hero, what a miracle of a man... Germany and Hitler are gone, but Amin al-Husaini will continue the struggle.'"

"Yet Rubin and Schwanitz make al-Husaini responsible not only for the manifest evil of his own words and deeds, but also for the Holocaust—and for the subsequent birth of Israel and the entirety of the subsequent Arab-Israeli conflict. According to Rubin and Schwanitz, Israel only became a reality through the Mufti's rejection of the 1939 White Paper and, later, his staunch opposition to the UN partition of Palestine in [1947](#). If not for the Mufti's powerful naysaying, they argue, Britain's White Paper would have been accepted by the Arabs, who would soon have ruled Palestine. This was the clear promise of the White Paper, which would have ended Jewish emigration to Palestine after five years. After ten years, with Arabs still in the majority, the White Paper promised a bi-national state."

"So, without the grand Mufti, no Israel. But al-Husaini, Rubin and Schwanitz say, is also responsible for the lack of peace between Israel and most of the Arab world. According to Rubin and Schwanitz, there's a single man behind the radicalism of Middle East politics since the 1930s, right down to the present day: The Mufti made rejectionism look glorious, paving the way for countless Arab demagogues who trumpeted the notion that standing up to Israel and the West is heroic, while compromise is treason. Scorning the practical, clinging to noble but failed memories of revolt: these became dominant ideas in Middle East politics thanks to al-Husaini."

"Yes, the Mufti remains a source of inspiration to those who dream of annihilating Israel and establishing a purely Muslim Middle East cleansed of Jews and Christians. But that doesn't mean he changed history. There is never a lack for prophets of violence in the Arab world, or Islamists who look to the Nazis as models of proper neighborly relations with Jews and with others."

**Wolfgang G. Schwanitz: "The Mufti's primary goal was blocking all of the ways out of Europe. He slammed the last doors of a burning house shut."**

I spoke to Wolfgang G. [Schwanitz](#), a German-American Middle East historian who coauthored the book with Barry Rubin, to decipher all of it for me.

*I understand that Barry Rubin recently passed away.*

Yes, he was an accomplished [scholar](#) and a good friend. It was a great shock to me because a week earlier he was still sending me emails.

*The book was just published?*

It was released on February [25, 2014](#). Unfortunately, he didn't live to see it. He learned he had cancer in August 2012.

*At least he lived to complete the book.*

Yes, at least that much.

*Isn't it complicated for two people to write one book?*

It's not easy because different people have different experiences. But we had much in common in our views and experiences so we had a solid base.

*Barry Rubin was in Israel. You live in New Jersey. Was that a problem?*

No. We met at the [Middle East Forum](#) in Philadelphia and exchanged a thousand and one emails.

*His background was different from yours. What is your specialty?*

I'm a Middle East historian. My focus is the history of great power relations to the Middle East, especially Germany and the United States. I've done this for [three decades](#) at five universities and five research centers in America, the Middle East and Europe, the "Bermuda Triangle" of global policy.

*You were born in Germany?*

In East Germany.

*So you still recall Communist rule?*

Oh yes, for two decades. Moreover, I grew up in Egypt and spent seven years of my boyhood there and vividly remember [Abd an-Nasir's time](#).

*How did you get to Egypt?*

My parents were diplomats from East Berlin. So they took me around. My school was on the outskirts of Cairo, near the pyramids. I lived there through the [1967](#) war and I watched Israeli jets over our area.

*So you and Barry Rubin had different perspectives of the Middle East?*

Very different. He was American-born and spent a great deal of his life in the US, and I was raised behind the Berlin Wall, part of the Iron Curtain. I saw the dictatorships in the Middle East and Europe.

*Before you collaborated with Barry Rubin, did you both have similar views? Or did they evolve in the course of your research?*

My views developed over a long time. After the Berlin Wall came down, I used my time in the Academy of Sciences to go through the records. The East Germans had a great influence on the so-called revolutionary countries—Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Ye-

men, Egypt, Iran and Yasser Arafat's PLO. All of the most troubled areas and organizations.

For the first time I was able to look behind the scenes and research all of this. So I published a lot on this subject. My views developed. Then, shortly after the Wall came down, IREX, the International Research and Exchange Board [in Washington, DC], invited me to visit Middle Eastern centers of Washington DC, New York and Princeton, New Jersey. I also participated in Congressional sessions on the Middle East. It was after the first Gulf War in [1991](#). So I gained some insights into DC decision-making. I spent two months on this journey. I also gained access to the [West German](#) and [American archives](#).

