

## Muslim Anti-Semitism: Historical Background

Richard Breitman

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**Abstract** This article very briefly surveys and compares the history of Christian and Muslim anti-Semitism. Drawing on recent studies by German scholars and on newly declassified CIA records, the author focuses on the critical role of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini. Through his radio broadcasts and other work during World War II, Haj Amin instilled Nazi images of the Jew as the international power behind the scenes to Arab nationalists and to the Middle East generally.

**Keywords** Christian · Nazi · Grand Mufti · Jerusalem · Haj Amin al-Husseini

If one understands how certain attitudes developed, one may have a starting point for a strategy to change them. To that extent, the history of anti-Semitism in the Middle East may have some bearing upon the climate in the Middle East and on Muslims in Europe today. This short article focuses on some interactions among European (Christian and secular) anti-Semites and Muslim anti-Semites.

Christian authorities sustained anti-Semitism throughout much of European history. The Catholic Church restricted and discriminated against Jews in ways that Nazi Germany later followed, consciously or not, during the 1930s. In his book *On the Jews and Their Lies* Martin Luther mentioned (without questioning them) accusations that Jews had poisoned wells and hacked children to pieces.<sup>1</sup> Over many centuries some Catholic and Protestant theologians and clergy helped to instill stereotypes of the Jew and animosity toward Jews among the pious.

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<sup>1</sup>Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961), 1–9. This work was subsequently expanded and revised a number of times, but Hilberg always included the Christian precedents.

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R. Breitman (✉)  
Department of History, Battelle-Tompkins 119,  
American University, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.,  
Washington, DC 20016, USA  
e-mail: rbreit@american.edu

An essentially separate strand of secular anti-Semitism took root in Europe during the Enlightenment and spread during the nineteenth century; racial anti-Semitism was a late nineteenth-century offshoot of it.<sup>2</sup> In most countries Christian anti-Semitism had greater resonance into the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>

Given this background, Muslim anti-Semitism seems more anomalous. Walter Laqueur generalized that Jews fared better under Muslim rule than in Christian Europe until the eighteenth-century.<sup>4</sup> In Spain, some Jews flourished under Moorish rule—there was little comparison with the Christian rulers who followed them. Muslims and Muslim rulers generally considered Jews inferior and relegated them to second-class status, but they were still members of a related ancient faith, and there was no particular reason to view them as a serious threat. The theological and institutional foundation for anti-Semitism was thinner, if not totally absent. As one scholar put it, “Opposition to Jews and Judaism at a deep level does not form an essential aspect of Islamic thought, but is a recent development in Islam arising from the shock of Judaism’s emergence from an apparently accepted and prolonged position of general inferiority.”<sup>5</sup>

European Christians brought modern forms of anti-Semitism into some Arab communities during the nineteenth century. Monks and European authorities living in the Middle East spread accusations of Jewish ritual murder, which led to sporadic outbursts of violence in Damascus and other cities.<sup>6</sup> Direct contact between Christians and Muslims, I believe, was of considerable significance in transferring implausible charges against Jews and instilling intense emotions—creating extreme anti-Semites.

The term anti-Semitism, employed by the German writer Wilhelm Marr in 1879 to designate a non-confessional and partly race-based hatred of Jews,<sup>7</sup> technically included Arabic peoples as well—not an asset in the Middle East. Of course, there was no such thing as “Semitism” for opponents to counteract anyway.<sup>8</sup> The word anti-Semitism supplied a modern political label for writings and movements designed to stir up fears and animosities against Jews. Such sentiments could and did arise in the Middle East without much use of this term.

First, small numbers of Jewish immigrants and longstanding Jewish minorities had to seem powerful and dangerous. This watershed came during World War I with the 1917 Balfour Declaration pledging British support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine; and in 1918–1919 with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the creation of new European mandates over Arab populations. These events juxtaposed perceived Jewish ascent, Muslim weakness, and European colonial expansion.

<sup>2</sup> George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1980).

<sup>3</sup> One recent, if controversial, work even argued that those who became Nazi officials borrowed substantially from Christian predecessors. Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism: From Ancient Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 192–193.

<sup>5</sup> Hyam Maccoby, *Antisemitism and Modernity: Innovation and Continuity* (London: Routledge, 2006), 149.

<sup>6</sup> Laqueur, *Changing Face*, 194–195.

