

Unholy Alliances

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Abstract: *While Nazi Germany's failed attempt to conquer British-controlled regions of the Middle East such as Egypt during the Second World War has been widely studied, less is known of its meddling in Palestinian affairs before and during the war. From 1917 to 1948, Britain had a mandate on Palestine with a promise of creating a Jewish National Home, ostracizing many of the region's Arab inhabitants. When the Nazis rose to power in Germany in 1933, they saw benefits to both cooperating with Zionist Jews to encourage them to leave antisemitic Germany and Arab alliances in Palestine to create chaos in a British controlled region. In doing this, they tested British control of the region by supporting the Arab Revolt with its prominent nationalist leaders like Amin Al-Husayni. By the fall of the Reich, whether the Nazis wanted it or not, they had sped up Zionist dreams of a Jewish National Home in Palestine while worsening their Arab allies' position in the region.*

Keywords: *Palestine, Nazi Germany, Britain, Zionism, World War Two, Arab Revolt, Immigration*

Introduction

The fire crackles away in a cave near the outskirts of Arura in late 1944, on a hot October night. One of the men hiding in the cave, a former Jerusalem native, wipes his forehead clear of sweat and dust as he looks down at his worn khaki uniform illuminated in the fire light. He had received the uniform back in Germany, where he was given military training by the Grand Mufti Al-Husayni himself, with the assistance of the Reich's notorious SS. Despite this training and being so close to the home he hasn't seen since the Arab Revolt, nothing could have prepared Abdullatif Zul el-Kifel, known as Latif, for this operation. He has barely slept or ate since he was dropped into the region a few days ago. The distant echo of dogs barking breaks Latif's thoughts. It has become an all too-familiar sound, but these noises are closer than before. British search dogs are constantly on their tail while Royal Air Force (RAF) planes search for them from the sky. As Latif huddles around the campfire, he knows the game will soon be up; soon he will be

apprehended and most likely interrogated.¹ Even he is confused about how he got here: an Arab sent on a German expedition to sabotage Jews in Palestine, now being hunted by the British. Latif does not realize it then, but he is simply a pawn in a game between desperate factions and unusual alliances.²

When the Nazis rose to power in Germany in early 1933, the government immediately began disenfranchising Jewish people. First, they boycotted Jewish businesses and then passed legislation that prohibited Jews from participating in many aspects of public life, ranging from holding political office to mundane activities such as attending a movie theater. Then the Nuremberg Laws were passed, which completely segregated Jews from other Germans in all aspects of life, especially marriage and procreation. Facing punitive legislative actions and constant physical harassment by Sturmabteilung (SA), the Nazi party's militant wing, by the 1930s, Jews came to realize that the new German regime no longer welcomed them in the country. Along with Bolshevism, Jews were the Aryans' arch enemy, labeled a major threat to a prosperous Germany and its people, the Volk. However, neither victim nor perpetrator could have predicted during the pre-World War Two years of Nazi Germany's reign a Final Solution or mass genocide of Jews. Thus, before World War Two plunged the world into chaos, the Nazis

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¹Perry Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men: Haj Amin Al-Husayni and SS Parachute Expeditions to Palestine and Iraq, 1944-1945," *Journal of Military History* 82, no. 3 (July 2018): 806.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hia&AN=130321453&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

² Abdullatif Zul el-Kifel was an expatriate of Palestine and member of the Palestine Arab Party (PAP) before he moved to Iraq to study at university. Here he became involved with Al-Husayni, an Arab nationalist, and his inner circle. Al-Husayni and his inner circle, including Zul el-Kifel, led a failed coup in Iraq in 1941. Husayni, Zul el-Kifel and many others fled to Germany afterwards. Encouraged by Husayni, Zul el-Kifel took part with four others in the SS supported parachute drop into Palestine, October 1944. On the morning of October 16, most of them were discovered and apprehended by British patrols hunting them with search dogs and scout planes. The opening of this paper is a summary and recreation of these events.

and Hitler saw benefit in helping Jews emigrate from Germany to British Mandate Palestine, one of the few countries to welcome a mass influx of Jews with its promise to create in Palestine a Jewish National Home. This shared goal between the Nazis and the Zionists manifested in economic and even political cooperation.³ This, however, left Germany at odds with many Arabs and increased their nationalist sentiment. Arabs in Palestine were becoming more frustrated with wave after wave of Jewish immigrants; they were hostile to Zionism and the British regime in Palestine.

Though originally supporting Jewish immigration to Palestine, the Nazis kept close ties with Arab nationalists in Palestine. Through the 12-year period of the Nazi Reich, the Nazis oscillated between cooperating with Jews and Arabs in Palestine, depending on their interest and goals at any given time.⁴ In the early periods of the Reich, the Nazis supported Jewish immigration to Palestine, while on the eve of war, the Nazis hesitated on which faction to fully back and veered between continued support of Zionism to supplying arms and money to Arabs during the Arab Revolt in Palestine against the British. With the outbreak of World War Two against Great Britain and France, Nazi interests shifted firmly towards the Arabs in order to undermine the British in the region. Nazi/Arab relations stabilized for the duration of the war, with the Germans supporting Arab revolts against the British and cooperating with certain Arab nationalists such as Amin Al-Husayni. In response to Nazi interference, British policy and actions in the Palestine region shifted depending on current threats and influences, from the 1939 White Paper, indirectly helping the British feel they had fulfilled their pledge in establishing a Jewish National Home, to increased paranoia and policing of the Palestine region out of fear of

³ Klaus Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts: Zionism and Nazi Germany, 1933-1941," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 5, no. 3/4 (1976): 54.

⁴ R, Melka, "Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question." *Middle Eastern Studies* 5, no. 3 (1969): 221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206908700130>.

German and Arab spies and saboteurs. Overall, the Nazi impact on British Palestine ensured one thing by the end of the Second World War: whether the Nazis supported it or not, they had directly and indirectly sped up Zionist dreams of a Jewish National State, and in retrospect, hurt their Arab allies.

