

**THE FATHER OF ARAB TERRORISM**  
*Tom's Perspectives*  
by Thomas Ice

Haj Amin al Husseini (1893–1974) is the father of Arab terrorism and a leading modern anti-Semite and anti-Israel protagonist. Even before the Muslim Brotherhood was formed (1928), al Husseini was doing all he could to make sure that the modern state of Israel would be stillborn. While Islam has always had a terrorist streak, al Husseini is considered its modern architect, especially as it relates to early Zionism in the 1920s and 1930s.

**THE EARLY YEARS**

Born in Jerusalem to a family originally from Yemen, whose grandfather has been appointed the Mufti (expounder of Muslim law) of Jerusalem by the Turks, which was at that time largely a figurehead position with little authority.<sup>1</sup> After a childhood of average academic achievement, at 19 he was sent to Cairo to study Islamic philosophy. Without completing his studies, he collected enough money to make his pilgrimage to Mecca and Media in 1913. After his pilgrimage he returns to Jerusalem, foregoing further study in Cairo. Shortly after his return, World War I broke out and he served as a Turkish officer in Smyrna, Turkey. During the war he observed the massacre by the Turks of the Armenians. After the war he returned to Jerusalem and became a tutor in a Moslem teacher's school. Starting in 1919, Haj Amin became active in Arab nationalism and his writings and speaking struck a popular cord with many of the common Arabs as he made appeals in the name of the Koran. "He was passionate in his hatred of the British and the Jews."<sup>2</sup>

April 4, 1920 was a day that catapulted al Husseini into the public limelight of Jerusalem once and for all. This was the day that al Husseini incited Arab mobs into a four-day riot throughout Jerusalem against the Jews. The Arabs went through the Jewish quarter massacring, burning, and pillaging the defenseless Jews. The events in Jerusalem lead to similar activity in a number of towns throughout Palestine at that time. "A total of forty-seven Jews were killed and over 140 wounded in the first significant bloodshed in Palestine in hundreds of years."<sup>3</sup> al Husseini, who had fled to Syria, was eventually convicted in absentia for "incitement to violence" by a British military court and sentenced to 10 years in prison. So it would be that the modern Arab terrorist movement was conceived and launched by al Husseini in the spring of 1920.

**GRAND MUFTI OF JERUSALEM**

While al Husseini was in Syria, the first British High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, to oversee the Mandate for Palestine given them by the League of Nations. Since Samuel was a Jew, he appeared to bend over backwards to appease the Arabs. Even though there were a number of Arab leaders who believed in cooperating with the Jews of Jerusalem, al Husseini was pardoned and brought back from Syria and on March 1921 named the Mufti of Jerusalem. To add insult to injury, al Husseini was named President of the Supreme Muslim Council in May 1922, which meant that he became the virtual dictator of all things Arab and Muslim in

Jerusalem. Later that year, al Hussein was "installed as virtual religious leader of the Muslim Arabs of Palestine."<sup>4</sup>

Things were pretty quiet in Palestine until August of 1929 when al Hussein instigated a series of simultaneous attacks by Arabs against the Jews throughout Palestine. He used fabricated pictures showing the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem supposedly vandalized by Jews who, it was said, were making plans to rebuild Israel's Temple. This pogrom against the Jews "resulted in the murders of one hundred and thirty-three Jews with over three hundred wounded." This riot resulted in the murder of sixty-seven Jews in Hebron and the Jewish abandonment of the ancient city until Jews returned in 1968.

"The election of Hitler as Chancellor of Germany, January 30, 1933, was an event that galvanized the entire Arab world and this would serve to further accelerate al Hussein's growing influence."<sup>5</sup> By April of 1936, in response to more propaganda from al Hussein, more Arab riots throughout Palestine broke out. In the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, sixteen Jews were murdered and seventy-five were seriously wounded. However, this time the Jewish communities had built up defense forces and were often able to fight back and defend themselves. Ongoing engagements by the Arabs against the Jews led to near-warlike conditions throughout Palestine for the next three years.