*Is the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem the central character of your new book?*

No, but he plays a great role, from the Kaiser via the Caliph to Adolf Hitler. We have a group of characters like the former Iraqi premier Rashid Ali [al-Kailani](#), Fauzi al-Qawuqji from Syria, and their colleagues. There were many Islamists residing in Berlin and Rome during World War II. And we trace the story back to [WWI](#), to the German-Ottoman jihadization of Islam. Then we go on to WWII and the Cold War until the global era. The Ottoman leaders and then the Grand Mufti became the symbols of the German-Ottoman and Nazi-Islamist axis that survived after 1945 and led to 9/11 in subsequent generations. To our surprise, the global puzzle from multiple archives all fitted together like a Hollywood picture. The dark sides were the Armenian genocide, the [attempted genocide](#) against the Jews of Palestine, and then genocides against the Jews, Slavs and others during WWII.

*Most people view Islamists as a footnote in the Holocaust. You say it's more than that.*

Yes. Islamism and Nazism developed in parallel. At certain points they converged. We trace it back, researching sources in two dozen archives that were never used before. We followed new facts and evidence as they became accessible. This was also a result of the German re-unification. [Germany](#) had been divided for 45 years; so were its archives. Only after the unification in 1990 were we able to dive into history with full speed and put the parts of the puzzle together. Plus, there was a simultaneous push in the [United States](#) to uncover the secrets of the Second World War and the Cold War, such as the Nazi War Crime Disclosure Act in Congress [in 1998, I used it for my [book](#) on the German Orient Bank]. It has only been in recent years that we were able to access CIA reports dating from WWII until [1974](#) about the Grand Mufti. We discovered how he and his aides, also former Nazis and Islamists, cooperated with each other. So it's still an ongoing process.

*Hitler despised Semites.*

No. That's wrong. First of all, in the recent sense, there was no group of "[Semites](#)." That's an invention of the Jew-haters. They made up the term shortly before 1900 and called themselves "anti-Semites." Before then, it was just a family of languages. There were no tribes that called themselves "Semites." These are traditional, Biblical terms, inappropriate in the era of nationalism.

*So Hitler hated Jews but had no problem with other Semitic groups like the Arabs?*

As I said, there were no "Semitic" groups, only languages. Hitler respected Arabs. He looked at their achievements in history, religion, architecture and agriculture. We have records in which he tells stories about the Arabs and their jihad. He read all the books by Karl May on adventures in those lands.

*But they aren't "Aryans." He had no problem with that?*

He had no problem with the Turks, Arabs, Iranians, Kurds—all of them. He had a romantic view of them simply derived from reading. He never traveled beyond Europe. Hitler regarded al-Husaini as someone with Roman ancestors. His physician said he was a Caucasian with his blue eyes and red hair. Hitler also believed in relying on regional allies. In “Mein Kampf” of 1925 he explained that if you look for power-sharing, you need stable regional forces to depend on. He didn’t look to colonize; he looked for locals who would do the job for him there.

*Is it your thesis that the Grand Mufti and others were instrumental in influencing Germany to exterminate the Jews?*

They played a role; **they were not the main people responsible, which were Hitler’s Nazis. That’s undisputable.** But they had joint goals, for instance, stopping any Jewish emigration to the Middle East to prevent an Israeli state. After 1922 it was the only place where a Jewish national homeland could legally be established. Until [1941](#), even during the war, legal Jewish emigration from Nazi Germany to the Middle East was possible [see also document 3.1, page 9]. Half a million Jews did it. The Grand Mufti’s primary goal was blocking all of the ways out of Europe. He slammed the last doors of a burning house shut. In the beginning of 1941 he asked Hitler in writing to stop Jewish emigration from Europe to the Middle East. In turn, Hitler promised to deal with the Jews in the Middle East the same way he did in Europe.

On November 28, [1941](#) they made a deal. They concluded a pact of genocide, first verbally, and then in April/May of 1942 in writing, see below. Hitler wanted to eliminate all of the Jews in Europe, the Middle East and globally in three steps. He would also ask every non-European nation to deal with the “Jewish problem.” This was agreed to in a one-and-a-half-hour talk. Hitler told the Mufti, “As soon as my army reaches the Caucasus, Iran and Iraq, I will continue to march further; you are the man for the Mideast.” It was agreed between the two of them that the Jews of the Mideast had to be liquidated. Italy and Iraq joined in the atrocity.

Rom, den.28.April 1942.

Herr Reichsminister !

In unseren Besprechungen mit Ihnen haben wir das Vertrauen des arabischen Volkes zu den Achsenmächten und ihren hohen Zielen zum Ausdruck gebracht und die nationalen Ziele der zur Zeit unter englischer Unterdrückung leidenden arabischen Länder des vorderen Orients dargelegt. Wir haben die Bereitschaft des arabischen Volkes zur Teilnahme am Kampf gegen die gemeinsamen Feinde bis zum Endsieg erklärt.

