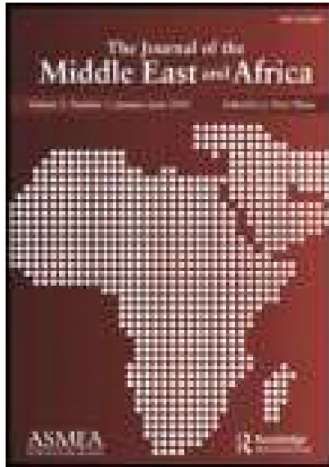


This article was downloaded by: [Boris Havel]

On: 29 December 2014, At: 10:27

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



The Journal of the Middle East and Africa

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ujme20>

Haj Amin al-Husseini: Herald of Religious Anti-Judaism in the Contemporary Islamic World

Boris Havel

Published online: 23 Dec 2014.



CrossMark

[Click for updates](#)

To cite this article: Boris Havel (2014) Haj Amin al-Husseini: Herald of Religious Anti-Judaism in the Contemporary Islamic World, *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 5:3, 221-243, DOI: [10.1080/21520844.2014.966232](https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2014.966232)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2014.966232>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms &

Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

Haj Amin al-Husseini: Herald of Religious Anti-Judaism in the Contemporary Islamic World

BORIS HAVEL 

*This article follows the development of religious anti-Judaism and anti-Zionism within Arab Muslim society in the twentieth century. Using the method of historical examination, it starts from the view that Muslim religious antagonism toward the Jewish political enterprise in Palestine did not exist prior to World War I. Only after Haj Amin al-Husseini became the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem was the early Islamic perception of Jews as religiously unfit for political rule introduced as a major issue in the Muslim-Jewish relations. This article expounds how the Mufti combined Islamic canonical anti-Judaism with Christian medieval folklore, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, and European anti-Semitism. Thus was introduced the notion of the Jew despised and cursed by Allah, yet powerful enough to defy Allah's will of making that curse evident through his political, social, and economic humiliation. The pamphlet *Islam and Judaism* published in 1943 for an unorthodox Bosnian Muslim community has been used to demonstrate the Mufti's aberration from traditional Islamic views on Jews and the development of an eclectic anti-Judaism that today exists in many parts of the Muslim world.*

KEYWORDS *anti-Judaism, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Haj Amin al-Husseini, Islam, jibad, Palestine*

It is becoming increasingly apparent that religion is one of the most important features of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is primarily noticeable within the Arab Muslim community. Arab attitudes to Israel are, of course, complex

BORIS HAVEL earned his Ph.D. in international relations and national security at the University of Zagreb, and an M.A. in comparative religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He currently works at the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

and should not be simplified and reduced to religion only. Israeli attitudes toward Arabs are even more multifaceted and impossible to narrow down to one aspect; different parts of Israeli society rest upon different political, ideological, and religious premises. Christian Arabs were historically active in their struggle against Zionists and later Israelis, but the religion of Christianity hardly played a crucial role in their activism. Christians who championed the Arab cause in Palestine, from George Antonius¹ to George Habash² and Edward Said, were mostly Arab nationalists and ideologues, who essentially disregarded any religion as irrelevant. Those famous Arab Christians were following or followed by countless other coreligionists. As Christians were in many parts of the Middle East a minority in a predominantly Islamic world, the common denominators, Arabism, and “anti-imperialism,” allowed them to merge into the majority of the population and—one may add, even without questioning their ideological, political, and nationalist sincerity—to at least temporarily avoid their centuries-long second-class citizen status.³

However, European (mostly French) Christian anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism⁴ did influence Arab Christians of the Middle East. Modern persecution of Jews in the Middle East with religious undertones commenced in areas of the region with a strong Christian presence, notably Syria and

¹Antonius (1891–1942), author of the famous 1938 book *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement*, has been regarded as the first widely recognized Arab historian of Arab nationalism.

²Habash (1926–2008) established the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a leftist revolutionary and radical organization that opposed Israel’s existence and eventually joined the PLO.

