



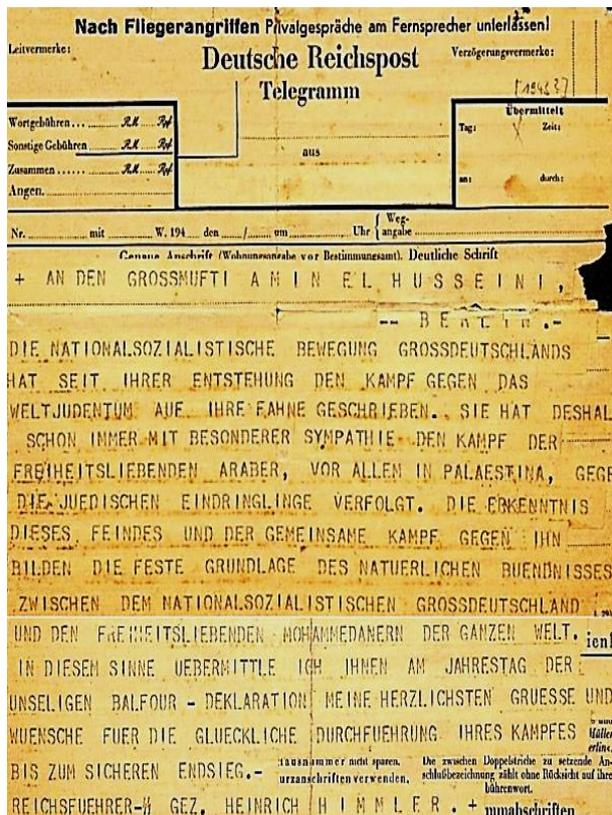
Himmler's Boost for al-Husaini

The SS-Leader's Anti-Balfour Cable to the Grand Mufti

In March the National Israeli Library blogged Himmler's re-discovered [telegram](#) to the grand mufti of Jerusalem Amin al-Husaini. Contrary to the comment there that Nazi Germany did not declare its support for the Arab independence, I argue, it did. This cable further recognized the Islamist movement of the cleric who lived from 1941 to 1945 in Berlin. He realized with the Axis powers his main goals against the Jews and Allies, also in the Mideast. The thesis that his only success was preventing "a few cases of Jews departing Europe for Palestine" denies his admissions and ideological role. He described the fate of Jews who were forced to remain in Europe after his protests, especially of [Hungarian](#) Jews. I will shed historical light on this cable.

On the 26th anniversary of the Balfour-Declaration, Heinrich Himmler sent his best wishes for success to the Mufti's related "protest meeting" that took place in Berlin's city. Of course, such public support for al-Husaini would have been impossible without Hitler's prior consent. It would come swiftly, for he and the Mufti had agreed on a [1941](#) anti-Jewish pact of genocide.

Pic. 1: Himmler's anti-Balfour Declaration Cable as sent to al-Husaini on November 2, 1943



To the Grand Mufti Amin al-Husaini,

the Greater Germany's National-Socialist Movement has since its advent upheld its fight against the world Jewry as written on its flag. Therefore, it always closely watched the fight of the freedom-loving Arabs, above all in Palestine, against the Jewish intruders. The recognition of this enemy and the joint struggle against it are the firm base of the natural alliance between the National-Socialist Greater Germany and the freedom-loving Muslims of the whole world. In this spirit, I am conveying to you, on the anniversary of the wretched Balfour Declaration, my heartiest greetings and wishes for the lucky realization of your struggle until the certain final victory.

Reichsfuehrer-SS, Heinrich Himmler

On that Tuesday, All Souls' Day, as if to finally bury the Balfour Declaration, the SS leader cabled this 100-word-telegram to his guest's anti-Balfour Declaration meeting. The November 2, 1943 cable was supposed to protest the 1917 letter written by the British foreign secretary Arthur J. Balfour to Jews that favored a Jewish national home in Palestine.

Instigating Mideasterners to turn against this "imperialist plot by colonialists," (it was rather a Jewish self-liberation), Himmler assured al-Husaini the official sympathy of the Nazi movement with the "freedom-loving Arabs, above all in Palestine, against the world Jewry."