Wir bitten Sie nun, dass die deutsche Regierung ihre Bereitschaft erklären möge, den gegenwärtig unter britischer Unterdrückung leidenden arabischen Ländern in ihrem Kampf für die Befreiung jede denkbare Unterstützung zu gewähren, die Souveränität und die Unabhängigkeit der gegenwärtig unter englischer Unterdrückung leidenden arabischen Länder des nahen Orients anzuerkennen und ihrer Vereinigung, wenn sie von den Beteiligten gewünscht wird, sowie der Beseitigung der jüdisch-nationalen Heimstätte in Palästina zuzustimmen.

Es besteht Einverständnis darüber, dass der Wortlaut und der Inhalt dieses Briefes unbedingt geheimgehalten werden, bis im gegenseitigen Einvernehmen etwas anderes bestimmt wird.

Genehmigen Sie, Herr Reichsminister, die Versicherung meiner ausgezeichnetsten Hochachtung !

An den Reichsminister  
des Auswärtigen  
Herrn Joachim von Ribbentrop  
BERLIN

*Emine El Husaini*  
*Reshid Ali El Gulkani*  
RI 60059  
5507

Doc.1: Secret letter, April 28, 1942, al-Husaini, al-Kailani to Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop [same to his Italian colleague Ciano] asking “to agree to the liquidation of the Jewish national home in Palestine.” [=the Jews]. They did. The four signatories hoped also to reach Iraq and Iran via the Caucasus [see [book](#), p. 134].



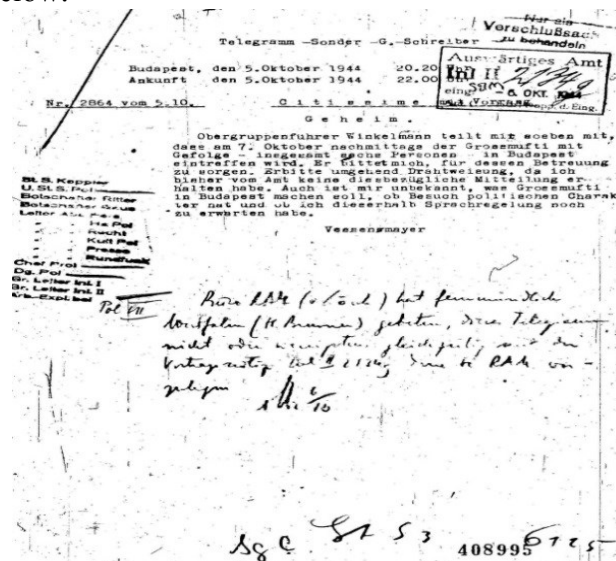
In this way, the Mufti was instrumental in implementing Hitler's vision in the Middle East. We found files in the archives of the former Soviet Union, interrogation protocols of Fritz [Grobba](#), the Nazi diplomat to the region, in which he told the Communist interrogators in 1946, "Yes. Hitler and his foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop planned to evacuate all of the Jews of Palestine and the region to liquidate them."

*Tablet Magazine claims that your book says that Zionism caused the Holocaust. Do you in fact say that?*

**No.** It was not the finest hour of their [reviewer](#), who teaches English and not Middle Eastern history. To me, it's unimaginable to say that. On the contrary, [Zionists](#) rescued a lot of Jews before and during both World Wars. We also write about the attempted genocide against the Jews of Palestine from 1915 to [1917](#). Persecution and pogroms were long on the table both in the Middle East and globally. Theodor Herzl started Zionism to stop it, initially as a German-Austrian-Polish-Russian and British project.

*Tablet Magazine also says you make the astonishing claim that al-Husaini was nothing less than the architect of the Final Solution.*

**No. The architect of the Final Solution was Hitler. His ministers of death were Heinrich Himmler and Adolf Eichmann**, who closely cooperated with the [Grand Mufti](#). I found six [meetings](#) between them during the process of the Holocaust [as recorded in my German [book](#), p. 319]. Al-Husaini visited various places where Nazis rounded up Jews, like Budapest, see below.



Source: US National Archives II, Record Group 242, Captured Enemy Property

Doc. 2: German Foreign Ministry, cable from Budapest to Berlin about Amin al-Husaini's predicted arrival in two days in Budapest on October 7, 1944, by knowledge of Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. Six men were expected in al-Husaini's entourage. German SS envoy to Hungary Edmund Veesenmayer asked what al-Husaini would do, if this was a political mission and which language to use. SS officer Otto Winkelmann requested that the envoy take care of him and his men. Al-Husaini was to meet 60 imams of the 13<sup>th</sup> Muslim SS [Division](#), who briefly gathered near Budapest, to boost their moral—for "2,000 soldiers deserted to Josip B. Tito's partisans" as it was reported to Berlin on 10/5/1944. Eberhard Ritter reveals in his handwriting that von Ribbentrop ("RAM") and SS officer Anton Brunner, also known as one of Adolf Eichmann's aides in hunting Hungarian Jews, were informed on al-Husaini's travel. Jews were being rounded up. Eichmann's commandos drove them to places of the railroad with Auschwitz death camps as goal.

