

Nazi Terror

Heinrich Himmler's Official Diary II

Himmler's official diary was deemed to be lost – until 1990. A special archive near Moscow became known in this year for its collection of war records seized by the Red Army. Among them was Himmler's official diary, from 1941 to 1942, which is filled with daily activities of the Reichsführer-SS (commander of the Nazi "Protection Squadron": SS) and police chief. In 1999, academics edited this part I of the diary.^[1] Recently, a team with Matthias Uhl, of the German Historical Institute in Moscow, finished it by editing part II of Himmler's official diary for the years from 1943 to 1945.

The part I of the diary shows Himmler as the driving force behind the start of the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." This was a code name for the planned murder of Jews, which was not restricted to Europe. This genocide, starting in German-occupied areas, culminated in the Shoah (or the Holocaust): the killing of 90 per cent of Polish Jews and two-thirds of Europe's Jews. The Nazis also planned implementing it in the Middle East and included Jews from there, as well as from the Tunisian island of Djirba and metropolitan France, in the transport to labor and death camps. Here I will compare both diary parts to offer the related insights.



After the invasion of Soviet Russia, Himmler initiated the mass shootings of Jewish civilians and got Adolf Hitler's consent to begin increasing deportations in late 1941 from "Greater Germany", to build six main death camps in occupied Poland and for trains to camps such as [Auschwitz](#), as well as begin mass gassing in March 1942 (Himmler's order to destroy gas chambers in late [1944](#), II, p. 946). Jews and other civilians perished, while those who did not were used for forced labor, along with prisoners of war, often Russians.

The second part of the diary exposes the evil crimes in the execution of the "Final Solution", led by Himmler's SS, police, and German and foreign auxiliary forces. It proves that Hitler directed the Shoah in connected war areas: in Europe, in the Middle East, and globally. In late [1941](#), he told this to Amin al-Husaini, being his top non-European aide. Hitler needed the support of locals from the Middle East via Iran (II, p. 513) to India. However, the [Allies](#) were successful in the North African [front](#) when a quarter of a million Axis troops gave up in [May 1943](#) in Tunis (I, p. 617, II, p. 958, Hitler forbade any capitulation).

A Genocidal Pact

Now, I will focus on the Middle East. At the turn of 1942, with Hitler's offensive coming to a halt in Russia, Himmler established units of the Waffen-SS (SS-controlled field armies) under the Austrian politician Arthur Seyß-Inquart, Reichskommissar (commissar) of occupied Netherlands; the Indian nationalist Subhas Shandra Bose; the Croat leader Mile Budak; the Iraqi ex-premier Rashid Ali al-Kailani and Jerusalem's grand mufti al-Husaini. Some lived in Berlin, traveling also to Italy and occupied areas of Europe. Most "[natural allies](#)" wanted to [liberate](#) their [lands](#) from [colonial powers](#) with the [help](#) of the Axis powers.

Beginning in 1941, al-Husaini and al-Kailani asked the Axis powers for a public declaration on Arabia. On 25 February, al-Husaini proposed his own draft declaration, which stated in clause 7 that Berlin and Rome would declare a Jewish home in Palestine illegal, recognize the Arab right to solve the question of their Jewish populations in the same manner as it has been resolved in the Axis states, and end Jewish immigration to Arab lands. In April 1942, al-Husaini and al-Kailani used this content for a letter in the “fight against the joint enemy until victory” for national independence and the destruction of the Jewish home as agreed upon by the Axis in May. It was a quadrilateral, Palestine and Iraq oriented pact of genocide with Nazi and fascist leaders for the creation of “Jew-free” Arab lands or empires.

In June 1941, as al-Husaini and al-Kailani fled from Iraq to Berlin after murdering Jews by instigating the al-Farhud pogrom, the foreign office’s Martin Luther, head of the Germany section, wanted to let 2,000 Spanish Jews leave France for Morocco. In October, as both Arabs were proposing their 11-point draft, the SS forbade those Jews from leaving for Morocco and ordered an emigration ban for them (I, p. 228). A year later, Himmler said that the “Jewish Question” is no longer an issue for it is now “solved” by deportation: “to preserve the own kind, the extermination of the other is needed” (I, p. 621, II, p. 953, 715).

	<i>Al-Husaini's and al-Kailani's 11 points for Berlin and Rome, September 24, 1941</i>
1	Approve the establishment of an independent Arab State with full internal and external sovereignty that is comprised of:
	a. Kingdom of Iraq b. All Syrian lands including Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and East Jordan
	c. The Arab emirates under the British rule
2	This State shall be established upon signing this Convention and recognize the al-Kailani Iraqi Government representing it. The mentioned Government shall have its headquarters at any place of its choice [starting with Tbilisi, later Tunis or Cairo].
3	The two parties shall cooperate in liberating all parts of this State, and the second party shall arm the first party and transform it for that purpose.
4	The Arab State shall join the Tripartite Convention [1940 Tripartite Pact Rome-Berlin-Tokyo] have representatives at the committees and research related to its interests, its lands, and areas.
5	The Arab State shall be represented at the Reconciliation Conference and shall participate in its memoranda and decisions.
6	The Arab State shall support the recognition of the independence of the other Arab states and approve them joining the Arab State or forming an Arab Union [Greater Arab Empire].
7	Approve the cancellation of the Jewish National Home in Palestine and eliminate all its effects and outcomes.
8	Include Germany's allies in signing and supporting this Convention.
9	Germany and its allies shall assist the Arab State to get financial compensations in Britain and France for the damages to Iraq, Syria, and Palestine from these two countries.
10	The second party pledges to assist the first party upon request by giving them the weapons and arms they need after the liberation of the first party countries.
11	If the war ends before ousting the enemy army from the Arab State, the second party shall secure the independence of the mentioned State in Article 1. 24 Sept. 1941–5 Ramadan 1360

