



## History Behind Netanyahu

### *Interview with Dr. Wolfgang G. Schwanitz*

By [Brent Scher](#) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has taken flack for his [comments](#) this week that overstated the influence that al-Hajj Amin al-Husaini had on Adolf Hitler, but a leading historian says that al-Husaini nevertheless played a key role in Hitler’s plans outside of Europe. Dr. Wolfgang G. Schwanitz’s [book](#) on Hitler’s relationship with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem is being credited as the source of Netanyahu’s belief that it was al-Husaini who convinced Hitler to exterminate the Jews rather than deport them from Europe.

[Schwanitz](#) says that Netanyahu “exaggerated” his claim but [insists](#) that the broader argument that there has been a “long-standing incitement of people against Jews” emanating from the Middle East since the 1920s is “certainly correct.”

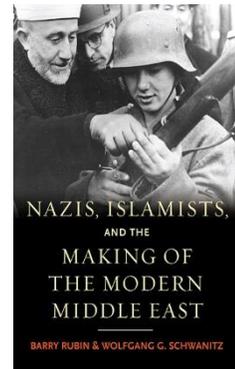


Figure 1: [Watch Media](#)

Netanyahu [said](#) that al-Husaini went to Hitler and told him that expelling the Jews from Europe was not an option, “If you expel [the Jews], they’ll all come here.” Al-Husaini then suggested that Hitler “burn them” instead, according to Netanyahu. His remarks were accurate concerning al-Husaini’s influence on Hitler’s immigration policy, according to Schwanitz.

Al-Husaini wanted Hitler to end Germany’s standing immigration policy—kept in place by Hitler when he took power in 1933—which allowed for roughly 10,000 Jews to leave Germany each year and travel to British Mandate Palestine.

“It was a most disturbing factor for al-Husaini that Berlin would facilitate Jewish travel to Palestine,” said Schwanitz. “He wanted to fight this immigration by all means. This was his goal: Whatever happens with Jews under Hitler’s reign in Europe, they should not come to the Middle East.”

Al-Husaini got his way. Early in 1941, Hitler agreed to a pact advanced by al-Husaini that there would be no more Jewish immigration to Arab countries allowed.

This did not mean that Hitler’s plan for the Jews prior to meeting with al-Husaini involved only deportation, as Netanyahu suggested.

“Hitler made known his intent to kill Jews since 1920,” said Schwanitz. “In *Mein Kampf*, [1925], you find all the racist reasoning and all the means on how to eradicate the Jews.”

Al-Husaini was aware of Hitler’s view, aided by the fact that Arabic was the first foreign language *Mein Kampf* was translated into.

**Al-Husaini** would end up knowing more about Hitler’s plans than anybody else outside of Europe. Schwanitz says that al-Husaini was the only foreign guest Hitler ever received who was told the details of Hitler’s plan for the Jews.

“Hitler always talked about ‘world Jewry’ and that the Jews were an international problem that needed to be solved,” said Schwanitz. “He assured al-Husaini at that meeting that he would urge all nations to solve their Jewish problem.”

“There is no other document available where Hitler told a foreign guest, in utmost clarity, what he intends to do—to eradicate the Jews in three steps,” he said.

Hitler’s plan was to first rid Europe of Jews, then the Middle East, and then the rest of the world—and he had a role for al-Husaini in this plan. When the two met, Hitler told him that once the plan reached its Middle East stage, al-Husaini was his man to lead that effort.

“There was an oral agreement between al-Husaini and Hitler—we have ample documentation about this talk,” said Schwanitz. “Hitler told the Mufti that he would be the Arab leader to execute his plan in the Middle East, and the Mufti agreed.”

Schwanitz says that just before Hitler met with **al-Husaini** in Berlin, he told his Italian allies that the war in Russia was already won, thus opening the door for an invasion of the Middle East through the Caucasus.