*Why did Eichmann deny those meetings during his trial in Jerusalem?*

He said he met the Grand Mufti once, just briefly.

*Why did he downplay it?*

Hitler did the same. At first he concealed his meeting with the Grand Mufti on November 28, 1941 in Berlin. He only made it public ten days later, after the Nazis had to postpone the original Wannsee Conference from December 9 to January 20. This broke the link between their meeting and the start of the Wannsee preparations for the Holocaust. Nobody discovered it again until now. There might have been another reason: to “protect” each other. After [1945](#) there was always a “danger” that al-Husaini would be brought to justice as he deserved. He was an accomplice to the Holocaust. Although he encouraged the Nazis to kill the Jews **he was never “[the main architect](#).”** But there is no doubt that he would have done the same if Hitler had won. He started the Farhud pogrom in Baghdad in mid-1941 and called the Muslims to jihad a year later to kill the Jews just as Erwin Rommel’s troops reached Egypt.

*How much influence did he have on Hitler, if at all?*

He held some sway over him. We have many files corroborating this. Hitler was never outside of Europe, so he was clueless about the Middle East. All he had was a romantic view derived from literature. He even once said, “You don’t need to travel to the Middle East to guide the armies there because you can read the literature.” But of course, he had a lot of questions. There were four secret meetings between Hitler and al-Husaini. Simon Wiesenthal always said they met several times, and he was right. We previously only knew about one of them, [the official one] in late [1941](#).

*So what do you think was his actual influence on Hitler?*

The invitations to the Wannsee Conference went out on the very next day after their verbal genocide pact. The Wannsee Conference, of course, laid the [“logistical”] foundations for the Holocaust. So this is very tangible. That’s number one.

Number two, at that point Hitler had the impression that the war against Russia was basically won. His units had reached Rostov. Erwin Rommel was on the march in North Africa. Where next to focus? On November 29, [1941](#), he told the Italian Foreign Minister Ciano, “Now we are turning to the Middle East.” He needed aides there. Only the Mufti and guys like Rashid Ali al-Kailani in Iraq were able muster troops and help the German army when they would invade.

Hitler issued two orders to ready the Middle East as the next great theater of war, expressing his desire to rely upon the “revolutionary movements of the Middle East.” And he clearly meant al-Husaini and his Islamists, al-Kailani and his nationalists, and all the others. If Hitler had succeeded [winning the war], he would have had many people greeting him when his army entered the Middle East, among them the Grand Mufti’s men.

Number three: The Mufti had a deal with Hitler to liquidate Jews of Palestine. There are identical letters between Hitler’s and Mussolini’s foreign ministers, the Iraqi Prime Minister Rashid Ali al-Kailani—see here page six, doc. 1—and the Grand Mufti. And it was always their intention to eliminate the national homeland of the Jews in Palestine, the Jews there. Later they extended it to all the Jews of the Middle East, about half a million.



After this, the Mufti watched what was going on. He visited the places where Jews were being rounded up and sent to the death camps [as shown for example in Budapest with document 2 on page 7]. And he himself visited the death camps.

*Was he responsible for any of the exterminations?*

Yes. He discusses it in his memoirs. They only came out in Arabic [1999](#) in [Damascus](#), compiled by a man who had served as his secretary [Abd al-Karim al-Umar] for many years. Al-Husaini admits almost everything. He even says, "I was accused of promoting the Holocaust, for instance, that 400,000 [Hungarian] Jews were sent to death camps." (documents 6-7, p. 13). Some people wanted to kidnap him, bring him to trial. He himself discusses this. He was proud that his interventions with Hitler, Himmler and other Nazis were successful. Whenever he heard that Jews had escaped or that the Nazis were willing to exchange them for prisoners, he intervened and got them to close the escape routes in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and elsewhere. "I was successful," he notes proudly.

*How did he wield power in Europe?*

By giving advice to Hitler and Himmler. In one letter to Himmler he wrote, "I heard an exchange is being planned of 10,000 Jewish [children](#) for prisoners." We know that this SS leader promised him not to release Jews to Palestine, the Mideast. We have records of Eichmann's aides saying the same. Under Nazi rule this meant almost certain death.

*But what was his involvement in the actual extermination of Jews? How much blame can we assign him?*

He was a close accomplice of Hitler in the liquidation. From 1939 until [1941](#) Hitler was unsure of what to do with the Jews; even for him it only developed step by step. When he invaded the Soviet Union, it represented a whole new area to exterminate, and the Grand Mufti would do the same in the Middle East. While **he wasn't the main architect of the Holocaust**, he was a close co-conspirator. His SS units in the [Balkans](#) were infamous for killing Jews. A lot of this is starting to come out as new documentation is discovered.

4. After the occupation of Poland an additional 4 million Jews came in the hands of Germany. This problem demanded new devices.