<sup>7</sup> Laqueur, *Changing Face*, 21 pointed out that the term was in existence for two decades before Marr used it.

<sup>8</sup> This argument is sometimes used to maintain that antisemitism is the better spelling, or even that using the spelling anti-Semitism gives anti-Semites support for their cause.

To insist that Muslim anti-Semitism purely stemmed from European ancestry would be exaggerated—perhaps a peculiar form of Edward Said’s term “Orientalism.” It may be just a coincidence that pre-World War I Arab newspapers in Palestine particularly hostile to Zionism and Jewish immigration had Christian publishers. Less coincidental, however, was the activity of Muslim–Christian Societies, which conducted anti-Zionist propaganda among the population in early postwar Palestine.<sup>9</sup>

There was nothing coincidental about the European contacts of the Palestinian politician Haj Amin al-Husseini, a critical figure in the evolution of Muslim anti-Semitism, who sought out the most extreme anti-Semites he could find. Implicated in anti-Zionist riots in Jerusalem in 1920, Haj Amin al-Husseini fled to Trans-Jordan to avoid arrest by British authorities. But British High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel pardoned him, and he was appointed Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in 1921 after the death of the incumbent, his half-brother. His descent from the prophet Mohammed and his title soon gave him a religious basis, despite his youth (in his mid-twenties), to claim leadership in the Arab world. A pan-Arab nationalist, he sporadically favored cooperation with the British, but also experienced serious clashes with them in Palestine. By the mid-1930s Haj Amin had turned against Britain because of his fears that the British would support or compromise with Zionist interests, which he regarded as a deadly threat even to Muslim religious sites, such as Al-Aksa.<sup>10</sup> He was one of many Arab activists who, following the logic that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” turned enthusiastically toward Germany after Hitler came to power.

There were a number of serious obstacles in the way of a Nazi-Arab collaboration. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler had written insultingly about Arab peoples and had dismissed the idea of working with such racial inferiors: he was, in this sense, even more imperialistic than the British or French. A complete translation of Hitler’s book could not serve German interests in the Middle East. Instead, some expurgated translations were circulated before the war.<sup>11</sup>

An even more serious problem was that the Nazi regime promoted the emigration of German Jews to Palestine, especially in 1933–1935. It struck a deal with the Jewish Agency for Palestine that allowed it to confiscate the property of Jewish emigrants, but partially compensate them from the proceeds of additional German goods exported to Palestine. Among the benefits for Nazi Germany were ridding itself of some it considered dangerous enemies and increasing exports.<sup>12</sup> Arab activists could hardly have approved of this “transfer agreement.”

Yet even in March 1933 the Grand Mufti assured the German consul in Jerusalem that Muslims welcomed the Nazi regime and hoped for the spread of fascism to other

<sup>9</sup> Zwi Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin al-Hussaini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement*, tr. David Harvey (London: Frank Cass, 1993), x.

<sup>10</sup> This sketch is drawn from Elpeleg and partly from a brief biography composed by an unnamed moderate Arab leader in Jerusalem and given to an OSS official, who considered the author reliable. The author had known Haj Amin al-Husseini for a long time. Haj Amin al-Husseini Name File (hereafter HAAH), United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 263, vol. I, part 1.

<sup>11</sup> Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz: Das Dritte Reich, Die Araber und Palestina* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 43–44.

<sup>12</sup> See among others, Francis R. J. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

countries. An October 1933 Palestinian Arab protest strike against Jewish immigration used the swastika on posters, and Palestinian literature described Jews as greedy weaklings, new Shylocks totally without scruples. Meanwhile, about twenty-five hundred Palestinian-Germans, mostly members of the Order of the Templars (founded in 1868), disproportionately joined the Nazi Party. Germans were quite popular among Arabs in Palestine even when other Europeans were not.<sup>13</sup> Mallmann and Cüppers, authors of the most recent (and excellent) study of the relationship between the Nazis and Arabs, conclude that substantial segments of the Arab world and, to an extent, the Islamic world of the Middle East favored Germany because of its dictatorial system, its aggressiveness, and its anti-Semitism. By favoring Germany, Arabs could express their feelings about both Jews and Britain. Both Germany and Italy exploited this situation from the mid-1930s on, with secret intelligence connections to Arabs in Palestine.