Zionist Collaboration with the Nazis

When Hitler ascended to power in late January 1933, roughly 500,000 Jews lived in Germany. Of these, the majority saw themselves as Germans first, while only a minority were Zionists.⁵ Zionism's main ideology is for a Jewish National State, and thus Zionism and Fascism carry similar ideological traits, chiefly in their emphasis on ethno-nationalism, the former Jewish, the latter White Christian. In his "The Secret Contacts: Zionism and Nazi Germany, 1933-1941," Klaus Polkhen compares the two ideologies and notes the similarities, writing "the fascists as well as the Zionists believed in unscientific racial theories, and both met on the same ground in their beliefs in such mystical generalizations as 'national character'"⁶ The Nazis were sworn antisemites; however, it is no easy task removing 500,000 people from a country's population, even through boycotts and disenfranchisement. Therefore, the Nazi Party saw the Zionists as a potential ally. Alfred Rosenberg, a Reich minister in the Nazi Government and one of the chief ideologues of the party, said in 1937, recounting the Nazi position on Jews in 1933: "Zionism must be vigorously supported so that a certain number of German Jews is transported annually to Palestine or at least made to leave the country."⁷ Similarly on June 21, 1933 an official Zionist declaration was released in response to the new Nazi Government, imploring Jewish immigration to Palestine and cooperation with the new German government, "In our

⁵ Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts," 55.

⁶ Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts," 57.

⁷ Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts," 57.

opinion one of the principles of the new German state of national exaltation would make a suitable solution possible.”⁸ Thus Zionists and the Nazis created an unholy alliance that would see non-Zionist Jews punished and would change the scope of Palestinian politics.

An unholy alliance typically refers to two allied factions antagonistic to each other, making the alliance unnatural and often unpredictable. Although the Nazis’ disenfranchisement of and crackdown on many Jewish businesses and organizations had begun in 1933, the Nazis turned a blind eye to Zionist organizations and newspapers. A January 1936 article in the *Palestine Post* demonstrates the Nazis’ official stance on Zionists, in an interview between the German press and Herr Hinkel, the commissar for Jewish Affairs in the Reich. He explained that the Nazis continued supporting Zionist emigration because they are the only Jews that have given a formal and acceptable guarantee of cooperation with the Reich government.⁹ Economic agreements between the Zionists and Reich Government were meant to complete this immigration to the Holy Land.

As early as 1933, the Nazis began economic cooperation with Zionists through the Haavara Agreements, completed between various Zionist organizations including the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and Zionist businesses in Palestine on the one hand, and the Nazi Reich’s Ministry of Economics on the other. The deal was finalized by August of 1933.¹⁰ In essence it allowed German Jews to move goods and finances from Germany to Palestine. Polkhen describes the process a Jewish emigrant would undertake:

... the Jewish emigrant paid his money... into the German account of the Haavara (at the Wassermann Bank in Berlin or at the Warburg Bank in Hamburg). With this money, the Jewish importers could purchase German goods for export to Palestine, while paying the equivalent value in Palestinian pounds into the Haavara account at the Anglo-Palestine

⁸ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 59.

⁹ Palcor, “Nazi Opinion of Zionism.” *The Palestine Post*, January 29, 1936.

¹⁰ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 221.

Bank in Palestine. When the emigrant arrived in Palestine, he received from this account the equivalent value of the sum he had paid in Germany.¹¹ In “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” R. Melka explains that the Haavara Agreements allowed German Jews emigrating to Palestine to essentially deposit their capital into an account in Germany and upon arrival in Palestine be reimbursed with the money that was put into the account.¹² Many Jewish organizations and businesses in Palestine found the Haavara Agreements absolutely necessary for economic and infrastructure growth within the Holy Land to accommodate the influx of Jewish immigrants.¹³

German Jews immigrating to Palestine were able to transfer considerable wealth to the region and continue to invest in businesses and property in Palestine through this system. This Haavara process was typically only available to wealthy German Jews, as the minimum deposit into the German accounts that would be transferred to Palestine was around 1,000 Reichsmark. Polkhen accredits the Haavara agreements with helping boost Jewish capital in Palestine and partly aid in the establishment of Israel, stating, “Indeed, prior to the founding of Israel, the Haavara transfer was a huge booster for the Zionist economy in Palestine. Zionist sources speak of a sum of 139.6 million Reichsmarks -- an enormous sum for that time, being transferred from Germany to Palestine.”¹⁴ He later goes on to say that after the foundation of Israel many of the key leaders in its economic industry and projects such as the largest foundry in the country were owned by former German immigrants who came in the pre-war Nazi period.¹⁵

As early as summer 1933, the Haavara agreements and immigration to Palestine were in full swing. A *New York Times* article from July 19, 1933, said in reference to Jewish immigration

¹¹ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 64.

¹² Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 221.

¹³ Yfaat Wiess, “The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Movement: A Jewish Dilemma on the Eve of the Holocaust,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998): 132.

¹⁴ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 66.

¹⁵ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 67.

to Palestine that four thousand German Jews had already migrated to Palestine within the last three months.¹⁶ Melka's article highlights a report from His Majesty's Government on total Jewish immigration statistics to Palestine. It shows that from 1932 to 1938, Germany had a total of 40,000 Jews immigrate to Palestine, while Poland was the largest contributor of Jewish immigrants overall, with a total of about 80,000 in that period. However, Germany had more Jewish immigrants than Poland in the year 1938, contributing to over 50% of all Jewish immigration in that year.¹⁷ On top of that, due to the Haavara Agreements, the German immigrants arrived with considerably more wealth and property compared to their Polish and other Eastern European counterparts.

Zionist cooperation with Nazi Germany was not limited to economic agreements. In the pre-war years, the Nazis turned a blind eye to Zionist institution building in Germany while sabotaging other Jewish religious and communal organizations. Zionists in Germany and Palestine also opposed international boycotts against Nazi Germany trade in foreign ports. In the pre-war years, many industries and ports boycotted German goods because of the Nazis stance on Jews especially in Britain and the United States. In the hopes of getting more and more Jews to immigrate to Palestine, Zionists again turned their backs on other Jews and supported German trade. Polkhen notes how Wilhelm Stuckart (Secretary of the Reich Minister of the Interior) in a memorandum emphasizes how crucial the Haavara Agreements are to the German economy, stating: "The main advantages [of the Haavara agreement] are the following: the influence of the Haavara group in Palestine has led to the unusual but hoped-for contingency wherein of all

¹⁶ "4,000 German Jews Reach Palestine: Zionist Body Reports Half of the Recent Immigrants Support Themselves." *New York Times* (1923-), Jul 19, 1933. <https://proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/4-000-german-jews-reach-palestine/docview/100628804/se-2?accountid=14378>.