Source: Al-Husaini's War Time Diary

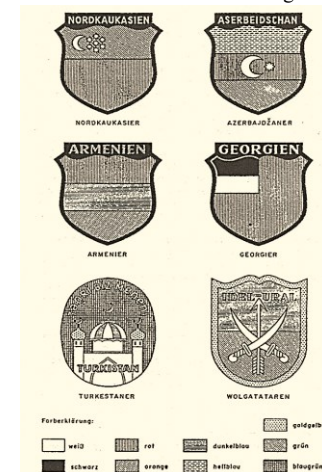
SS Units, Army Legions

On 30 November 1943, Himmler thanked the SS leader Odilo Globocnik for Action Reinhardt – named after the assassinated Reich Security Main Office’s chief Heydrich (1904-1942) – and the killing of 1.5 million Jews in occupied Poland (II, p. 553). They were also gassed in Belżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka. In that day’s entry, Jobst Gössling of the SS asked to be the liaison to Bose, who had established his Indian Legion (II, p. 954). Meeting some 7 times a month, with Hitler most often in 1943, Himmler reveals that Hitler steered all the major Shoah escalations (both 300 times in the compiled diary index compared to Luftwaffe [air force] chief Hermann Göring with 65 times). While diary I barely mentions non-European Nazi aides, part II offers a transregional picture, as reflected in the index: Bose’s 2 times, Adolf Eichmann’s 6 times, Seyß-Inquart’s 15 times, al-Husaini’s 17 times, compared to Gottlob Berger’s 300 times. The latter headed the SS Main Office in Berlin and recruited foreign Waffen-SS volunteers. He was a partner of al-Husaini, who mobilized an SS division in Croatia, an Arab Legion, and other Muslim units (II, pp. 249, 344).

Advising Nazi Troops

How did the mufti make himself so important? Muslims served in four Eastern Legions; two SS divisions, for instance Khanjar; and the Osttürkische Waffenverband (East Turkic Armed Unit) (II, p. 920). In 1944, more such armed forces were planned (II, p. 718). He advised an imam training as well as Islamic rules, and offered Hitler to [mediate](#) with Josef Stalin (II, p. 374, 908). In 1944, the mufti sent paratroopers to Palestine and Iraq (II, 908), believing in a Nazi atomic bomb and spreading Islamism in Germany, Croatia, Italy, Russia, and the Middle East. He asked the Axis to recognize parts of Greater Syria (ex-Ottoman Sham province, ولاية الشام, capital Damascus) and the Arab wish for a (Jew-free) Union of States. In 1943 he suggested raising up millions of Muslim soldiers in France (II 354) and North Africa.

The Wehrmacht's 6 Eastern Legions



The Darkest Era

Al-Husaini worked with a dozen key Nazis and invested via Göring half a million US dollars in shares of eight German companies. On 4 July 1943, Himmler told him of having killed about 3 million Jews (right: Arabic script, see also [book](#) “Nazis, Islamists” p. 185), as noted by al-Husaini in his memoirs.

Mid-1943 Himmler to al-Husaini in his Memoirs, p. 126: “about 3 million killed”

وقد كنت أسمع من هملر كل مرة ما يدل على شدة حقه على اليهود، يتهمهم بأنهم ظالمون، ويزعمون أنهم مظلومون، ويقول أنهم موقدو نيران الحروب، وأنانيون ونحو ذلك، ويبين مقدار الأذى الذي أنزلوه بألمانيا في الحرب الماضية، وأنهم دائماً يوقدون نار الحرب ثم يستغلونها لمصالحهم المادية، دون أن يخسروا فيها أي شيء، ولذلك فإننا صممنا في هذه الحرب على أن نذيقهم وبال أعمالهم مقدماً، فقد أبدنا حتى الآن حوالي ثلاثة ملايين منهم. (وكان حديثه هذا في صيف عام ١٩٤٣)

١٢٦

In March of that year, Himmler had received a number of 2.5 million “dead Jews” and found it “too low” (II, p. 62). A few months later, Himmler told the mufti the higher number (II, p. 223). Both met yearly, as in May 1944 (II, p. 718), when the mufti visited Berger to discuss SS troops and imams.

Secondary literature on the Middle East could have been more up to date. The mufti was born in 1897 (II, p. 197), and his mid-1943 meeting with Himmler needs context, that could be offered by current works on this era (II, p. 344). Himmler’s “anti-Balfour [Cable](#)” to al-Husaini was more broadly discussed (II, p. 522). Uhl’s research group offers a detailed account on how Nazi totalitarians committed the Shoah and also worked with like-minded men under a fanatical dictator with racism and merciless warfare (II, pp. 714-715). They found [similar](#) ideologies in faraway [regions](#). The book opens many venues to study this interaction between Islamist domination and Nazi [racist](#) antisemitism.

In using this very well-presented diary II, scholars surely will find the work of Uhl’s team a most indispensable, deep going, and highly professional research tool to one of the darkest human eras – to escape evil and do better.

Wolfgang G. Schwanitz

Uhl, Matthias; Holler, Martin; Leleu, Jean-Luc; Pohl, Dieter; Pruschwitz, Thomas (Hrsg.): Die Organisation des Terrors. Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1943–1945. München: Piper Verlag 2020, 978-3-492-05896-4, Connections. A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists, (21122021), www.connections.clio-online.net/publicationreview/id/reb-97410 This review first appeared in Connections. Here updated, cover picture, three documents, the links and the headlines were added.

[1] “Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1941/42” eds. Peter Witte, Michael Wildt, Martina Voigt, Dieter Pohl, Peter Klein, Christian Gerlach, Christoph Dieckmann and Andrej Angrick, Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1999