In 1937, Haj Amin al-Husseini fled to Lebanon to avoid British capture. After the British requested the French to arrest him at the outset of World War II, he escaped to Baghdad, where he plotted to install a government favorable to the Axis. In April 1941 an Iraqi coup succeeded; Rashid Ali al-Gaylani came to power, and the new Iraqi prime minister signed a secret treaty with Italy and Germany. British reinforcements, however, crushed the new regime, and both Haj Amin al-Husseini and Rashid Ali fled to Iran. Haj Amin blamed his defeat in Iraq partly on a “Fifth Column”:

The Fifth Column had a great influence on the failure of the Iraqi movement, and was comprised of many elements, most importantly, the Jews of Iraq. During the fighting, George Antonius told me that Jews employed in the telephone department were recording important and official telephone conversations and passing them to the British embassy in Baghdad.<sup>14</sup>

From Iran, Haj Amin and Rashid Ali went to Turkey, and then via Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary, to Rome. On November 6, 1941, Haj Amin reached Berlin, followed soon by Rashid Ali; although they quarreled with each other, both men became participants in German efforts to influence the Middle East and North Africa during much of the remainder of the war.

Haj Amin saw an Axis victory as the vehicle for his Pan-Arab nationalism. He appears to have taken to heart Hitler’s comments to him on November 28, 1941, in a private meeting shortly after he had arrived in Germany. Hitler said that Germany had declared an uncompromising war on the Jews, which of course meant that it was opposed to a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Britain and Russia were both power bases of Jewry, and he would carry on the fight until the last traces of Jewish-communist hegemony were eliminated. The German army would in the future break through the Caucasus Mountains into the Middle East and help to liberate the Arab world.<sup>15</sup> Its only other objective in the region, Hitler said, would be the annihilation of the Jews living under the protection of the British.<sup>16</sup> Mallmann and Cüppers offer

<sup>13</sup> Mallmann/Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 49–53.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted by Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti*, 62.

<sup>15</sup> German plans also envisioned reaching Palestine from North Africa and elsewhere.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of this meeting translated and reprinted by Gerald Fleming, *Hitler and the Final Solution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 103–104.

evidence that Haj Amin recognized and fully approved of the Nazi policy of genocide.<sup>17</sup>

During 1942 and 1943, Haj Amin delivered radio broadcasts from Berlin in Arabic to the Middle East. In Jeffrey Herf's words, "the Grand Mufti was one of those who translated National Socialist ideology into Arabic and into the idioms of fundamentalist Islam" and broadcast them to a very wide audience.<sup>18</sup> In his last broadcast, on June 15, 1943 he called upon Arabs to rise up against the British and the Jews.<sup>19</sup>

After the war Haj Amin made his presence in Nazi Germany seem involuntary and relatively insignificant. For example, in an October 1952 interview with a reporter from *Life* (magazine) he said:

Americans look on me as a Hitlerite because I went to Germany during the war. I believe the reasons I went are justifiable. In Palestine the English tried to capture me, to take me to a desert island. I ran away to Syria. The French tried to capture me and I went to Iraq. Later I had to go to Iran. Marshal Wavell put a 25-thousand-pound price on my head. I tried to stay in Turkey, but under British pressure the Turks would not let me stay. I had to go to Europe. Where in Europe could I go? England? France? The only place was Germany. In my radio talks I never spoke against America. I used to mention Britain, but I limited myself to injustices Britain had done to the Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular. Because I did this, Americans look upon me as an enemy.<sup>20</sup>

Critical biographies concentrate on Haj Amin al-Husseini's cooperation with the Nazis, while sympathetic works see his wartime activities as of limited significance in a long nationalist career or explain it away as a by-product of his opposition to Britain and Zionism.<sup>21</sup> Good primary sources are crucial in this historiographical context. One biographer, Zwi Elpeleg, has published Haj Amin's January 20, 1941 fawning letter to Adolf Hitler, written well before he had to escape from Iraq.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Mallmann/Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 116.

<sup>18</sup> Herf, "Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism," 65.