Finally, in 1937 the British decided to do something about the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. al Hussein not only killed Jews and the British, but would also kill fellow Arabs who opposed him. On October 1, 1937, the British began to round-up al Hussein and his gang. Those who were captured were deported to the Seychelles Islands, east of Africa. However, the Mufti of Jerusalem hid in the Dome of the Rock, "confident that the British authorities would not dare to enter. A few days later, he slipped out of a side door and, dressed in the garb of an Arab peasant woman, was smuggled aboard a boat moored near Jaffa and escaped to Lebanon."<sup>6</sup> Some believe that it was likely the Nazis that aided his escape to Lebanon.<sup>7</sup> On October 2, 1937 Nazi SS officers Adolf Eichmann and Herbert Hagen arrived in Haifa and had a meeting for 48 hours with al Hussein. Even while exiled in Beirut, al Hussein was able to direct many terrorist operations back in Palestine for another year and a half, ending in 1939. al Hussein's "Arab revolt would result in the deaths of 2,652 Jews, 618 British and 6,953 Arabs."<sup>8</sup>

### WORLD WAR II YEARS

In 1938 the exiled al Hussein was put on the payroll of the German Intelligence Division. He became an agent for Nazi political, financial, and military interests in the Middle East. The Mufti of Jerusalem agreed to aid in spreading Nazi ideas throughout the Muslim Arab world. This influence is seen even in our own day where Saddam Hussein was the head of the Ba'ath party in Iraq while currently Bashar al-Assad and the Ba'ath party control Syria. The Arab Socialist Ba'ath party throughout the Islamic world is nothing more than a Muslim version of Nazism, which al Hussein played a central role in spreading.

In October 1939, one month after the German war began, al Hussein fled to Iraq and attempted to aid a Nazi backed coup against the pro-British government. The Germans had a plan to remove all European influence from the Middle East and form an independent and united Arab kingdom. Had the German's won, al Hussein would have been placed over this kingdom so that he could kill every Jew under his jurisdiction. Fortunately all of these plans failed, however, there still exists a major strand of ideology that has been left that resonates in our own day through movements like the Egyptian Brotherhood. al Hussein blamed the Jews, even though small in number and largely powerless in Iraq, for the Nazi failure.

As the coup in Iraq failed, al Hussein once again flees, this time to Berlin, with a stop in Rome to meet with Mussolini on October 17, 1941. al Hussein is called in Germany "The Fuhrer of the Arab World" and lived in Berlin until May 1945. He labeled his residence in Berlin as "The Research Institute on the Jewish Problem in the Moslem World." The displaced Mufti of Jerusalem was funded by the "money confiscated from Jews on their way to concentration camps."<sup>9</sup>

al Hussein was extremely active on behalf of Hitler and the Nazis during the war. What did he do? He was intimately involved in developing the tactics and strategy for the "final solution"—the systematic extermination of the Jews. This is something that was clearly dear to his heart. It is said that many of his ideas about killing Jews originated with him during his time in the Turkish army during the First World War as he observed the Turks during the massacre of the Armenians. The former Mufti of Jerusalem established for Hitler the Hanzar Brigades, which were composed of Muslims Nazi troops. Many were Muslims from the Balkans who made-up a significant percent of the Nazi fighting force. "Approximately 100,000 European Muslims were recruited and fought for Nazi Germany during the course of the war."<sup>10</sup>

### CONCLUSION

After the Second World War, al Hussein was under house arrest in Paris and was to be tried on the World Court as a war criminal, for which he certainly qualified. As he had done a number of times before, he escaped and made his way to Cairo and lived within the Arab world until his death in 1974. He never returned to Jerusalem after his 1937 departure and had very little influence. The former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem left quite a legacy! As the father of Middle East Muslim terrorism, his place as leader of the radical, nationalist Palestinian Arabs was taken by his nephew Mohammed Abdel-Raouf Arafat As Qudwa al- Hussein, better known as Yasser Arafat. In August 2002, Arafat gave an interview in which he referred to "our hero al-Hussein" as a symbol of Palestinian Arab resistance. Just such a profile could very well foreshadow some of the events destined to unfold during a coming tribulation. Maranatha!

### ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Information for this article was obtained from the following resources: Moshe Perlman, *Mufti of Jerusalem: Haj Amin El Hussein, A Father of Jihad* (Philadelphia: Pavilion Press, 2006); Chuck Morse, *The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism: Adolf Hitler and Haj Amin al-Hussein* (New York: iUniverse, 2003);

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Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cuppers, *Nazi Palestine: The Plans for the Extermination of the Jews in Palestine*, translated by Krista Smith (New York: Enigma Books, [2005] 2010); *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, corrected edition (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, n.d.), s.v. Husseini, Hajj (Muhammad) Amin Al-

<sup>2</sup> Perlman, *Mufti of Jerusalem*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Morse, *The Nazi Connection*, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Perlman, *Mufti of Jerusalem*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Morse, *The Nazi Connection*, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Perlman, *Mufti of Jerusalem*, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Perlman, *Mufti of Jerusalem*, p. 30; Morse, *The Nazi Connection*, pp. 45–47.

<sup>8</sup> Morse, *The Nazi Connection*, p. 49.

<sup>9</sup> Morse, *The Nazi Connection*, p. 56.

<sup>10</sup> Morse, *The Nazi Connection*, p. 71.