



Grand Mufti Disputes *Amin al-Husaini's Mideast-Europe*

Strangely, the Jerusalem grand mufti Muhammad A. Husain claimed on October 25, 2015 that Jews never had a temple on the Temple Mount. Yet, the Supreme Muslim Council of one of his predecessors made a 1929 booklet that says the Temple Mount's identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute. Another controversy grew over Premier Netanyahu's talk on October 20 accusing Amin al-Husaini, grand mufti of Jerusalem 1921 to 1948, of complicity in the Holocaust. Netanyahu struck an essential truth: there is much [evidence](#) for his claim that this mufti had also a substantial sway on the genocide in Nazi-occupied Europe. Al-Husaini's 1941 to 1945 stay in Berlin is a part of German-Mideastern history, as is his biography. First, I point at an uncharted gap of eleven days.

Friday talk news of 11/28/41 delayed, appeared on 12/10/41
Mittwoch, 10. Dezember 1941



Der Führer empfing den Großmufti von Jerusalem zu einer politisch bedeutsamen Unterredung über die Zukunft des arabischen Lebensraumes. Aufn. Funkbild des Hamburger Fremdenblattes, Presse-Hoffmann

[Photo of Hitler's Friday talk with M. Amin al-Husaini on November 28, 1941. "The Fuehrer" only published it after December 9, 1941, see the backside of the original photo: "Released by the Adjutancy of the Fuehrer 9-12-41." Above is Heinrich Hoffmann's photo as edited on the next day in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*. Hitler delayed news for eleven days: There was a Soviet counteroffensive, the Pearl Harbor attack and the shift of the original Wannsee Meeting from December 9 to January 20. In my German [book](#) I show why Hitler put the conference date on December 9 and how he veiled a link between his Friday talk with the mufti on November 28 and the next day invitations for the original Wannsee Conference by withholding news of their talk. He published the news only after that meeting was postponed to January 20.]

Back of photo released on 12/09/41



Speaking in Jerusalem, Netanyahu said of the "Fuehrer's" well-documented 1941 meeting with Jerusalem grand mufti [al-Husaini](#), "Hitler didn't want to exterminate the Jews at the time, he wanted to expel the Jews. And al-Hajj Amin al-Husaini went to Hitler and said, 'If you expel them, they'll all come here [to Palestine].'" According to Netanyahu, Hitler then asked what he should do with them, to which the mufti replied, "Burn them." I have not seen the quotations in the records [scholars of the Vienna [Wiesenthal](#) Institute validated them]. But there is much evidence to support Netanyahu's underlying claim that the grand mufti had a substantial (and for a non-European, unparalleled) influence on the genocide that unfolded in Nazi-occupied Europe and that was [envisaged](#) for the [Middle East](#) as well.

After 20 years of inciting violence against Jews as Jerusalem's grand mufti (notably in 1920, 1929 and 1936), claiming the "al-Aqsa mosque is in danger," al-Husaini found an ally in Hitler's [Berlin](#) in the 1930s. The mufti and many Arabs of his day saw themselves as a defeated and humiliated people [losing the [war](#) with the [Berlin](#) allied [Ottomans](#)], much like all Germans in [World War I](#). Thus, Nazi ideology resonated deeply in the Islamic areas. In 1933, Arab newspapers serialized Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, and it became a bestseller.

The Germans encouraged the mufti's activities, even providing funds and weapons for the 1936-39 Palestinian revolt led by him. He had a steady link to the Nazi security service from 1937 on. In that year, the mufti called on all Muslims to rid their lands of Jews and provided on November 24 his Nazi-Islamist pact draft [here abridged; full text is in my German book, 413]: to promote [§3] spread of the Nazi ideology in the Mideast, [§6: to wage "acts of terror" in all French colonial/mandatory areas; §7: to fight against the founding of a Jewish state in Palestine by all means; §9: in case of a victory of the liberation movement just to rely on the German capital and spiritual forces]; and [§5:] to boycott all Jewish goods, here.