<sup>19</sup> Haj Amin al-Husayni, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Biographic Sketch No. 60, April 24, 1951, HAAH,

<sup>20</sup> "Mystery Man of Islam Speaks," *Life*, October 27, 1952. His denial began early. On May 14, 1947 Haj Amin al-Husseini told an Arab source that he was hoping shortly to publish a declaration in which he would refute, by means of new documents which he was about to obtain, what he described as the false accusations spread by the Jews about his alleged pro-Axis activities during the war. HAAH, NARA, RG 263, vol. 2, part 1.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Mufti and the Führer: the Story of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and his Unholy Alliance with Nazism* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965); Chuck Morse, *The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism: Adolf Hitler and Haj Amin al-Husseini* (New York: iUniverse, 2003). By contrast, Philip Mattar, *Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin Al-Huseyni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Diane, 1988). The best biography, in my view, is Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti*; important also is the more specialized work, Klaus Gensicke, *Der Mufti von Jerusalem, Amin el-Husseini und die Nationalsozialisten* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988).

<sup>22</sup> Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti*, 202–205.

Much of his other correspondence with Nazi officials has now been published in German.<sup>23</sup> But some may question the weight of such documents, given his need to curry favor with the Germans.

In 2006, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) declassified (under the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act) a detailed, interesting file on Haj Amin, which contains, among many other things, a late 1943 mini-biography written by a moderate Arab notable in Jerusalem who knew him well; extensive Office of Strategic Services (OSS) records about his wartime movements and activities in Nazi Germany, and a 1951 State Department biographical profile.<sup>24</sup>

OSS records indicate that the Nazis hoped to use Haj Amin al-Husseini in Spanish Morocco and later in Tunisia to recruit Arabs to the Axis cause. In August 1942 Germany formed an Arab Committee headed by Haj Amin, Rashid Ali, and an Egyptian pro-Nazi named Eltai Abbas. One undated report indicated that the Axis Powers planned to set up an overall Arab government, of which Haj Amin was to become prime minister. Another report said that while in Italy in 1942 he was calling himself premier of the United Arabic States. In the fall of 1943 he did recruit Muslims in the Balkans to serve in the Waffen-SS.

In quality and quantity the information in the CIA file on Haj Amin al-Husseini in Nazi Germany is inferior to the latest (German) scholarship, which tracks Haj Amin's activities in considerable detail, mostly through German documents. But the OSS documents in the CIA file have the advantage of being written during the war itself. They can't be blamed on distortion by the Nazis or explained away as postwar partisanship by pro-Israeli scholars.

There are also some new wartime items in the CIA file. According to an OSS report received in October 1943, Haj Amin al-Husseini sent a letter to Syria through the German Embassy in Ankara to the Mufti of Damascus, who read it on May 19, 1943, to a gathering of Muslim leaders in Damascus. He declared that the present Allied agreement to give Syria and Lebanon independence was a scheme to split up the Arab world into small independent states. Referring to this independence as a false independence, he stated that it would isolate Palestine, which would become a Jewish state. He wanted his fellow muftis to work for the day of true Arab independence, with all Arab countries united into one.<sup>25</sup>

Berlin radio announced during October 1943 that during a visit to Frankfurt Germany, Haj Amin stated that the Axis powers and the Arab nations were allies and partners in the war against international Jewry.<sup>26</sup> According to the CIA file, he also ran a school in Dresden for training Mullahs who were supposed to be used with Muslims in the Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Gerhard Höpp, *Mufti-Papiere. Briefe, Memoranden, Reden, und Aufrufe Amin al-Husainis aus dem Exil, 1940–1945* (Berlin: PUB, 2001).

<sup>24</sup> HAAH, NARA, RG 263, six volumes.

<sup>25</sup> He sent along similar letters for the Mufti of Lebanon, the Mufti of Aleppo, and a Sheikh 'Aqil of the Druzes.

<sup>26</sup> Washington X-2, March 8, 1944, from Tel Aviv, October 22, 1943. HAAH Name File, NARA, RG 263, vol. 1, part 1. According to the latest research, the Germans initially paid him 75,000 Marks per month, but this sum was adjusted upward over time. Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 108.

<sup>27</sup> Undated OSS report XX8802, HAAH name file, NARA, RG 263, vol. I, part 1.

OSS documents also indicate that the Nazis paid Haj Amin al-Husseini heavily.<sup>28</sup> An OSS official in Jerusalem asked one of his friends, an important official in the wartime Arab Palestinian government, about this collaboration with the Nazis. The friend replied that, to fund the revolution...