In fact, it was a two-way-street, for the Mideast also shaped Nazis of some generations. Many, born a decade before 1900, fought there in 1914 as young officers with the allied [Ottomans](#) and advanced in 1939 to Nazi leaders. Hitler's press, on the other hand, idolized war minister Enver Pasha and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's resistance against the Allies and [results](#) of World War One.

Himmler, the third strong man, after Hitler and air force chief Hermann Göring, named all Jews their "joint enemy." He pointed at two separate movements converging in Europe and in the Mideast against the "common foes." In his cable he stressed to recognize those enemies. This included also "powers behind them," Great Britain, and America that had approved the Balfour Declaration in 1922; on July 24, the League of Nations confirmed it too by Mandated Areas, which agreed to Balfour's text, the historical nexus and reconstitution of a Jewish home.

The protest meeting convened in Göring's Luftwaffe Ministry, the House of the Aviators. So al-Husaini was well linked to the top three men of Nazism. Why Göring? In February of 1943 the Mufti invested his "war chest" with foreign cash, \$920,000, in shares of seven big German companies. By Hitler's nod, Göring became the trustee. Had Berlin won, al-Husaini would have emerged as a rich leader, if not caliph, of the Greater Arab Empire based on the Nazi principles.

Pic. 2: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husaini and Ali al-Kailani

The Mufti was not the only Arab guest and speaker at the air force chief's office near Brandenburg Gate. Rashid Ali al-Kailani was there and spoke too, as he was Iraq's ex-premier who led the failed anti-British coup in Baghdad. There, on June 1, [1941](#) he and the Mufti initiated the al-Farhud pogrom as a "model to rid Arabia of Jews." Hitler had ordered limited help for Iraq's coup and used this event in the British sphere as a diversion of his upcoming war against Soviet Russia on June 22.



Himmler meant in his cable that "their joint fight against the Jewish intruders" rests on the "natural alliance of Greater Germany and Islamic areas." By his wording, he elevated and treated al-Husaini as *the* Palestinian, Arab and Islamist leader on his, and thus also Berlin's side.

Also, Himmler, an ideologue as well, alluded to their parallel ideologies: German National-Socialism and Palestinian National Islamism. But this opposed the first, [1917](#) published Arab theory of Islamism calling for just one global Muslim [Brotherhood](#) not only in an area such as Palestine, but for every Islamic region. Since 1700, nine Islamist generations – the Mufti acted in generation five – refined Islamism as a supranational movement of an overarching pan-Islamist fight for the whole worldwide community to restore the glory of the olden caliphate days.

At the start of World War One, the Ottoman war minister Enver Pascha had tasked the mufti Sheikh Salih ash-Sharif [at-Tunisi](#) to modify the doctrine of jihad for a "partial jihad" in an interfaith coalition war: on the side of "allied infidels just against certain enemy infidels." Enver asked also the Egyptians Abd al-Aziz Jawish and Abd al-Malik Hamza to produce an illustrated monthly magazine to be published in a German "Berlin version" and in an Arabic "Istanbul version," called The Islamic World, العالم الإسلامي. Therein they spread the word from 1916 to 1918. Hamza edited his theory of Islamism, as he named it, a mix of modern political Islamism and religious affairs of World War One during a "German-Ottoman jihadization of Islamism."

Pic. 3: Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop sent also a 1943 cable to al-Husaini: "the destruction of the so called Jewish home is an integral goal;" a year prior he affirmed the home's destruction and the Arab independence

In Berlin exiled, al-Husaini got much of what he wished for: an Axis broadcast in favor of Arab independence; a halt of Jewish emigration to the Mideast by the Nazis in late 1941; a secret April 28, 1942 letter between Berlin, Rome, al-Kailani and him to destroy a Jewish home in Palestine. Now al-Husaini asked for a telegram to his credit in the natural alliance of Nazism and Islamism. Drafted by the SS, envoy Wilhelm Melchers agreed to the cable. He knew that the Mufti wrote since 1937 four key drafts of pacts. Paragraph seven always stayed the same: a Jewish home in Palestine is illegal. Even as in May of 1943 the Allies drove Axis troops out of the Mideast, he still asked the Nazis to destroy the Jewish home.