Part of al-Husaini's pact draft given to the Nazis on 12/01/37

- 1.- Propagierung des Deutschen Handels in der arabisch-islamischen Welt;
 - 2.- Vorbereitung einer sympathiereichen Atmosphäre für Deutschland die sich im Falle eines Krieges bemerkbar macht;
 - 3.- Verbreitung der Nationalsozialistischen [sic] in der arabisch-islamischen Welt;
 - 4.- Bekämpfung des sich allmählich zu verbreiten scheinenden Kommunismus mit allen denkbaren Mitteln;
 - 5.- Boykottierung aller jüdischen Waren;
 - 6.- Aufrechterhaltung der Terrorakten in all den Kolonial- und Mandatsgebieten Frankreichs die von Arabern oder Mohammedanern bewohnt sind; (z. B. Syrien, Libanon, Algerien, Marokko);
 - 7.- Bekämpfung und Verhinderung der Gründung eines jüdischen Staates in Palästina mit allen Mitteln;
 - 8.- Verbreitung der Deutschen Bildung in den arabisch-islamischen Ländern;
 - 9.- Die Bereitschaft bei einem Erfolg der Freiheitsbewegung nur aus Deutschem Kapital und geistigen Kräften Gebrauch zu machen.
- Wie die bereits erwähnten 9 Punkte ausgeführt werden bleibt den Militär- und Politischen Führern der arabischen Freiheitsbewegung und den mit ihnen arbeitenden und über ganz Arabien verbreitet öffentlich und Geheimorganisationen überlassen.

In 1941, the mufti instigated Iraq's al-Farhud pogrom. Above all, he called for the Axis powers to stop Jewish influx into the Middle East [al-Husaini drafted §7 too for a joint German-Italian declaration on Arab freedom, given to envoy Fritz Grobba in February 1941.]

Al-Husaini's draft §7: Axis Arabia Declaration given to Grobba 02/25/41

7) Deutschland und Italien erklären das "Jewish National Home" in Palästina für illegal. Sie erkennen Palästina und den anderen arabischen Ländern das Recht zu, die Frage der jüdischen Bevölkerungsteile in Palästina und den anderen arabischen Ländern gemäß dem national-arabischen Interesse und in der gleichen Weise zu lösen, wie diese Frage in den Ländern der Achse gelöst werden ist. Daraus folgt auch, daß keine jüdische Einwanderung nach den arabischen Ländern mehr gestattet sein wird.

[Paragraph seven, §7, held that the Axis states declare illegal a Jewish national home in Palestine recognizing the Arab right to treat the Jews in their lands the same way as the Axis did in their lands. "Therefore, no Jewish immigration into Arab lands will be allowed anymore."]

On Friday, November 28, 1941, the mufti met with Hitler and the two came to an understanding that Jews would be killed rather than simply deported [as in the Madagascar plan that was still an option]. Although Nazi mass shootings of Jews began soon after the June 1941 attack on Russia, Berlin devised ["in the Reich combined and actionable"] plans for their comprehensive extermination in the aftermath of the Friday talk. At that point, Hitler saw the Mideast as the next non-European theater of war. Thus, he was averse to disrupting his Nazi-Islamist axis by flooding the area with Jewish refugees [the mufti's take: if Hitler wanted jihadists on his side when he would invade the area, he had to hold Jews in Europe].

Adolf Eichmann and his SS men briefed Amin al-Husaini, who lived in Berlin [in 1942 and 1943 occasionally also in Rome, since mid-1944 in Oybin, Saxony] on the ongoing genocide, as if to reassure him that Hitler had not changed his mind [in four lands the mufti went to sites from or to which Jews were deported]. Al-Husaini met often with Eichmann [see my German book, 317-19], who years later testified in Jerusalem about the grand mufti's fierce opposition to the mass transfer of Jews to Palestine. In East Prussia SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler told al-Husaini in mid-1943 "that three million Jews had been liquidated so far." Eichmann's aide Dieter Wisliceny was quoted at Nuremberg trials [some of his texts were used in the 1961 Eichmann trial], "The mufti was one of the initiators of the systematic extermination of European Jewry... He was one of Eichmann's best friends and had constantly incited him to accelerate the extermination measures. I heard him say, accompanied by Eichmann, he had visited incognito the gas chambers of Auschwitz."