I know that we Arabs were all called upon to contribute to the fund, and the amounts we were assigned were not small, so that great funds were thus collected. I also know that non-Palestinian Arabs helped meet the cost of the revolution. Whether Hadj Amin was offered or accepted funds from the Axis I am not in a position to know, but I should not censure him if he did. We could not any longer hope for any help or justice from Great Britain. We Arabs are not anti-British or anti-American. We look up to them as great nations, with high ideals of justice—the leaders in democracy. But when it comes to Palestine we cannot trust or respect them. They are under the thumb and controlled, for various reasons by the Jews and Zionists.<sup>29</sup>

The end of the war left Haj Amin al-Husseini with a considerable reputation in the Middle East. A June 1945 OSS report from Jerusalem passed along views from a pro-Arab source with close contacts among well-established Arab families; the source called the Grand Mufti the idol of the Palestinian Arabs, Muslims and Christians alike:

Source has talked at length with Arabs, asking them how they reconcile his acceptance of Axis money and guidance, and also his ordering the death of many Arabs during the Revolution. The answer is always the same, i.e., Britain and the United States drove him and other Arabs to desperation through their pro-Zionist activities. It is denied that he ordered the death of any Arabs.

OSS analysts in Washington added a commentary: although the Mufti's prestige outside Palestine dwindled in 1944–1945, his reputation was again rising, except in Transjordan, Egypt, the Arabian peninsula, and North Africa.<sup>30</sup> So he was a force in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine itself.

The Allies had evidence that Haj Amin al-Husseini had planned a combined German-Arab operation dropping agents into Palestine by parachute. The mission was carried out in October 1944, but the German and Arab agents were arrested before they could carry out their assignment. They did, however reveal to their British captors that Haj Amin had personally sent them off, assuring them that Nazism and Islam were similar, and that they should work to bring Arab nations together in a war against the Jews.<sup>31</sup> Such activities and his radio broadcasts from Berlin certainly made him vulnerable to prosecution as a war criminal.

After he tried and failed to enter Switzerland, French troops arrested him, and he was brought to Paris. According to a source that postwar American intelligence

<sup>28</sup> Undated OSS report XX8802, HAAH name file, NARA, RG 263, vol. I, part 1.

<sup>29</sup> Hadj Amin el-Husseini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem: A History and Criticism, p. 32, HAAH Name File, NARA, RG 263, vol. 1, part 1.

<sup>30</sup> The Problem of Hajj Amin, Grand Mufti, Washington, Distributed 2 July 1945, from Jerusalem June 7, 1945, HAAH, NARA, RG 263, vol. 1, part 2.

<sup>31</sup> Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 239–240.

considered reliable, the French planned to prosecute him, but the British objected (probably because it would have had repercussions on their tenuous hold on Palestine). The British even threatened the French with Arab uprisings in French North Africa if they went ahead with a trial. The French responded by letting Haj Amin go back to where he might cause the British trouble.<sup>32</sup> The 1951 biographical profile by the State Department contained a different account. While the British were considering prosecution and even asking the French to extradite Haj Amin, he escaped from Paris in disguise with the assistance of the Syrian ambassador to France, and he arrived in Cairo, where he was welcomed:

In the opinion of American officials in Cairo, this move by King Faruq [publicizing Haj Amin's arrival] gave Egypt increased prestige with extreme nationalist leaders in the entire Near East, and served to strengthen Egyptian leadership of the Arab League States where the Mufti was considered the best available threat against the Zionists. In the meanwhile the Mufti's latest move was hailed in the Muslim press, and he was accorded an unrestrained welcome by the populace. Prayers were held for the occasion in al-Azhar Mosque, and cheers for the Mufti developed into anti British, anti-Government manifestations which grew serious enough to require police interference to quiet the crowd.<sup>33</sup>

Although this flight was not a heroic performance, it was nonetheless seen as a blow against the colonial powers and the Jews.

Most of Haj Amin's career after 1946 is of marginal value for this article.<sup>34</sup> Suffice it to say that he found himself increasingly angry with developments in Palestine and with the establishment of Israel: he also came into increasing conflict with existing Arab powers; and he turned more and more toward even more extreme methods and an association with the terrorist organization, the Muslim Brotherhood.