¹⁷ Melka, "Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question," 230.

places, Palestine is the country in which German goods are not boycotted by the Jewish side...”¹⁸ Zionists even bought a shipping company in Palestine that would ship Jews from Germany to Palestine that raised the Nazi swastika on its ships’ masts.¹⁹

Zionist and Nazi cooperation prospered to the point that Reich officials, using the WZO shipping company, visited Palestine to promote Zionism back in Germany and encourage more immigration of German Jews. Joseph Goebbels even produced propaganda pieces about it, including a medal struck on one side with a swastika, the other the Zionist star.²⁰ Adolf Eichmann, who later in the war became one of the chief architects of the Holocaust, was invited to Palestine in 1937 by Zionists.²¹ British officials would later refuse Eichmann and his SS entourage entry into Palestine, and he would end up going to Egypt. His intentions to visit, whether it was to meet with Zionists or with Arab nationalists, are highly debated among scholars. In any case, Eichmann and other Nazi officials used Zionist ships to enter Palestine. Nazi visits to Palestine, along with Zionist economic and political cooperation, not only helped the Nazi’s goals of a “*judenrein*” or “Jewish free Europe”, but it also boosted their economy. In turn, such trade and property boosts to the Nazi regime helped them in military re-armament. Zionists undermined the British who were in control of Palestine at this point. In an effort to forward their own goals of a Jewish National Home, they supported a totalitarian regime instead of rallying around the British, who were desperately trying to thwart Germany from launching

¹⁸ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 65.

¹⁹ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 66.

²⁰ Souvenir Coin with a Swastika and Star of David Owned by a Young German Jewish Girl, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, Washington D.C. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, Washington D.C.
<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn517746>

²¹ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 73.

Europe into another war. The Zionist-Nazi collaboration not only did nothing to stop the impending war; it actually helped encourage the war.²²

Polkhen, at the end of his article, concludes that the Zionists were crucial to the Nazis and detrimental to the Allies and other Jews in Europe by stating: “The Zionist leaders not only did nothing against fascism; they even took action that sabotaged the anti-fascist front (through the prevention of an economic boycott by their Haavara agreement).” In practice, they also rejected attempts to save the German Jews which did not have as their aim the settlement of the Jews in Palestine.²³ There is little doubt that this large transfer of wealth and Jewish immigrants, with the help of Nazi Germany, only distilled further anger and dissent into the local Arab population of Palestine, and that British control of the region would soon be tested.

The Nazis and the Arabs

Before the large-scale 1936 Arab Revolt in Palestine, in reaction to increased Jewish immigration and their large capital growth, Nazi ideology was not unpopular among Arab nationalists. Arabs nationalists and the Nazis shared nationalism as a trait. The Nazis wanted a unified German population, the Arab nationalists wanted a unified Arabic population; they also shared a common struggle between the Jews and the British. Germany lost the First World War along with significant territory, while Arab regions of the former Ottoman Empire fell under British and other imperialist powers. In *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, Barry Rubin and Wolfgang Schwanitz highlight the similarities between Germany’s fascism and Arab nationalism: “Nazi Germany and its ideology became popular among Arabs for many reasons. They, too, saw themselves as a weak, defeated, and humiliated people...

²² Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 81.

²³ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 81.

Germany was also an enemy of Britain.”²⁴ Certain Arab nationalists began to look up to Nazi Germany. In “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” Francis Nicosia says on the Arab reaction to the Nazis rise to power, “The new regime in Germany in 1933 generated a high degree of enthusiasm throughout the Arab world.”²⁵ In 1933, *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler’s autobiographical manifesto, was translated into Arabic and became a best seller the same year in Arabic regions.²⁶ The narrative of a humiliated Germany rising back to power, throwing off the West’s influence and having antisemitic beliefs was clearly inspiring for many Arabs who wanted to thwart off Zionism in Palestine.

Amin Al-Husayni, an Arab nationalist, had a deep fascination with Hitler and his ideology. Originally, Husayni cooperated with the British regime in Palestine, becoming Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in 1921 and one of the most powerful Arab political leaders in Palestine with a network of allies and influence.²⁷ With his position, he had control over some of the most holy Islamic sites in Palestine, in addition to religious funding and endowments. In the Arab world he was a heroic leader for Muslims. To the British, he was a moderate among Arab Nationalists who could be worked with, unlike more radical nationalists. However, by 1933 Al-Husayni became fed up with British rule in Palestine in the face of ever-increasing Jewish immigration to the region. That same year, he met with the German consulate for the first time, expressing anti-Jewish sentiment and admiration for the new Nazi regime.²⁸ Al-Husayni, like many other Arabs, was tired of growing Jewish immigration to Palestine and the exponential capital growth of Jews.

²⁴ Barry M. Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz. *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 4.

²⁵ Francis Nicosia, "Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany, 1933–1939: Ideologic and Strategic Incompatibility: The Weimar Precedent." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, no. 3 (1980): 351.

²⁶ Rubin and Schwanitz. *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 4.

²⁷ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 783.

²⁸ Francis, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 352.

He had concluded by 1933 that cooperation with the British was fruitless, and Zionism was a direct threat to Arab well-being in Palestine. He needed other allies.

Unfortunately for Al-Huysani and other radical Arab nationalists, Nazi Germany was not at that point interested in an alliance with Arab nationalists. Many Arabs admired Nazi Germany simply because they were at odds with the British. As Nicosia says, “The consensus among German diplomats in the Middle East was that Arab enthusiasm for National Socialist Germany was devoid of a real understanding of the significance of Adolf Hitler and the goals of the National Socialist movement.”²⁹ Hitler and the Nazis saw Arabs and their Islamic beliefs as subhuman, similar to how the Nazis saw the Jews. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler stated that he saw natives of colonized regions such as the Middle East as inferior peoples.³⁰ In *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives*, Gilbert Achcar highlights that the everyday Arab population would have detested Hitler and the Nazis if they understood the real content of Nazi doctrine.³¹ He then goes on to argue that Arab leaders like Al-Husayni concealed this truth from much of the Arab population in order to gain as much support as possible and thwart the British rule from Palestine, to eliminate any chance of a Jewish National Home.

By April of 1936, tensions between Arabs and Jews in Palestine had come to a boiling point. Arabs had gone on general strike and on April 25, Al-Husayni took leadership of the Arab High Committee, essentially becoming the leader of the strike. The goal was simple: pressure the British to end Jewish immigration and end the Zionist dream of a Jewish National Home. In the coming months, the strike escalated into full-on revolt with violence and death in the thousands. Arabs engaged in violence against Jews and British forces, and the British had to send in

²⁹ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 353.

³⁰ Gilbert Achcar. *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives*, (Picador, 2011), 136.