By personal order of Hitler, HIMMLER was charged with new regulations and laws concerning Jews. HITLER transferred the decisions on all those questions to the Chief of the Sipo and SD. HITLER was the highest instance and EICHMANN was the personal advisor.

The Reichsinnenministerium as the law making agency had nothing to say in those matters. Very often the Ministry of the Interior had trouble with the RSHA especially as FRICK did not want to increase the difficulties in the question of mixed marriages.

During the first year of the war hardly any changes appeared. Also the question of Jewish emigration was more limited due to the war. In September 1940 thousands of Jews from Danzig emigrated to Palestine.

In Poland all Jews were forced to live in special destined districts of a town. Such a district was administrated by a Jewish Senate who also was responsible to distribute food. The Senate had to establish work centers to work for the army.

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Doc. 3.1: US Sergeant Marvin L. Rissinger captured SS officer Dieter Wisliceny on May 3, 1945, who was Adolf Eichmann's aide. Lieutenant Kurt Sichel debriefed him from August 25 to 27 producing four protocols on the Holocaust. Protocol of 8/27 clarifies that *Hitler put SS chief Heinrich Himmler in charge of Jews. Eichmann was his subordinate*. In 1940 and 1941 Jews, also thousands Jews from Danzig, emigrated to Palestine, their legally sanctioned home by the League of Nations. This changed on November 28, [1941](#).

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Also the food and sanitary conditions were intentionally kept at its worst in the Ghettos the biological substance of the Jews in the Polish Ghettos did not become less.  
The situation of the German, Czech, and Austrian Jews hardly changed until 1941 and many Jews were forced to work for war industry partly collective, partly single.

5. EICHMANN had planned since 1940 an extensive Jewish emigration to Madagascar after the victorious end of the war for Germany.

PW himself saw the manuscript during the Summer of 1940 at the RSHA and also the manuscripts of the French Ministry for colonists.

Those plans had been worked out in every detail and all European countries were supposed to participate. ~~HIMMLER~~ Goering had been selected to sign as man responsible.

6. The change to all real brutalities started in 1942. All ideas about the mass emigration were dropped. HITLER had ordered the complete destruction of all Jews. When PW asked EICHMANN in August 1942 who gave such an order he told him it was the special order of the Fuehrer. He also showed PW a letter of HIMMLER which ordered the finish of the Jewish question. "Endlösung der Judenfrage". This term-word had the meaning killing of all Jews. The beginning was made with the mass execution of Jews in Russia and Poland. In the Spring 1942 the evacuation of Jews to the eastern territories started. This was explained that the Jews came to Poland into camps and Ghettos to work there for the army.

To deceive the world the camp of Theresienstadt was opened at a show place.

The camps at Lublin and Auschwitz were the main extermination camps. Responsible for killing with gas was the former Gauleiter GLOBOENIG who was the SS and police chief in Lublin. The man who constructed the crematoriums was Standartenfuhrer FLOREL who was leader of the Kommando 1005. PW knows that FLOREL at the end of the war was seen in Istrian participating fighting partisans.

PW thinks that the numbers of killed Jews published by the Allies is about correct. EICHMANN should know the exact numbers.

The technical details of the extermination of Jews was the responsibility of Inspktoeur des KL Wesens, Brigadefuehrer GLICKS who was under the command of Obergruppenfuhrer POHL. The commander of Auschwitz was Obersturmbannfuhrer ROESS who was transferred in 1944 to the "V and W Hauptamt".

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Doc. 3.2: The murder of Jews started after the Nazi invasion into Soviet Russia in mid-1941. They were either executed there with the advance of troops by Himmler's commandos "as partisans." Or they were deported to Eastern Europe for mass executions after arrival, or in the death camps of Poland and Russia for which *Hitler gave in early 1942 a "special order" for the complete destruction of all Jews.* When PW [prisoner of war, Dieter Wisliceny] asked Eichmann in August 1942 who gave such an order, he told him it was "the special order of the Fuehrer" [Hitler]. Eichmann also disclosed to the PW *a letter of Himmler who ordered the "finish of the Jewish question,"* Endlösung der Judenfrage: "this term-word had the meaning of killing of all Jews." My German [book](#) has the full protocol with its early picture of the genocide, page 211.

*And you think al-Husaini's advice was important?*

Very much. According to a 1937 agreement, he paved the way for Nazism in the Middle East through his networks and propaganda. His men mustered troops in the Balkans and Soviet Union—Muslim SS troops. It was very important to Hitler to have additional forces. The longer the war dragged out, the more important the Grand Mufti became to him. He was his watchdog. He had a close network of men working for him. And he made the plans for a "Jew-free greater Arab Empire." Plus, he incited hatred in North Africa.