In his anti-Balfour cable Heinrich Himmler reminded the Mufti of the "natural alliance." Al-Husaini knew this term well from World War One. It was often used when he served as young Ottoman officer posted in areas of Armenian deportations like Smyrna (İzmir).

But in 1943 the magnitude of the Nazi debacle at Stalingrad, a loss of about 110,000 men, was sinking in. Himmler got desperate to also recruit Muslim soldiers with al-Husaini's help: in Bosnia – Berlin praised him as a recruiter of about 20,000 men into what became known as 13th SS Khanjar division – and in the camps filled with Soviet-Asian Muslim Prisoners of War.

As Hitler heard about al-Husaini's activities, he granted his propaganda chief Goebbels extra power for the Mufti in all directions. Al-Husaini even offered to mediate with Stalin. But Hitler insisted: "no separate peace deals" (in the Mideast the Mufti used this motto until 1974.) Joseph Goebbels became number four in the Nazi hierarchy with solid ties to al-Husaini. Number five was Gottlob Berger and a dozen of his SS men; six, spy chief Wilhelm Canaris; seven, foreign minister von Ribbentrop; eight, the chief ideologue Alfred E. Rosenberg. As number nine acted grand admiral Karl Dönitz who on April 30, 1945 succeeded Hitler. Berlin wanted al-Husaini to flee by a submarine, as Ottoman leaders did in 1918. But he used a car to Bern, had to return for he was on a "32 names no asylum list," and lived for a year near Paris before going to Cairo.

Back to 1943. The Mufti met Himmler on July 4 at his East Prussian field quarter. They spent a day with SS Jew-hunters. Two years prior, local Jews were killed by SS commandos. Hitler tasked Himmler with the shooting also of Jewish civilians "as partisans" in occupied Eastern Europe and to put others into labor and death camps. Al-Husaini praised his talks to Himmler as a base of trust and put up the photo of their handshake with Himmler's memento in his office.

On that summer day, Himmler told the Mufti of having so far killed three million Jews. He confided to him other top secrets. The German nuclear research advanced: In three years, Berlin will have an atomic weapon that would secure the "final victory." The same term of the "final victory," النصر النهائي, in the Mufti's invitation and Himmler's cable, now modified by "certain" (lacking in al-Husaini's Arabic translation), perhaps betraying some uncertainty on both ends?

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Berlin, April 28, 1942

Your Eminence:

In response to your letter and to the accompanying communication of His Excellency, Prime Minister Raschid Ali El Gailani, and confirming the terms of our conversation, I have the honour to inform you:

The German Government appreciates fully the confidence of the Arab peoples in the Axis Powers in their aims and in their determination to conduct the fight against the common enemy until victory is achieved. The German Government has the greatest understanding for the national aspirations of the Arab countries as have been expressed by you both and the greatest sympathy for the sufferings of your peoples under British oppression.

I have therefore the honour to assure you, in complete agreement with the Italian Government, that the independence and freedom of the suffering Arab countries presently subjected to British oppression, is also one of the aims of the German Government.

Germany is consequently ready to give all her support to the oppressed Arab countries in their fight against British domination, for the fulfillment of their national aim to independence and sovereignty and for the destruction of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

As previously agreed, the content of this letter should be maintained absolutely secret until we decide otherwise.

I beg your Eminence to be assured of my highest esteem and consideration.

(Signed) Ribbentrop

To His Eminence

the Grossmufti of Palestine

Amin El Husseini.

A year earlier, the Axis elevated al-Husaini, not al-Kailani, to the leader of a future Greater Arab Empire. In turn, the Mufti soon informed Berlin about the Allied landing in North Africa between Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia on November 8, 1942. But Hitler refused to believe it.