³¹ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 137.

thousands of troops and policing units to restore law and order. The British issued a warrant for Al-Husayni's arrest, and he fled first to Iraq and then later to Nazi Germany in 1941. Though prior to the Arab Revolt, Germany appeared firm on its domestic policy of moving Jews to Palestine, the onset of violence during the Arab Revolt in Palestine caused German officials to vacillate between continued cooperation with the Zionists and support for the Arab nationalist cause which made it difficult for the British Empire to maintain rule in Palestine.

The Arab Revolt and Nazi Germany's Influences

The Reich government shifted its policy in 1936 on Palestine in response to the Arab Revolt. Certain officials within its government, mainly consulate officials dealing in Middle Eastern affairs, began to feel that Zionist support was no longer in Germany's interest, and a debate within the Government began. Polkhen states, "Only after the outbreak of the Palestinian Arab rebellion of 1936 did the first difference of opinion set in amongst the various fascist institutions about the usefulness of continuing the Haavara transfers."³² Arab delegations, already knee-deep in the Arab Revolt and needing support, were adamant with Reich consulate officials that continued Nazi support for Zionist immigration to Palestine could create serious problems for the Germans down the line. They warned of a potential "Jewish Vatican" in the Middle East, as well as Arab dissent towards Germany if they did not end their support for Zionism.³³ Melka describes a report from German Foreign Minister von Neurath that support for Zionism should cease: "The formation of a Jewish State or a Jewish-led political structure under British mandate is not in Germany's interest, since a Palestinian State would not absorb world Jewry but would create an additional position of power under international law for international

³² Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts," 67.

³³ Melka, "Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question," 221.

Jewry, somewhat like the Vatican State...”³⁴ Others in the Nazi government argued similar points, contending that the creation of a strong “Jewish Vatican” would only hurt Germany later on and that the Arabs could be a potential ally against the British.

However, others within the Government, especially those who helped set up the Haavara agreements, like von Hentig, head of Middle Eastern affairs, wanted to continue the cooperation. The debate eventually was put to rest by Adolf Hitler himself, who in July 1937, in a Ministry of the Interior report, affirmed that Jewish immigration to Palestine should be supported. Hitler argued that Jews concentrated in one small region would be easy to deal with later on and that this region would be plagued with internal strife. As German influence and power grew, they would have no problem dealing with this inferior Jewish state.³⁵ Still as Arabs desperately urged, Nazi cooperation with Arab nationalists began. As the Arab Revolt continued, Nazi shipments of arms and money flowed covertly into Palestine under the British authorities’ noses, as well as anti-British propaganda broadcast into Palestine by German radio stations.

On the surface, at the beginning of the Arab Revolt, Germany appeared to be indifferent to the uprising in Palestine. The German press in 1936 was only mildly critical of British policies which may have led to the revolt.³⁶ Likewise it was still official Nazi party policy in 1936 that party members in Palestine have nothing to do with the Arab movement.³⁷ The German Reich did not want to aggravate the British Empire as it continued its own re-armament. Though this was the party’s official stance, its actions could not be more to the contrary.

³⁴ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 222.

³⁵ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 223.

³⁶ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 356.

³⁷ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 225.

Al-Husayni sent his ally, Musa al-Amini, who shared similar pro-German views, to Europe multiple times to collect German arms and money for the Arab nationalist cause. Al-Husayni sent similar envoys to Rome, and to German ambassadors stationed in the Middle East to collect weapons and money.³⁸ As Germany and Italy sent in arms beginning as late as 1937, the arms would first be smuggled to German consulates and embassies before being sent into Palestine. Rubin and Schwanitz describe the process: “Al-Husaini mobilized Arab rules and radical groups, as well as Italy and Germany’s sponsorship, for his intifada. From March 1937 on, he led delegations to Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries for this purpose. Syrian and Transjordanian border guards looked the other way as arms were smuggled into Palestine.”³⁹ The arms and money were mostly supplied by the Abwehr, the Reich’s military intelligence department, similar to America’s Central Intelligence Agency. The Abwehr also helped the German propaganda ministry, headed by Joseph Goebbels, reach Palestine with anti-British and antisemitic messages: “This theme of common opposition to Jewry also figured heavily in Nazi propaganda for Arab consumption... German Arabic radio services, which began broadcasting in 1938, found Palestine an inexhaustible source of stories – true, half-true, or false – illustrating Jewish and British wickedness, and permitting lavish expressions of German sympathy for the Arab cause.”⁴⁰

With the help of this support, Al-Husayni and his allies were able to keep the Arab Revolt going until 1939. In addition, through this cooperation of shipments of guns and capital, Al-Husayni was able to establish better contact with the Nazis and further grow his network of allies and spies. He began to align more with the Nazis’ ideological beliefs as well. Al-Husayni

³⁸ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 96.

³⁹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 95.

⁴⁰ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 226.

shared many of Hitler's views on the world especially when it came to the Jews. In 1937, he publicly advocated for Arabs to commit genocide against Jews in his speech, "Appeal to All Muslims of the World."⁴¹ The Nazi ideology was resonating in some Arab nationalist minds, and it was having a profound effect on British Palestine, furthering unrest and violence during the Arab Revolt years, during which hundreds of Jews died. Thousands more Arabs were killed, wounded, and arrested amid the fighting and British reprisals.

Still despite military support for the Arabs and fraternization with Al-Husayni and other Arabs, the Nazis continued their emigration of Jews out of Germany. Along with the top brass of the Reich government affirming in 1937 and again in January 1938 that the Haavara agreements would continue, a *New York Times* article from September 1939 highlights that despite the outbreak of war, the Nazis were still shipping Jews to Palestine. "Germany has permitted the emigration of seventy-seven Jewish children holding certificates for entrance into Palestine, despite war conditions and rumors that emigration from Germany has ceased..."⁴² The onset of war and the fact that the Nazis by now heavily favored the Arab cause did not result in a cessation of Zionist immigration in 1939. It can be inferred that the Nazis are simply attempting to undermine the British regime as much as possible and create division and chaos within British Palestine, having little actual care for the Arab cause. This inference may be supported by a meeting of Nazi high command that took place in mid-July 1938. The meeting included the top brass, such as Hermann Goering (head of the Luftwaffe), Heinrich Himmler (head of the SS), and Hitler himself. At the meeting, Hitler discussed that the planned attack on Czechoslovakia

⁴¹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 94.

⁴² "Nazis Free 77 Children: Permit More Jewish Youngsters to go to Palestine." *New York Times* (1923-), Sep 10, 1939. <https://proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/nazis-free-77-children/docview/103062078/se-2?accountid=14378>.

should coincide with heightened conflict in Palestine.⁴³ The Nazis were attempting any division and chaos they could within the British Empire in order to distract Britain from its own territorial desires in Europe.