*So when Hitler was waffling on what to do with the Jews from 1939-41, the Mufti stepped in and influenced him to go with the Final Solution?*

It wasn't that simple. It also had to do with what was going on in the rest of Europe and [America](#). But the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem was valued for his influence over Muslims, having promised to mobilize troops if the Germans invaded. The Mufti was Hitler's go-to man for creating a Nazi-style Mideast. We bring proof in the book, in 30 pictures and documents. Their high point of cooperation was in the first half of [1942](#), when they thought that the final victory was so close.

*You said that Islamists and Nazis had certain things in common. What were they?*

Al-Husaini propagated these concepts in writing. He said that the Muslim world had no greater friend than Hitler and Nazi Germany. The Nazis trusted him so much that they boasted to him of having already killed three million Jews in 1943. He mentions this in his memoir. He was so intimately involved that Himmler told him about his [nuclear weapons research](#).

وقد كنت أسمع من هملمر كل مرة ما يدل على شدة حقه على اليهود، يتهمهم  
بأنهم ظالمون، ويزعمون أنهم مظلومون، ويقول أنهم موقدو نيران الحروب، وأنانيون  
ونحو ذلك، ويبين مقدار الأذى الذي انزلوه بألمانيا في الحرب الماضية، وأنهم دائماً  
يوقدون نار الحرب ثم يستغلونها لمصالحهم المادية، دون أن يخسروا فيها أي شيء،  
ولذلك فإننا صممنا في هذه الحرب على أن نذيقهم وبال أعمالهم مقدماً، فقد أبدا  
حتى الآن حوالي ثلاثة ملايين منهم. (وكان حديثه هذا في صيف عام ١٩٤٣)

١٢٦

Doc. 4: On page 126 of his 1999 Damascus memoirs, al-Husaini reveals Himmler's remarks of having "**up to now liquidated about three million of them**" [Jews]. The talk occurred in summer of [1943](#).

The Mufti mentioned other commonalities: In the same way that Islam considers all Muslims a single community, the umma, so too did the Nazis consider the German people a single entity. Jihad is one of Islam's main duties. Muslims see jihad and martyrdom as a crown, and the Nazis also stressed struggle, battle and self-sacrifice. Islam puts the community of believers first; the Nazi Party's motto was against "Jewish materialism." Both the Grand Mufti and the Nazis were in agreement that the public good comes before the private good. In Islam, children must obey their father and motherhood is revered. The Nazis felt the same. Both ideologies oppose the Jews. As al-Husaini repeatedly emphasized, the al-Qur'an enjoins Muslims to stop tolerating Jews, urging them to drive them out, wage battle against them and kill them. There is also a common reverence for labor. An Allied victory would have been a triumph for Jews and a disaster for Muslims, it had to be prevented. All of this was his stump speech for motivating Muslim soldiers.

*Is Islamic hatred directed towards Jews or Zionism, or is it the same?*

It's a long story that began with the early Muslim community and the different views on the struggle against the Jewish communities in Arabia. It also has to do with the concept of modernity. Does it threaten us? Will we lose our holy traditions? The Jews were pretty much in the same situation as all minorities in the Middle East. Their survival was often threatened. And they lived among people who struggled with social and modernity issues.

*What about the struggle over the land?*

Of course that played an important role but it also depends on political vision. In the beginning the Zionists hoped to cooperate with the Arabs. The other role of the Grand Mufti was to block any liberal or democratic advances by the British, as well as to advance the Nazi option for the Middle East [November 24, 1937, in my German [book](#) on page 413]. In many ways he surpassed the Nazis in hatred and virulence. He called for ridding all the Islamic lands of the Jews in mid-1937, even before Hitler did in his realm.

*Do you think the Nazi hatred was a Christian hatred?*

It wasn't a single reason; it was a complex of many. Of course, one would be the struggle between Christianity and Judaism right from the beginning.



*So it was a Christian-Muslim alliance against Jews?*

They saw themselves as like-minded. Nazis didn't see themselves as Christian people. Hitler hated Christianity. He was happy to have "crushed" Christianity in Europe. He said that in a speech. The Nazis didn't regard themselves in religious terms. But Hitler and the Nazis appreciated Islamists. They had a certain similar ideology and the Nazis liked the concept of jihad very much.

*Do you think that WWII would have been different without the Islamists?*

Yes, in a way. **The main perpetrators remain Hitler and company.** But in order to establish an international "pyramid of power" he needed like-minded people. From 1939-41, the Nazis toyed with the idea of evacuating the Jews to Madagascar [see document 3.2, page 10], as Hitler opposed a Jewish state in Palestine. He had broken with the former German policy of encouraging their emigration to Palestine under Kaiser Wilhelm II.

*And that was because of the Grand Mufti?*

I wouldn't go that far. But al-Husaini was a key voice in the concert of accomplices. There are reports by leading Nazis that he influenced Hitler and Himmler to kill the Jews.

Confirms above GX002-426b.

GNY-45  
HQ/001  
3/30/45.

Swiss radio reports Grand Mufti arrested and taken to Paris by French Army to be turned over to the British.

LONDON, AP  
May 21, 1945.

According to higher officers of SS, order for destruction of Jews was given out by Hitler, but collaboration of subject is discernible.

EX-181  
Berne  
5/17/45.

After his escape from the Middle East to Berlin worked up contacts w. the German foreign Office who naturally hoped to exploit him for their own ends. Lived in Berlin, Goethestr. 33 or 35. Hoped to be Emperor of a Greater Arab Empire after the war, but continually quarrelled w. Rashid GAYLANI, who apparently had similar hopes. In 1944 left Berlin on acct. of bombing raids.

GX-002-510B,  
Cairo, 5/10/5  
SIDE on KIRCHNER

MOHSEI, a certain Arab who received military information from a John SCHURCK, captured enemy agent, is known to the Grand Mufti.

In-11980  
5/2/45 (Caserta)

Palestine Arab political parties are showing particular interest in the fate of the Mufti, and are attempting to ensure his return to Palestine or, at least, his safety and permission to live in a Moslem country. The Arabs have conveniently forgotten his cooperation with the Germans. A newspaper report, however, from the "Morgen Journal" of New York, which was stopped in censorship, accused the Mufti of responsibility for the extermination of Jews in Europe and demands his trial as a war criminal.

GX-002-625a  
Saint, Cairo  
6/25/45.

MOHAMMED EL HUSSEIN DI MOHAMMED(qv) in contact with subject.

IN-24682  
Rome, Italy  
9/21/45.

Source: US National Archives II, Record Group 226, Office of Strategic Services

Doc. 5: U.S. spy services watched the Grand Mufti Amin al-Husaini in the Mideast and Europe. Above are reports from 1945. A Cable, Berne, 5/17/45: "According to higher officers of SS, order for the destruction of Jews was given out by Hitler, but collaboration of subject [Amin al-Husaini] is discernible."

I don't like to exaggerate his role because Hitler had already advanced the idea of gassing the Jews—"tens of thousands of their agitators"—in "Mein Kampf" of 1925. Hitler clearly had his vision. The Mufti studied his book, the first Arabic (it was the first foreign language) edition came in a 1933 press serial, and therewith al-Husaini realized his vision.

**JWS.**

207  
 208 Envelope of 209  
 209 Original letter in German from Hungarian Ambassador in Berlin to M., dated July 25 1944, stating that Hun. For. Min. thanks M. for his letter of June 22 1944, re the stopping of immigration to Pal of Hung. Jews. The Min. will give the utmost consideration to this matter. Trans.-in Nation Doc.  
 210 -Arab handwritten traslation of 209.

Source: US National Archives II, Record Group 226, Office of Strategic Services

Doc. 6: This text illuminates findings about ["M."] Amin al-Husaini. In mid-1944 this text shows that Budapest recognized *al-Husaini's request of stopping Hungarian Jews from going to Palestine* with "the utmost consideration." In his Damascus memoirs of 1999, p. 128, he declared the "success" of his letters to Hitler, Himmler and von Ribbentrop preventing Jewish travel to the Mideast. Still, **this didn't make him the "architect of the Holocaust,"** as some [people](#) allege. But he lent the Nazis a helping hand and admitted this fact openly. He forged a connection with Hitler's Nazis, thus between Islamism and Nazism. His hope was that Berlin would win that war and reorder, according to his advice, the Middle East Nazi style.

وخلال الحرب حدثت أحداث خطيرة أخرى كالمحاولة التي قامت بها اليهودية العالمية عام ١٩٤٤ لتهجير يهود شرق أوروبا إلى فلسطين، وموافقة ألمانيا على ذلك، كما يفعلون اليوم بمحاولتهم حمل الدول الشرقية كروسيا ودول البلقان وشرق أوروبا على تهجير من فيها من اليهود إلى فلسطين المحتلة، وقد قاومنا هذه المحاولة فكتبنا إلى ريبنتروب وهملر وهتلر، ثم إلى حكومات إيطاليا وهنغاريا ورومانيا وبلغاريا وتركيا وغيرها واستطعنا إحباط هذه المحاولة، مما جعل اليهود يرمونني بتهمة فضيحة ويحملونني مسؤولية القضاء على أربعمائة ألف يهودي لم يستطيعوا الهجرة إلى فلسطين حينئذٍ، ويطالبون بمحاكمتي في «نورمبرغ» كمجرم حرب (مما سيرد ذكره في مناسبات أخرى من هذه المذكرات مع نصوص الكتب المتبادلة وصور بعضها الفوتوغرافية).