Haj Amin's ties with the Nazis became the subject of worldwide publicity after the Israeli capture of Adolf Eichmann and during the latter's trial in Israel. One of Eichmann's subordinates, Dieter Wisliceny, gave evidence that Haj Amin had used his influence in Berlin to block German consideration of certain proposed exchanges and ransom deals that would have allowed groups of Jews to leave Axis territory and reach Palestine. Haj Amin denied that he had ever met Eichmann. He also claimed that the Nazis had served Jewish purposes by creating worldwide sympathy for them, and he charged that the Israelis were committing atrocities against Palestinian Arabs similar to what the Nazis had done to the Jews.<sup>35</sup>

The most obvious link between the Nazis and pan-Arab radicals such as Haj Amin al-Husseini was the Nazi belief that the Jews represented the real power behind the Allied governments and the hidden source of all opposition to both the German people and the Arabs—arch-conspirators on an international scale. Haj Amin al-Husseini needed such a power to help explain the inability of Arab

<sup>32</sup> Jane Burrell to Blum, March 7, 1946, HAAH, NARA, RG 263, vol. 1, part 1.

<sup>33</sup> Haj Amin al-Husayni, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Biographic Sketch No. 60, April 24, 1951, HAAH, NARA, RG 263, vol. 4, part 2.

<sup>34</sup> Most of the CIA file is about the postwar period.

<sup>35</sup> March 4, 1961 Reuters article, copy in HAAH, NARA, RG 263, vol. 1, part 1.



nationalists to obtain their objectives—positive and negative. Although he certainly could have invented his own brand of anti-Semitism, it was natural for him, since he had a wealth of direct contacts with the Nazis, to take advantage of the work that they had already done in “understanding the Jew.”

Laqueur wrote that European anti-Semites typically saw the Jew as parasite, while Muslim anti-Semites had a different stereotype, especially after 1948—assassin, aggressor, and warmonger.<sup>36</sup> With his extensive contacts with Nazi leaders and ideologues, Haj Amin al-Husseini managed to combine both of these images—and to draw on religious passages too. Mallmann and Cüppers make it plain that under the influence of the Nazis, Haj Amin adopted racial-ideological images of the Jew—as an insect that spread disease. At the same time, he maintained that the Koran spelled out their negative characteristics.<sup>37</sup> He also anticipated the later Muslim image of the Jew as warmonger—he accepted Hitler’s belief that the Jews were the real manipulators and beneficiaries behind the Allied war effort against the Axis.

For the Nazis, annihilation of the Jews was part and parcel of winning their war against the Allies. Haj Amin al-Husseini too could imagine Jewish influence or control in London—and in Washington. So he found every reason to cooperate avidly in what has been called a Nazi war against the Jews—not just in the Holocaust, but in the Axis war effort itself.<sup>38</sup>

Ironically, Jewish leaders and organizations in Great Britain and the United States had so little real influence and leverage during the war that they were largely unable to move their governments toward rescue and relief efforts to mitigate the Holocaust.<sup>39</sup> The British refused, for example, to relax the restrictions of the May 1939 White Paper limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine even for children. Those who hold beliefs about a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, however, will find a plethora of reasons to ignore or discount evidence against it—the conspirators are, after all, supposed to be skilled at secret manipulation.

What all extreme anti-Semites seem to have in common is a paranoid, conspiratorial view of Jews and, to some extent, of the world itself. Some pick out “evidence” of what they believe in religious texts; others find secular or even pseudo-scientific language in which they set forth their views. Once such views are implanted, they tend to persist, even over generations, becoming part of a culture or sub-culture. So it is that the forgery *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* finds some Muslim believers in the Middle East today.

<sup>36</sup> Laqueur, *Changing Face*, 196.

<sup>37</sup> Mallmann/Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, especially 104–120.

<sup>38</sup> Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews* (New York: Bantam, 1961); Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> Many have written about this topic, among them David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941–1945* (New York: New Press, 2007, originally 1984); for a diametrically opposite view, William D. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1999). My own interpretation is in between. The forthcoming second volume of the diaries and papers of James G. McDonald will contain new evidence on this topic.

**Richard Breitman** teaches modern European history at American University. He is the author, co-author, or co-editor of eight books and about fifty articles. Recent books include *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew* (1998); *U. S. Intelligence and the Nazis* (2005), and *Advocate for the Doomed: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald, 1932-1935* (2007). His works have been translated into German, French, Dutch, Hebrew, Portuguese, and Japanese. He received his B. A. from Yale, his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard, and an honorary doctorate in humane letters from Hebrew Union College.