“Hitler thought that he would be able to conquer the Middle East either through Egypt or through the **Caucasus**,” said Schwanitz. “As he met with al-Husaini, he thought that the war against Russia was basically won and it was time to turn towards the Middle East.”

There were specific plans in place for **al-Husaini** and his allies to greet the invading German armies to provide support once they reached the southern exit of the Caucasus. The invading army would then “liberate” the Middle East from French and British control and leave it under the leadership of al-Husaini.

Rom, den.28.April 1942.

Herr Reichsminister !

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

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

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

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

An den Reichsminister  
des Auswärtigen  
Herrn Joachim von RIBBENTROP  
B E R L I N

*Emin al-Husaini*  
*Rashid Ali al-Kailani*  
Tel. Nr. 6005  
2/1942

**Watch Media** Figure 2: Letter of April 28 1942 from Grand Mufti Amin al-Husaini and Iraqi ex-premier Rashid Ali al-Kailani to Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop (and his counterpart Count Cian Galeazzo Ciano). They stated that the Arab people are ready to fight the common enemies until the final victory, and ask the Axis to support the Arab struggle against the British oppression, Arab unification, and the liquidation of the Jewish national home in Palestine. By May 14 the two Axis powers had agreed to the requests, thereby condoning by the letter Hitler's and al-Husaini's genocidal pact—Berlin, November 28, 1941—to liquidate Jews in the Middle East. The four signatories agreed to keep this text top secret and still hoped to gain access to Iraq, Iran and the Middle East via the Soviet Caucasus mountains. The Allies foiled all of this by their victories.

Al-Husaini had already been helpful by recruiting and training Muslims to join the Nazi SS. Following the war, Yugoslavia declared him a war criminal due to the atrocities committed by the Muslim units he put together.

Schwanitz explains that al-Husseini was eventually removed from the list by Yugoslavia—not because he was found to be innocent of war crimes, but because of fears of backlash from the Muslim world. He was allowed to travel back to Egypt, where he was able to reestablish himself as a leader of Palestinian Arabs in the fight against establishing a Jewish state [see Arab options, from [book](#) page 93].

Schwanitz acknowledges that even if al-Husaini had not existed, “the Nazis would have done what they did anyway” and “perhaps would have relied on another person like the Mufti”—but they didn’t need to.

Al-Husaini began to contact Hitler just as he came to power in 1933 and was a reliable partner in his “uncompromising war against the Jews.”

During the 1930s, Palestine’s Arabs had four choices:

- They could have made a deal with the British to partition Palestine, with the Arabs getting most of it—80 percent according to London’s 1937 Peel plan—and use that as a base to destroy the Jewish mini-state later.
- They could have accepted the 1939 British offer to give them all of Palestine as an Arab state within ten years and taken control gradually during that period.
- They could have worked with Abdallah and the British to get an Arab-ruled federated state of Transjordan-Palestine.
- Or they could have accepted the strategy of al-Husaini and his camp to reject all of these possibilities, believing that an Axis victory (and later an Arab military victory in 1947–48) would get them everything without compromise, conditions, or Jews.

**Watch Media** [Figure 3](#): Three other options that the Islamist Amin al-Husaini missed by fully betting on Hitler's Nazis

Schwanitz faulted Netanyahu for misspeaking in his “attempt to be anecdotal,” [mentioning his source would have been in order] but said that the broader argument he was attempting to make during his remarks was correct.

“The general argument Netanyahu made was certainly correct—If you want to stop the current fighting, the incitement has to stop,” said Schwanitz. “Since the 1920s, there is a long-standing incitement of people against Jews, for various reasons. This is easily proven.” [Also by some [other](#) and [Soviet](#) sides.]

Reprinted by permission of The Washington Free Beacon and Brent Scher. Three figures added, links and two sentences in [ ]. For further reading see also related books *Nazis, Islamists and the Making of the Modern Middle East*: Yale, February 25, 2014, 360 pp. & *Islam in Europe, Revolts in the Mideast*, in German, Weist, Berlin 2013, 2014 2nd ed. [order here](#).