Doc. 7: In 1944, notes al-Husaini in his memoirs as mentioned above, "the world Jewry wanted to bring the *Eastern European Jews to Palestine*—as they try today to bring them from Russia, the Balkans and Eastern Europe to the occupied Palestine [written about 1968, WGS]. *Germany agreed to this.* But we fought this attempt and wrote to von Ribbentrop, Himmler and Hitler, and then to the governments of Italy, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey and others. *We were able to foil this effort.* This caused the Jews to put ugly blame on me of being responsible for the liquidation of 400,000 Jews who were then not able to travel to Palestine. The Jews demanded to try me in Nuremberg as a war criminal (a matter to which I will come back to on another occasion in this memoir by some photocopies of those exchanged letters)." Al-Husaini rightly stressed that Nazis even agreed to let some Jews go in 1944, an "escape" which he was able to foil. The number of "400,000" Jews he referred to was then the known number of Hungarian Jews. Half of them perished in Auschwitz death camps. The Jewish genocide was one of the biggest crimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*How much influence do you think the Nazis had on Islamists?*

They had a huge influence. Germany was greatly admired because it didn't have colonies in the Mideast. This was a plus for Berlin. Then they brought all kinds of economic projects along with them like the Baghdad railroad, not to mention German-made products. Germany had united only relatively recently, in [1871](#), and some Arabs yearned to emulate them. After Paris fell, in [mid-1940](#), Europe was under Hitler's thumb and they admired that. There were some who rejected Nazism, fought with Allies. But not a majority.

*For sure we wouldn't have had Israel without the Holocaust.*

This is wrong. The League of Nations proposed rebuilding a national Jewish homeland in Palestine in 1922. As we reveal in the book, the Kaiser pressed Istanbul for an "Ottoman Balfour Declaration," and they issued one in mid-[1918](#), welcoming a Jewish home in Palestine through immigration and colonization. Of course, the Ottoman Empire came to an end soon. But there were many seeds for the State of Israel, including Theodor Herzl. The Holocaust was an additional factor, and likely a big one. But it wasn't the only one.



*But we definitely have a different Middle East because of Nazism?*

Very much so. If you read the book, you can see how the radical factions got the upper hand.

*And Nazism still influences the region till today.*

[Yes](#). Let's use colors: There was a black influence; the Kaiser's [radical right wing Jew-hating circles of] Christianity was represented by the color black. Then came the brown [racist warfare] influence of the German Nazis. In [1945](#), after the Nazis were finished in Europe, some fled to the Mideast and turned to Islamists; so a Nazi element survived in a strain of [Islamism](#). Plus, when Islamism was revived in the early 1970s, it was tinged by the red color—a [left wing extreme tied to class warfare] [Soviet sway](#) on radical states. After 1990 many leftists turned to Islamists. The [influence](#) of those “ideological colors,” black, brown and red, has existed in the Middle East for the past century, but was not deeply delegitimized. From 1919 to 1945, Italian fascists in black shirts played their role. The Mideast was always under the sway of three totalitarian strains. Its leaders adopted from those strains the fitting mosaics to suppress the people and moved on parallel tracks.

*How do you view the Islamization of Europe?*

I am in sorrow over it. There are a lot of “green dots”—Islamist-ruled neighborhoods that are no-go zones. It's also a problem for liberal Muslims all over the world when [Islamists](#) cooperate with [jihadists](#) in the Middle East. On the other hand, I have much hope that the Europeans know how to get a good integration going and how to de-jihadize, especially young men. All of Eastern Europe has had to turn around since 1990 and shed their old ideologies of hatred against groups or democracies [and so should others, like Islamists].

*Do you think the Sunni-Shiite divide will rupture soon?*

It's an ancient, major rift. The divide came about shortly after the advent of Islam. But it wasn't a problem for the Grand Mufti. He cooperated very closely with [Iranians](#) against a common enemy. There are also people in Tehran today who have no problem with supporting Sunni jihadists in Syria and in Iraq. Islamism is a very flexible movement and ideology in many respects.

*Sum up the basic message of your book.*

The book exposes the German-Ottoman alliance in WWI, Berlin's discovery of [Islamism](#) as a tool in world politics, and the use of Muslim [brotherhoods](#) as platforms for jihadism. Many times, the same [people](#) who served as young soldiers in [WWI](#) went on to become commanders with the same genocidal ideologies in WWII. They had previously seen genocide against Armenians and an attempted genocide against Jews of Palestine in [WWI](#).

In the Middle East, Nazism and Islamism continued to be [legitimate](#), so many of their networks continued to exist and resurfaced in the 1970s. On this basis, the next generations under Usama Bin Ladin prepared for [9/11](#), and some even managed to wrest power in the “Arab and Islamist Spring.” In Cairo it lasted a year. I can only hope that the Egyptians don't opt for another type of dictatorship. Time will tell.

See [book](#) *Nazis, Islamists and the Making of the Modern Middle East*: [Yale](#), February 25, 2014, 360 pp. [In German](#): *Islam in Europe, Revolts in the Middle East*, [available](#) June 10, 2013: [book](#) in [Berlin](#), [order here](#). Reprinted by permission of Ami Magazine. Updated on July 20, 2014. Links, photos and seven documents were added.