³In Peel’s report of 1937 (Earl Peel, et. al., *Palestine Royal Commission Report* [London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1937]) we find the following description referring to the year of 1921, when Arab violence in Palestine began: “Moslem and Christian Arabs, whose relations had always been uneasy and at times unfriendly, were united in their hostility to Jews.” For more on the Christian-Muslim relations during the time prior to and during Israel’s War of Independence, see Benny Morris, *1948: The First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁴Anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism are, of course, two different phenomena. However, they partially overlap and interrelate, and at times a clear and definitive distinction between the two might not be entirely apparent. For the purpose of this article, “anti-Semitism” means primarily racial (or national) animosity, whereas “anti-Judaism” means primarily religious animosity toward Jews. Religious and nonreligious Jews alike can be the object of religious animosity, inasmuch as it is founded on others’ religious perception of Jews, or religious concepts about Jews and Judaism, which more often than not have no link to what Judaism actually is. Early Islamic religious texts in which Mohammad’s polemics and conflicts with the Jews have been recorded often present precisely such an anti-Jewish sentiment (cf. Quran 9:30 and the famous statement about “Uzayr”); to speak of anti-Semitism in the context of those texts and events would be anachronistic. Anti-Judaism has been known both in Christian and in Muslim religious tradition and folklore for centuries, whereas anti-Semitism emerged in nineteenth-century Europe through the invoking of “scientific” arguments and is generally not related to a religion. Some aspects of anti-Semitism—such as the alleged Jewish plan to manipulate and harm societies—were unknown in the mainstream Muslim anti-Jewish discourse prior to Haj Amin’s appearance on the scene of Muslim-Jewish relations. As will be explained later in this article, Haj Amin merged religious anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic elements in his anti-Zionist thought, intermingling and making the three *antis* virtually undistinguishable. However, since Islamic early texts constituted the foundation of his thought and activism, in this article I will refer to his political doctrine primarily as anti-Judaism.

Lebanon, in the first half of the 1800s.⁵ Some Christian anti-Jewish ideas, such as blood libel, were eventually adopted by some Arab Muslims, and the grotesque accusation at times still appears in TV shows and articles published in Syria, Egypt, Palestinian areas, and elsewhere in the Muslim world. In due course of time, however, many Arab Christians changed their view on Israel. The shift in their perception of the Jewish state became evident *inter alia* when Arab Christians from Nazareth started a movement and a political party called *Bnei Brit HaHadasha* (*Children of the New Testament*) whose program of full incorporation of Arab Christians into Israeli society includes even the recommendation that they serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Thus, when we speak of the contemporary role of religion and religious antagonism toward Jews and the Jewish state, we can assert that it almost exclusively rests in the Arab Islamic community. Radical Islamic groups unambiguously invoke religion as their prime reason for armed struggle with “the Zionists.” In my writing on the Arab-Israeli conflict I have often pointed to Ibn Ishak’s *Sirat Rasul Allah*⁶ and to the Charter of Hamas as specimen texts for anyone who aspires to understand the modern Middle East.⁷ Interestingly enough, what I found largely unknown to many of my European peers interested in Arab-Israeli relations and history was the role that early Islamic texts and tradition played in shaping the theoretical framework, ideological principles, political programs, and practical behavior of a significant part of the Middle Eastern Muslim community. At times it has astounded me how little even those intellectuals who are shaping the political future of Europe know about those texts.⁸ That a modern political group would sincerely invoke medieval concepts and make them a cornerstone of their politics, many in the West deem absurd and bizarre. It may indeed be

⁵The most infamous incident took place in Damascus in 1840, when Jews of Damascus were accused of the ritual murder of a Christian monk. This event, known as the Damascus Affair, still inspires anti-Semitic propaganda among Muslims, at times even disguised as scholarship. (Cf. Moshe Sharon, *Jihad: Islam Against Israel and the West* [Jerusalem, 2007], 75.)

⁶Ibn Ishak’s *Sirat Rasul Allah* [*Life of the Messenger of Allah*], translated into English by Alfred Guillaume as *Life of Muhammad* (Oxford University Press, 1955) is commonly regarded as the most authoritative early biography of the Prophet of Islam.

⁷I am very much indebted to Professor Moshe Sharon of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who introduced me to the early Islamic texts and their contemporary relevance during my years as an M.A. student of comparative religion at the Rothberg International School.