The Mufti blamed "obstructionists" as the envoy Fritz Grobba that some of his ideas remained idle: Islamist troops, uprisings and a headquarter in Tunis or Cairo (Hitler granted him his Arab Brigade on "Balfour Day" of 1944 "to oppose Churchill's Jewish Brigade"); a trip to the Arab West with spy chief Canaris; mobilizing many "French Arabs" for troops and to bomb the 1943 Zionist meeting in Jerusalem, a year later in Tel Aviv, though Göring had no airplanes left. For that pro-Balfour event in Jerusalem, the SS called al-Husaini's meeting the "counter-congress." In 1943, as Nazis left the Mideast and retreated in Europe, the Mufti sent 60 men to be trained as paratroopers to Den Haag's SS "sabotage school:" his "troop kernel" for the next war against Palestine's Jews. He visited his "Dutch commandos" in August. In 1944 landed two of them in Tall al-Afar and Jericho. In turn, Himmler pleased him, also for his other war actions, with his "anti-Balfour cable," handed out to each protest meeting's participant with the Mufti's speech.

Pic. 4: Himmler's 1943 cable to the grand mufti al-Husaini from his memoirs

Invoking known Islamic verses, he painted Jews as "cosmic evil," denied them historical ties to the land, but contradicted himself: "they want to rebuild on the debris of the al-Aqsa mosque their temple." He invited Himmler via Berlin's Islamic Central Institute. The SS chief's cable used the code final victory (missing in the Library's text, also the natural alliance, *التحالف الطبيعي*), for the Nazis boost in favor of the Mufti. After the war, this cable was published also in America, and by al-Husaini in Arab journals and in his memoirs.

«إلى المفتي الأكبر أمين الحسيني
لقد كتبت الحركة الوطنية الاشتراكية، على علمها، منذ نشوئها، الكفاح ضد اليهودية العالمية، ولذلك فقد كانت تتابع دائماً، وبعطف خاص، كفاح العرب المحبين للحرية، ولاسيما في فلسطين، ضد اليهود الدخلاء، وإن تقدير مبلغ خطر هذا العدو، والكفاح المشترك ضده، يؤلفان أساساً متيناً للحلف الطبيعي بين ألمانيا الوطنية الاشتراكية الكبرى وبين المسلمين المحبين للحرية في العالم بأسره.
واني، بهذا الشعور، ولناسية تصريح بلفور المشؤوم، ابعث اليكم بتحياتي القلبية لكفاحكم الموفق حتى النصر النهائي.»
«هانريش هملر»

In hindsight, the Mufti remembered that the Ottomans, allied with the Kaiser, talked to Jewish delegates about a Jewish home in Palestine. Of the Three Pashas Enver, Cemal and Talat, the grand vizier took the lead. After half a year of talks, in mid-1918, Talat issued an "Ottoman Balfour Declaration," briefly: Istanbul's Council of Ministers lifted all restrictions for Jewish emigration to and colonization of Palestine. They welcomed a religious and national center for Jews as equals among others. As Istanbul agreed to it, Jerusalem fell already into British hands.

Al-Husaini read that declaration in Turkish. It looked much like the Balfour text, he recalled. Published in September of 1918, it went down with crumbling empires. Yet, it was not in vain, indicating early on Berlin's official sympathy for a Jewish home in Palestine. From a viewpoint in German-Mideastern history, the Kaiser and the Pashas had hoped that Jews would also bring development and means, a modern turn to a commonwealth to the benefit of all peoples there.

Thus, the Ottomans, Istanbul's last Imperial Islamic Government, found a fair way of negotiations, closer to realities of history, also of the Jewish people with strong ties to ancestral lands that the Mufti **rejected**. He refused them, even British offers for an Arab home. While seeking all or nothing, he put the eggs into Hitler's racist basket. The Mufti lost with him and further as architect of the an-Nakba debacle. The rejectionist-in-chief missed compromises, leading into a dead end. Recently, **London** said it would not apologize for the Balfour Declaration, rather being proud of its role in creating the State of Israel.

Wolfgang G. Schwanitz

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