الجنود المتأزيم، وقد قابلت هملاً مراراً فأعجبت بذكائه ودهائه وسعة اطلاعه. وكنت خلال إقامتي في ألمانيا أدعى سنوياً إلى مقر هملاً حيث كان مقره خلف الجبهة الغربية مباشرة بجوار هتلر، فكان الجنرال - برغر - مساعداً هملاً في قيادة قوات

["Repeatedly, I met Himmler," the mufti noted. He adored him as bright, smart and so insightful. "Yearly, I was called to Himmler's East Prussian site right behind the front near Hitler." To visit both, the mufti traveled annually by train through the occupied Poland.]

Al-Husaini certainly believed that his encouragement of Hitler and others to destroy the Jews of Europe was decisive in their choice to do so. He wrote in his memoirs, the “world Jewry wanted to bring the Eastern European Jews to Palestine ... Germany agreed to this ... we were able to foil this effort.” [In 1961 he said the Nazis "did not need me." But Hitler insisted twice (orders #30 Iraq, #32 Russia) to rely on his "Arab liberation movement."] The mufti favored genocide in Europe also by his direct advice to key Nazis in the 22 days before he met Hitler, and thereafter. On April 28, 1942, he asked Berlin and Rome in a secret letter to agree to the liquidation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. They did on May 14, confirming Hitler's and al-Husaini's genocidal pact of November 28, 1941, to kill Jews in the Mideast too. In Europe, the mufti sent “protest letters” to five states to keep Jews, not to let them go to Palestine, and not to exchange them with prisoners of war. Rather, he advised Hungary about Jews on June 28, 1943 "send them to Poland" where they are "under active control," and in a June 22, 1944 letter to "prevent the immigration to Palestine of Hungarian Jews." On July 25, Budapest gave it "the utmost consideration." In his June 27 letter (deportations lasted May to July), he reminded Himmler on his pledge: the destruction of a Jewish home in Palestine is an integral part of the German Reich's rule.]

[In 1944, notes al-Husaini in his memoirs (126), 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. Germany agreed to this. But we fought this attempt and wrote to von Ribbentrop, Himmler and Hitler, and then to the governments of

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 قاومتها هذه المحاولة فكتبنا إلى رينتروب وهملر وهتلر، ثم إلى حكومات إيطاليا وهنغاريا ورومانيا وبلغاريا وتركيا وغيرها واستطعنا إحباط هذه المحاولة، مما جعل اليهود يرموننا بتهم فظيعة ويحملوننا مسؤولية القضاء على أربعمئة ألف يهودي لم يستطيعوا الهجرة إلى فلسطين حينئذ، وبطالون محاكمتي في «نورمبرغ» كمجرم حرب (مما سيرد ذكره في مناسبات أخرى من هذه المذكرات مع نصوص الكتب المتبادلة وصور بعضها الفوتوغرافية).

Italy, Hungary, Romania, 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." He thus admitted: Nazis agreed to let Jews go in 1944—and his counter impact. This genocide was the chief 20th century crime. Mid-east scholars need to vet this aide in synopses of Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Iranian, Italian, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Turkish primary/secondary sources. We know 1/4 about him; much is to be done.]

The mufti explained, “This caused the Jews to put ugly blame on me for being responsible for the liquidation of 400,000 Jews who were then not able to travel to Palestine.” About half of 437,402 deportees perished. Al-Husaini copied his “protest letters” in the memoirs. The mufti’s role in recruiting and indoctrinating Muslim SS troops in the Balkans and in Soviet Asia makes him responsible for more victims. Netanyahu was not equating al-Husaini with all Palestinians, then or now. Rather, he was highlighting that the kind of eliminationist Arab incitement against Jews, intensified with the grand mufti. It emanates from the same Islamist ideological strain, using the same symbols and rhetoric on “protecting” holy sites from Jews. “For the murder to stop, the incitement must stop,” Netanyahu stressed.—Also in German-Mideastern history al-Hajj Amin deserves more research, since he spent his life often displaying links between incitement and murder.

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Originally published under the title "Netanyahu was right about Hitler and the Mufti," updated/expanded 06/03/16 and 04/13/21: illustrations, links, texts were added [in brackets]. Wolfgang G. Schwanitz co-authored with Barry M. Rubin *Nazis, Islamists and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Yale UP 2014). He authored ten books and edited ten books, among them *Germany and the Middle East 1871-1945*; *Islam in Europe, Revolts in the Middle East*; and *The Middle East Mosaic 2015-2019* in his AME series America-Mideast-Europe. His works were translated into eight languages. — He is a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia.