

HITLER AND THE MUFTI OF JERUSALEM

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Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1987-004-00A
Foto: Hoffmann | Dezember 1941

(Hitler and the Mufti, 1941)

Note: A Mufti is a Muslim scholar and interpreter of shari'a law, who can deliver a fatwa.

A fatwa, in the Islamic faith, is a religious opinion concerning Islamic law issued by an Islamic scholar.

Haj Amin al-Husseini (1893-1974), born in Jerusalem, was a member of the al-Husayni clan of Jerusalem, and was a Palestinian Arab nationalist and Muslim leader in the British Mandate of Palestine. Al-Husseini served in the Ottoman Army during World War I, and was vehemently anti-British and anti-Jewish; consequently, he was the key nationalist figure among Muslims in Palestine.

From 1921 to 1948, he was the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and played a key role in opposition to Zionism and a recognised state for the Jews living in Palestine.

Because Al-Husseini was concerned that increased Jewish immigration to Palestine would damage Arab standing and interests in the area, he instigated bloody riots against Jewish settlement in 1929 and 1936.

In 1941, al-Husseini arrived in Germany and met with Adolf Hitler and other Nazi leaders, including Heinrich Himmler, and Joachim Von Ribbentrop. his purpose was to get the Arab world included in the Nazis' anti-Jewish program.

The Mufti provided Hitler with the various declarations that he desired Germany and Italy to make concerning the Middle East. Al-Husseini particularly emphasised the need for Germany and Italy to declare the illegality of the Jewish home in Palestine, and that:

"they accord to Palestine and to other Arab countries the right to solve the problem of the Jewish elements in Palestine and other Arab countries, in accordance with the interest of the Arabs and, by the same method, that the question is now being settled in the Axis countries." ["Grand Mufti Plotted To Do Away With All Jews In Mideast", *Response*, (Fall 1991 edition), pp. 2, 3]

In November 1941, at their meeting, Hitler told the Mufti that the Jews were his foremost enemy; however, he rejected the Mufti's requests for a declaration in support of the Arabs by saying that the time was not yet right.

The Mufti expressed:

"thanks for the sympathy which he [Hitler] had always shown for the Arab and especially Palestinian cause, and to which he had given clear expression in his public speeches... The Arabs were Germany's natural friends because they had the same enemies as had Germany, namely... the Jews..."

Hitler replied that:

"Germany stood for uncompromising war against the Jews. That naturally included active opposition to the Jewish national home in Palestine... Germany would furnish positive and practical aid to the Arabs involved in the same struggle... Germany's objective [is]...solely the destruction of the Jewish element residing in the Arab sphere... In that hour the Mufti would be the most authoritative spokesman for the Arab world. The Mufti thanked Hitler profusely." [Transcript of the Conversation Between Hitler and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, 28 Nov 1941 in Berlin - also present was the Reich Foreign Minister and Minister Grobba, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. XIII, London, 1964, p. 881]

Yugoslavia tried to indict the Mufti as a war criminal, in 1945, for his recruitment of 20,000 Muslim volunteers for the SS who participated in the killing of Jews in Croatia and Hungary.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1980-038-05
Foto: o. Ang. 1 November 1943

(Picture above - Grand Mufti and Bosnian Muslim Nazi Troops- Nov, 1943)

However, Al-Husseini escaped from French detention in 1946, and continued his fight against the Jews from Cairo and then later from Beirut.

When the United States entered the war (08 December 1941), Al-Husseini declared:

“The Americans are the willing slaves of the Jews” and “as such the enemies of Islam and the Arabs.”

During the 1948 Palestine War Al-Husseini represented the Arab Higher Committee and opposed both the 1947 UN Partition Plan and King Abdullah's ambitions for expanding Jordan by capturing parts of Palestine.

Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem died in 1974.

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