In late 1936, the British government sent six delegates to Palestine, in order to determine the causes and roots of the massive insurgency. Known as the Peel Commission, it finalized a 400-page report that was released publicly on July 7, 1937.⁴⁴ In its length, the report identified Jewish immigration from Nazi Germany as one of the key causes for the Arab Revolt. In *Britain, Palestine, and Empire: The Mandate Years*, historian Penny Sinanoglou writes: “The rise in Jewish immigration in 1928 and early 1929 was blamed for the disturbances of 1929 just as the rapid influx of Jews fleeing Germany after Hitler’s ascendance in 1933 was said to have caused the 1936 rebellion.”⁴⁵ The commission also noted the rise in nationalism among Arabs. While Nazi Germany cannot be directly credited for starting the Arab Revolt, it is evident that the Nazis’ sense of nationalism and propaganda inspired and had a profound effect on Arab nationalists, as well as instigating further violence once the revolt kicked off through aid and propaganda.

The Peel Commission’s report of 1937 concluded with a plan to partition Palestine, known as the Peel Partition. It divided up the territory between Jews and Arabs with most of the land mass going to Arabs but putting vital seaports in Jewish hands. This did little to quell the unrest as both Zionists and Arab nationalists publicly denounced the partition. Violence ramped up for the duration of 1937 and 1938. All the while, Nazi weapons, finances, and propaganda were being shipped discreetly into the region for support of the Arabs. At the same time German

⁴³ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 364.

⁴⁴ Penny Sinanoglou, “The Peel Commission and Partition, 1936-1938” in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller, Ashgate, 2010, 119.

⁴⁵ Miller, *Britain, Palestine and Empire*, 136.

Jewish immigrants still came in monthly from Germany. The Nazis were fanning the flames on both sides of the conflict.

In 1939, with war on the horizon, the British were forced to make another policy shift, one that would truly quell the unrest in Palestine, at least temporarily. They issued the 1939 White Paper, passed in Parliament a few months before the outbreak of World War Two. It heavily limited Jewish immigration for the next five years and after those five years allowed Arab officials to have a say in Jewish immigration. The new policy also limited Jewish purchases of land in Palestine. The White Paper outraged many Zionists, some of whom resorted to terrorism, while also not satisfying some Arabs. Among them was Al-Husayni, partly because the White Paper had not gone further and partly because he, like many Arabs, completely mistrusted Britain. The policy had generally calmed the region and was Britain's last effort to keep the region in relative peace as war in Europe was loomed closer.⁴⁶ Melka argues why Britain moved to the White Paper:

Nazi Germany had been a prime mover in the abandonment of the Peel Commission's proposals. Although Arab-German collaboration on Palestine was, as we have seen, very limited, the threat was there, and it was used by the Arabs. Pan-Arab conferences in 1937 and in 1938 bluntly told Britain that if she continued to give preference to Zionist aims, the Arabs would seek friends among Britain's enemies. The White Paper, as Zionists have always said, was Chamberlain's appeasement of the Arabs.⁴⁷

Miller also argues the White Paper was in direct response to Nazi Germany's rise and influence, saying the paper signaled "British desire to win the Arab world to its side in the rivalry with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy."⁴⁸

On the eve of war, Germany had directly and indirectly altered the political atmosphere of Palestine, for Arabs and Jews alike. It had helped Jews grow in numbers and capital but at the

⁴⁶ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 143.

⁴⁷ Melka, "Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question," 228.

⁴⁸ Miller, *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, 169.

same time had shaken the British enough to drastically shift its own policy and appeal to Arabs. While Germany certainly demonstrated how it could flaunt its power outside of Europe and within the British empire, Nicosia argues it was wasted potential. He concludes with primary accounts from high-ranking German officials such as Chief of the General Staff, Franz Halder, that German policies towards the Arabs were “wasted opportunities” in that, “Germany failed to utilize Arab hostility towards Britain and France, and friendship for Germany to promote German political and economic influence in the Middle East.”⁴⁹ While Germany had a profound effect on the region in the prewar years, it could have utilized its influence further, which in turn could have altered Germany’s chances once the war began, especially when it came to oil resources and Palestine’s proximity to the Suez Canal, a crucial shipping lane. This can be primarily blamed on Hitler and the Nazi’s stubborn racist views on the world, seeing Arabs as inferior while also ridding Germany of the also-inferior Jews.

World War Two

Though the Nazis zigzagged between alliances with Zionists and Arabs on the eve of the war, Nazi Germany was essentially forced to align with Arab nationalists as the war escalated. As the common saying goes, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Likewise, many Jews previously sympathetic to Zionist cooperation with the Nazis on immigration policies were forced to throw their support in with the Allies as the war expanded in scale, and Nazi policies towards Jews all over Europe become increasingly genocidal. Berlin encouraged all efforts to incite rebellion and insurgency within Palestine and anywhere else in the British sphere of influence in the Arab/Muslim world. On October 18, 1940, Von Weizsacker, a German foreign minister, met with one of Al-Husayni’s envoys and read them the official declaration of Italian-

⁴⁹ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 366.

German support for the Arab cause in the Middle East. Later, in January 1941, the Germans and Italians issued a declaration of support for Arab independence, which was broadcast on Germany's Berlin Arabic radio, the same radio station that broadcasted propaganda all over the Arab world.⁵⁰ The Nazis supported the Arabs in Palestine for another major reason. With the outbreak of war, there was a dire need for raw materials. Germany required more oil than ever for its mechanized resources. Palestine was near oil-plentiful regions as well as the Suez Canal.⁵¹

Nazi support for Arab nationalists in Palestine essentially came in two forms. The first was military aid, which involved arm shipments, supporting sabotage teams, and training by the Reich's military branches: SS, Abwehr, and Wehrmacht. The second was through propaganda, primarily by the radio station which was launched during the Arab revolt. While the radio broadcasts targeted the entire Middle East, its propaganda was mainly aimed at Palestine, the region thought to be the most hostile to British rule and where Al-Husayni had a substantial network of intelligence.

The radio station, located just outside of Berlin, was in fact one of the most powerful shortwave radio stations in the world at the time. The station could be listened to thousands of miles away in Africa and Asia. Jeffrey Herf, in "Nazi Germany's Propaganda Aimed at Arabs and Muslims During World War II and the Holocaust: Old Themes, New Archival Findings," describes the importance of this radio station: "The Arabic propaganda campaign, especially with shortwave radio, was far more extensive than the previous focus on the Mufti alone would suggest...radios were often heard in cafes and other public places, and listening was a kind of collective experience. Radio was crucial to the propaganda efforts in the Middle East in this

⁵⁰ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 124.

⁵¹ Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men," 787.

period because rates of illiteracy were so significant.”⁵² The goal of these broadcasts were to rile the Arab population into revolt against the Jews and British. The broadcasts took place seven days a week and into the night. In the daytime, the station usually aired a mixture of music and news while in the evening it contained about two hours of commentary news. Fascist propaganda was mainly projected at this time.⁵³ The programs were called “Voice of the Free Arabs”⁵⁴ and other similar names. The radio was headed by pro-Nazi Arab exiles like Taqi ad-Din al Hilali, an Arabic professor who, after years of travelling, found a job at Bonn University and fell in line with Nazi ideology and started working for the Nazis via the radio station.⁵⁵ Al-Husayni, who ended up in Berlin after the failed Iraq coup, made many appearances on the radio between 1941 and 1945. One of his most notable broadcasts is his “Kill the Jews” speech, which was given at the height of General Rommel’s advance of the Afrika Corps into Egypt in 1942:

Kill the Jews who took your valuables. Arabs of Syria, Iraq, Palestine, what are you waiting for? ... According to Islam it is a duty to defend your lives. This can only be fulfilled by the liquidation of the Jews. This is your best chance to get rid of this dirty race. Kill the Jews! Set their possessions on fire! Demolish their shops! Liquidate those evil helpers of British imperialism!⁵⁶

Antisemitic, violent, aggressive messages were commonplace on the radio. Another example is when Fritz Grobba, a Reich foreign minister who was chiefly involved in Arab affairs, got the radio to broadcast anti-American propaganda. After Operation Torch (Allied landings in North Africa), the radio aired speeches claiming all Americans are secretly Jewish puppets and that Franklin Roosevelt may even be a Jew himself.⁵⁷

⁵² Jeffery Herf, “Nazi Germany’s Propaganda Aimed at Arabs and Muslims During World War II and the Holocaust: Old Themes, New Archival Findings.” *Central European History* 42, no. 4 (2009): 714 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40600977>.

⁵³ Herf, “Nazi Germany’s Propaganda,” 714.

⁵⁴ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 142.

⁵⁵ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 137.

⁵⁶ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 142.

⁵⁷ Herf, “Nazi Germany’s Propaganda,” 727.

Husayni's relatively late arrival at the radio station outside of Berlin in late 1941 was because he was previously involved in staging a coup in Iraq against the British-friendly regime. The regent of Iraq was pro-British, while many military officers and government officials were pro-German. The coup was staged by militant pro-Nazis like Husayni and others including as-Sabawi (the man who translated *Mein Kampf*) and al-Kailani, who headed the coup.⁵⁸ They set up the Arab Cooperation Committee to stage the government overthrow and collaborate with the Germans for support. Hitler gave his personal support to the coup, which began on April 1, 1941.⁵⁹ The insurrectionists initially had high hopes. They overthrew the regent and installed a pro-Nazi government, but it quickly fell apart under the weight of a British army counterstrike. The Nazis could only send piecemeal military support, as they were focused on their upcoming invasion of the Soviet Union. The new Iraqi leadership was also plagued with incompetence. One example of this occurred when the Germans sent a small squadron of Luftwaffe planes, bombers and fighters to aid the coup. One of the planes was accidentally shot down by the Iraqis themselves. That plane carried Axel von Blomberg, the man sent by Hitler to command the German military mission there.⁶⁰ By the end of May, British forces had overwhelmed the Iraqis, and coup leaders like Al-Husayni fled.

Though this uprising took place outside Palestine and was a complete failure for the Germans and Arab nationalists, the coup diverted considerable amounts of British resources and instilled a looming sense of paranoia for the British for the duration of the war in the Middle East. It reminded Britain that their Eastern holdings were not entirely safe from German influence, and further security over their oil regions was needed. Britain would later launch

⁵⁸ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 127.

⁵⁹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 127.

⁶⁰ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 131.

invasions into Syria and Iran, simply out of fear of potential Nazi-friendly regimes. While the threat may have been minimal in these countries, the Nazis were surely sending a message to Britain that insurgency and Nazi-backed saboteurs could strike anywhere.

After the failed Iraq coup, the Germans and Husayni attempted to restart the Arab revolt within Palestine under the leadership of Fawzi Bey el Quwuqji, one of Husayni's key leaders during the Arab Revolt.⁶¹ Most of the Arab fighters in the Iraq coup did not flee to Germany and were either captured or fled to Vichy France or Syria. Here the Abwehr, under Husayni's intelligence advice, smuggled arms into Syria, where Quwuqji and hundreds of his men planned to sneak into Palestine and create insurgency or another Arab Revolt. In "The Mufti's Men: Haj Amin Al-Husayni and SS Parachute Expeditions to Palestine and Iraq, 1944-1945," Perry Biddiscombe says, nothing went according to the plan: "On 8 June 1941, the British attacked Syria, quickly reaching Damascus and thus stripping away the launching pad for Quwuqji's mission. Quwuqji himself was wounded and evacuated..."⁶² This was Husayni's last shot toward helping the Nazis incite a popular rebellion and control in Palestine or nearby regions. The Nazis lost their main chances with the Arab Revolt and the Iraq coup. Though another brief glimmer of hope for insurgency in Palestine arose in mid-1942, when Axis forces reached the Caucasus from the north of Palestine and Egypt west, the Germans' window of opportunity was slim and brief, as their resource situation had become dire. Husayni could only sit on the sidelines during this short interval and chant antisemitic propaganda on the Arabic radio or help the SS train the few Arab volunteers the Germans received. Rommel's advance seemed to have no effect on everyday Palestinians and resulted only in minor demonstrations in Cairo.

⁶¹ Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men," 791.

⁶² Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men," 792.

Although the chances of damaging British control of Palestine had disappeared by the end of 1941, Husayni and the Nazis had not given up. Throughout Husayni's tenure in Germany, he helped train Arabs in exile into German divisions. In 1942, Husayni promised the Germans he could give them 100,000 Arabs to fight for the German war effort. While Husayni and other Arabic leaders in Germany found plenty of success recruiting Muslims from the Balkans, they were able to recruit just 243 Arabs; of these, it is estimated around 100 were from Husayni's homeland of Palestine.⁶³ Balkan Muslims were far easier to recruit since they were already under direct Nazi occupation and did not have to be lied to about the fact that they were actually going to fight in the Soviet Union, and not the Middle East to liberate Arab lands from the British, a falsehood that Husayni told the few Arabs who signed up to bolster recruitment.

The propaganda aimed at Palestinians and other Arabs seemed to have little impact. Husayni's calls for jihad against the British and Jews mostly fell on deaf ears. There was never a popular uprising again, and Husayni's influence had diminished. A *New York Times* article from October 1939 criticizes the Nazi propaganda in the Middle East as being futile, arguing that Arabs are better off working under the British for self-determination. A Beirut resident voiced his opinions on the Nazi radio's messages: "whoever prepares these Arabic broadcasts, in my opinion is a big fool if he believes the Arabs are listening to them or are in any way influenced by them... We know our lot would be probably even worse than that of the Jews."⁶⁴ As Achcar puts it: "In the space of ten years, Husseini had plummeted from the peak of his prestige at the

⁶³ Rubin and Schwantz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 145.

⁶⁴ "Nazi Propaganda Fails Among Arabs: Moslems Fear Suppression of Religion if Dominated by Either Hitler or Stalin Democracies Their Hope Anglophobia a Political Device Some Still Pro-Hitler Scoffs at Propaganda," *New York Times* (1923-), Oct 08, 1939. <https://proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/nazi-propaganda-fails-among-arabs/docview/102674281/se-2?accountid=14378>.

1931 Jerusalem Islamic conference to disgrace...”⁶⁵ It is estimated that through the entire duration of the war, a total of 1,300 Arabs from Palestine, Syria, and Iraq served in the German military. This is a meager amount compared to the tens of thousands who served in Allied uniform, including 9,000 Palestinians in the British Army.⁶⁶ Most everyday Palestinians had lost faith in Husayni and his allies. An anecdote that supports this is the Italians’ attempt to recruit an Arab Legion of their own, similar to that of the Germans. In 1942, with Afrika Korps successes in Egypt, Germany transferred 250 Palestinian prisoners of war (POWs) captured from the British Army to the Italians. The Italians attempted to recruit them to fight for the Axis. They recruited just 18 and of these, only eight did not desert.⁶⁷

It was evident by 1942 that most Arabs had little enthusiasm for the Nazis and a potential uprising against the British. The failed Arab Revolt had crushed many nationalist networks and the White Paper had eased Arab tensions with the British, at least for the time being. Likewise, while in the prewar years Nazi ideology was inspiring to the Arabs, during the war, many felt it fruitless as the Nazis failed to prove any tangible military success when it came to liberating the Middle East or knocking Britain out of the war. As Rubin and Schwanitz put it, “The worse Rommel did at the front, the less eager were Arabs to join the Axis cause.”⁶⁸ To everyday Arabs, the Nazis represented a distant radical ideology that could no longer benefit them in self-determination or rid them of Zionism.

By 1943, the Axis themselves began to realize that Husayni was of limited use to them. His recruitment was minimal, and the intelligence and spy networks he had promised the Abwehr would be of great use had gone nowhere. Biddiscombe points out that by 1943 the

⁶⁵ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 145.

⁶⁶ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 145.

⁶⁷ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 145.

⁶⁸ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 143.

Abwehr and its respective agency in Italy had grown tired of Husayni and had lost faith. Husayni then began to gravitate towards cooperation with the SS.”⁶⁹ For the duration of the war, Husayni continued his work with fascist propaganda but also helped the SS with sabotage teams that would operate in the Middle East.

One such example is Operation Atlas, which was launched as the war was in its final stages in October 1944. The SS continued to pressure Husayni and his men into instigating trouble in Palestine, anything that could distract the British this late in the war as the Allies crept closer to Germany from all sides. Husayni worked closely with the SS to train and prepare the men who would undertake parachute landings into Palestine. The team comprised five men, a mix of Palestinians in exile such as Abdullatif Zul el-Kifel, mentioned in the anecdote above, and Germans with mixed Palestinian heritage like the team’s leader, Kurt Weiland. Like previous German plans to provoke unrest in the region, the operation was a disaster. During the week the parachutists had in Palestine before being captured by the British, they were constantly in hiding from British forces, harassed by locals, or struggling to recover much of their equipment that was dropped in with them.⁷⁰ Though this event seems largely insignificant, a desperate last attempt by the Nazis and radical Arabs to implement trouble in Palestine, the British investigation into it discovered the operation had the potential to be much more. Firstly, there was the debate over exactly what the parachutists’ intentions had been in Palestine. Biddiscombe explains that the agents were not clear on what their objectives were. German factions in the planning of Operation Atlas wanted the agents to support another large scale Arab Revolt,⁷¹ while Husayni wanted them to strictly focus on sabotaging Jewish infrastructure and

⁶⁹ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 793.

⁷⁰ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 806.

⁷¹ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 800.

killing Jews, and not go directly into conflict with the British in the hope that British retaliation would not exist or be minimal: “Significantly, Husayni insisted that the ‘Atlas’ raiders refrain from confrontations with the British, thus avoiding one of the mistakes of the 1936-39 Revolt.”⁷²

This leads to the final point that the British investigators discovered: the raiders possessed large amounts of arsenic oxide, which during their investigations and interrogations supports the fact that the raiders’ main objective was to sabotage Jewish infrastructure and kill Jews. There were over ten boxes of the arsenic oxide; each box had the capacity to kill 15,000 people.⁷³ Biddiscombe says on the intent of the poison: “A number of factors – the Mufti’s instructions to the parachutists, the large scale maps of Tel Aviv; the familiarity of Wieland, Frank, and Salama with the Tel Aviv area – suggest that the arsenious oxide was intended to poison the Tel Aviv water supply.”⁷⁴ These supplies gave the raiders the potential to kill hundreds of thousands of people. Further increasing British and Jewish paranoia of Nazi-backed saboteurs was the fact that two of the five raiders were not initially captured like the other three. A large-scale manhunt for them lasted until after the war was over, when one of the members was finally captured and the other completely avoided capture. The British believed the uncaptured men may have been using invisible ink or radio codes to communicate with Germany, so the British implemented mass testing of letters and correspondence within Palestine as well as close monitoring of radios.⁷⁵ Biddiscombe describes one the main reasons for the attack: “It was a political strategy meant to alert both Palestinian Jews and the British to the fact that Arabs still retained an ability to project force violently...”⁷⁶ It was also one of the first acts

⁷² Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 797.

⁷³ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 803.

⁷⁴ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 803.

⁷⁵ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 808.

⁷⁶ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 812.

of state-sponsored terrorism in the region, a strategy that would become a reoccurring theme in the 20th century. As Biddiscombe concludes, these acts convinced the British there may have been a Nazi fifth column operating within the country.⁷⁷

Post World War Two

As World War Two was beginning to end in 1945, it was clear that any chance of success for Husayni's and the Nazis' efforts to provoke the Arab population in Palestine to revolt against the British had vanished. Even further, attempts to recruit Arabs into the German military were futile, and sabotage raids into Palestine and other Middle Eastern regions proved failures, although they were symbolically important for the Arab cause. It appears that as Nazi Germany fell, the story of the Arab-Nazi alliance does as well; a partnership that had potential but was ultimately fruitless. However, this is not the case. While the Reich government had gone, its ideological impact continued to influence many Arab nationalists, including the concepts of opposition to Zionism, dictatorships, and anti-democratic values. Many of the key leaders in the post-World War Two Middle East had collaborated with the Nazis at one point or another. Husayni, though his reputation had diminished, returned to the Middle East after the war and continued his anti-Zionist fight against the Jews in British Mandate Palestine and then in the new Israeli state. Future presidents of Egypt Gamal Abd an-Nasir and Anwar as-Sadat were both sympathetic to the Nazi regime during the war, with as-Sadat leaking British military information to the Afrika Korps in 1941 and 1942. Both were involved in anti-British demonstrations in Cairo in 1942.⁷⁸ These men would later overthrow the British-friendly regime in Egypt and launch wars against the new Jewish state of Israel.

⁷⁷ Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men," 809.

⁷⁸ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 140.

While Argentina and Spain have a reputation for being a haven for Nazis after the collapse of the Reich, however in fact, far more Nazis fled to the Middle East than to Argentina or Spain. It is estimated that while several hundred Nazis connected to the war effort or war crimes fled to Argentina, about 4,000 Nazis fled to the Middle East, finding safe harbor with radical Arab nationalists at least temporarily before travelling back to West Germany.⁷⁹ These officials, like Fritz Grobba, who helped coordinate the Iraq coup with Arab nationalists, were able to escape prosecution and continue their antisemitic goals, even after returning to West Germany years later. Rubin says on the issue: “While the West German government as a whole made a break with the past, these individuals in its ranks continued to hold their pre-1945 views and to advocate similar Middle East policies. They remained hostile toward a Jewish state and soft on radical Islamism and Arab nationalism.”⁸⁰ Post-war, Nazism and its antisemitic beliefs helped fuel the fire of tensions between Jews and Arabs, further increasing the number of hardline Arab nationalists who were uncompromising when it came to a partition of Palestine post war, and resorted to violence as the British Mandate was beginning to end.⁸¹ Rubin and Schwanitz open their concluding chapter on Nazi influences in the region by stating:

Hitler committed suicide, Nazi Germany disappeared. But the era’s legacy continued to shape Middle East events long afterward through their allies in the region. Al-Husaini emerged as a Palestinian Arab and Islamist leader; many of the collaborationist nationalists and Islamists became top officials or leading forces in their countries; and there was continuity between the Arab nationalist and Islamist ideologies that had led them to collaboration with Nazi Germany and those that dominated the Middle East during the seven decades after Hitler’s fall.⁸²

Conclusion

⁷⁹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 209.

⁸⁰ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 232.

⁸¹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 200.

⁸² Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 233.

Though the Nazis' antisemitic ideology lived on with many Arab leaders after the fall of the Reich, post-war they hurt their former Arabic allies, indirectly aiding renewed Jewish immigration to Palestine. The Nazi genocide of Jews left millions of Jewish peoples displaced and without a home. While the British attempted to honor the White Paper and limit Jewish immigration to Palestine in quotas, it was no use. The British forced back ships with thousands of Jewish immigrants, many holocaust survivors, and placed them in internment camps on Mediterranean Islands to process them. This galvanized western public opinion against British policy despite the fact that the policy respected the White Paper and Arabic wishes. In 1946, President Truman pressured the British to let 100,000 Jews immigrate into Palestine.⁸³ The flood gates had now been opened, with waves of thousands of Jewish immigrants into Palestine. This influx, combined with many Arabs' newfound radical ideologies, attributed to the Nazis they had collaborated with, created a powder keg for violence and war in Palestine.

While Nazi Germany cannot be solely blamed for the unrest and violence in a prewar and postwar Palestine, it certainly contributed to it. The Nazis attempted to play both Zionists and Arab nationalists like puppets to whatever goals were convenient for them at the moment, with little regard for the lasting effects in the region, similar to the region's colonial powers like Britain and France. The Nazis were directly responsible for escalating the Arab Revolt through arms shipments and financial aid, and to which in response, the British killed thousands of Arabs in reprisals for the insurgency. The White Paper, a last resort by the British to quell the region in direct response to Nazi Germany's rise, had the lasting implication of hurting a fully-fledged Nazi/Arab alliance during the war. Though unsuccessful, Nazi Germany made British control of

⁸³ Arieh Kochavi, "The Struggle against Jewish Immigration to Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 3 (July 1998): 148, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263209808701236>.

Palestine far more tenuous through sabotage and insurgency, which also caused the British to believe a Nazi fifth column existed even after the war.

Although by the time the war had begun the Nazis firmly supported the Arabs, they had failed to do so earlier during the Arab Revolt, which was the most crucial time to do so. As Nicosia pointed out in his article “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany, 1933-1939,” German prewar relations with the Arabs were characterized by wasted opportunities, and they hurt their Arab allies by supporting Jewish immigration to Palestine at the same time.⁸⁴ In retrospect, it is clear the Nazis damaged their Arab allies both prewar and postwar by speeding up Zionist dreams, initially through the Haavara Agreements and then indirectly after the holocaust when millions of Jews wished to flee Europe.

Adding fuel to the fire, Nazi ideological impacts on many key Arab leaders greatly influenced the Middle East for decades after the war, fanning the flames of war and violence in Palestine. Their violent and uncompromising methods, exemplified by Husayni’s propaganda and plans, only worsened their chances of holding onto territory in Palestine post war. The Nazis helped aid a legacy of hate and war in Palestine and the Middle East that continues today and left a great mark on Palestinian 20th century history. As R. Melka concludes his article on Nazi Germany and its relations with Palestine, “Nazi Germany had ultimately proven a disaster for the Arab cause, which in the critical years after 1945 was further weakened by the Mufti and his friends' wartime collaboration with the Axis Powers.”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 366.

⁸⁵ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 230.