⁸Springer’s journal *European View* (the policy journal of the Centre for European Studies, the official think tank of the European People’s Party) published an article by Mufti Mustafa Cerić, former *Reisu-l-Ulama* of Bosnia-Herzegovina and one of the leading European Muslim clerics, who aspires to become the first chief Mufti of Europe. In the article, which allegedly promotes the advancement of peace between Muslims and Europe, Cerić wrote that he sees Europe as “*dāru-l-sulb*, the house of social contract.” As examples of such contracts, the author lists the treaty that Muhammad concluded at Hudaybiyya, and the treaty with Jews and Christians [*sic*] at al-Madinah; see Mustafa Cerić, “The Challenge of a Single Muslim Authority in Europe,” *European View* 6, no. 1 (2007): 45. It is rather obvious that whoever recommended this article for publication probably knew nothing or next to nothing about terminology and the events to which Cerić refers, inasmuch as they send a message quite opposite to the one supposedly promoted by the article.

absurd and bizarre, but the key issue is, Is it true? As the Charter of Hamas demonstrates, and many clerics, leaders, and members of Islamic groups tirelessly reaffirm, it often is. Many Western scholars, analysts, and activists often argue that, inasmuch as Muslims never persecuted Jews on religious grounds, as Christians did, contemporary Muslim animosity towards Jews is essentially political phenomenon which has been provoked by Zionism. This myth has been contested by authors such as Moshe Gil, Bernard Lewis, Moshe Sharon, Norrman Stillman, and Bat Ye'or, to name a few.

Nevertheless, as we focus our attention on the development of the early *Yishuv*, the Jewish communities in Palestine, and the first Arab-Zionist interactions, we will indeed find little outright religious Muslim antagonism toward Jewish settlement in their ancient homeland. At the turn of the twentieth century, Arab nationalism was taking shape, but it developed slowly, almost sluggishly, like most other creative processes under the dying Ottoman Empire. The beginning of World War I urged the more rapid development of this nationalism, and its growth became more vigorous and even brisk, mostly because of external factors. Probably the most important factor was increased British involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. The British solicited Arab support against the Turks, who were allies of Germany. They encouraged Arab nationalism as a counterweight to the Arab-Turkish common denominator of Islam. Caliph Mehmet V declared *jihad* against the Allies in 1914, just as the British had predicted and duly warded off by promising the ruler of Hejaz, Hussein ibn Ali (1854–1931), that they would grant independence to Arabs as soon as the Ottoman yoke was removed from Arab lands. Hussein forbade the call to *jihad* to be proclaimed in Mecca and Medina.⁹ For Hussein, who dreamed of a pan-Arab kingdom ruled by him, and for many other Arab Muslim political actors of the time, the vision of an independent Arab state proved far stronger than religious affiliation with their Ottoman coreligionists. The rise of the nationalist Young Turks and Atatürk added to the further marginalization of political religion throughout the Ottoman lands. Ottoman decline and Turkish nationalism provoked the growth of nationalist independence-seeking movements among other nations long ruled by the sultan. The empire soon disintegrated, and new nation-states emerged in its stead.

Many Britons who played important roles in the process of the rise of Arab nationalism, such as T. E. Lawrence, Arthur Balfour, Mark Sykes, and Winston Churchill, believed that Arab nationalists would recognize the advantages that the Jewish presence in Palestine offered to the development of their societies.¹⁰ Indeed, some Arab leaders, such as Hussein's son Faisal

⁹Peel et al., *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, 16–17.

¹⁰Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 189; Vera Weizmann and David Tutaev, *The Impossible Takes Longer: Memoirs of Vera Weizmann as Told to David Tutaev* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 88; Peel et al., *Palestine Royal*

ibn Hussein (1885–1933), welcomed Jewish immigration to Palestine.¹¹ This is not to say that there were no conflicts between Arabs and the Jewish settlers. Changes in land ownership, particularly of the scarce arable soil, provoked local tensions and communal clashes. Still, most of those conflicts were comparable to conflicts elsewhere, where one ethnic group, tribe, or nation moves onto land adjoining that held by another, and they wrestle over territory, water, and other natural resources, as well as over employment, government, real estate, and the like.¹² Conflict at this stage to a large degree rested upon what Raphael Israeli called “*quantifiable* argument: measurable, negotiable and compromisable.”¹³ All that was apparently needed was fair settlement of tangible issues. Even if irrational and religious considerations cannot be dismissed altogether, they can be dismissed as decisive at this stage. Islamic attitudes toward Jews as religiously unfit for ownership of the Palestinian land did not exist as an articulated and mobilizing political force.

Even during the years after the Ottomans lost possession of Syria and Palestine, this trend continued. From today’s perspective, it seems as if a religious “vacuum” interrupted the sequence of events, a period devoid of the expected Islamic faith-based perception of non-Muslims in their midst. Kedourie used remarkable wording to describe Islam after World War I, a time in which the main Arab identity was Arabism. He called this religion “Islam without dogmas.”¹⁴ As Arab nationalist sentiment grew, it clashed not with Judaism, but with Jewish nationalism. An immediate cause behind the increasing tension between Arab and Jewish communities was the

Commission Report, 41. By the time Peel had written his report, this logic has been proven wrong (131). The *Palestine Royal Commission Report* of 1937, known as Peel’s Report because Lord Peel headed the Commission, presented a comprehensive British evaluation of the contemporary and possible future developments in Palestine.

¹¹See Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, ed., *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, 7th ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 17–20. Faisal was Hussein’s third son, who briefly ruled in Syria in 1920 and later became king of Iraq. Abdullah I (1882–1951), whose family still rules the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was his brother. Abdullah and his successors were viewed as moderate in their policy toward the Jewish state, and it seems that they appreciated the advantages that this position gave to their fragile kingdom. Most wars that Jordan fought against Israel were more result more of wider Arab pressure than of Hashemite belligerency.

¹²Cf. Chuck Morse, *The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism: Adolf Hitler and Haj Amin Al-Husseini* (New York: iUniverse Inc., 2003), 26; Morris, *1948*, 6. Morris explains that some prominent Arabs showed concern over Jewish purchasing of Palestinian lands and tried to obstruct the sales through the Ottoman government. One of them called for the “harassment” or expulsion of all Jews who settled in the land after 1981. This individual was the Mufti of Jerusalem, the father of Haj Amin al-Husseini.

¹³Raphael Israeli, *War, Peace and Terror in the Middle East* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 2003), 290. The other “*qualitative* debate” refers to values: it can be “moral, cultural or religious, and as such it becomes utterly non-negotiable and immutable.” Israeli here discusses the contemporary Arab-Israeli conflict, and as this article deals with the transformation of the conflict from *quantifiable* to *qualitative*, I will use this terminology even later in the article.

¹⁴Elie Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle-Eastern Studies* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004), 324.

appearance of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which reached Palestine by 1918.¹⁵ Indeed, it is only logical that such an aggressive Jewish political, economic, and ideological program as the *Protocols* outlined, if perceived as genuine, would make an Arab nationalist concerned.

While “Islam without dogmas” was the main framework within which Arab nationalist politics and ideologies were forged and formed, there was another stream of thought present in many Arab societies beneath the dominant ideology of nationalism, dormant but waking up, still hard to grasp or even to name. Like a giant slowly emerging out from under Arabian sand, long-buried Islamic notions began to reappear. Peel’s Report points out that Arab-Zionist “nationalist” conflict generated the antagonism of Arabs toward Jews in places where no plans for a Jewish national home existed, such as Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. “Quite obviously, then, the problem of Palestine is political,” the authors of the report confidently stated.¹⁶ The statement, however, is somewhat contradictory: Why would the Jews of Iraq be attacked over a political issue in another and distant land? It seems that the British were carefully circumventing the idea that by 1937 must have been apparent to the British intelligence, the same smart men who in 1914 understood well where the danger lay when British interests were at stake.¹⁷ To perceive back then that the old notion of *jihad* could reappear in the Muslim world was a sign of impressive analytical skill.¹⁸ Yet, in 1937, the Royal Commission casually concluded that “it is difficult to be an Arab patriot and not to hate

¹⁵Weizmann, *Autobiography*, 217–22; Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1988), 431. See also Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881–1999* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 88–89. *The Protocols* turned not only Arabs but also many British officers against Zionism. In 1918, most British officers serving in Palestine were more familiar with the *Protocols* than with the Balfour Declaration. They were also concerned that Jews came from Russia to Palestine to spread the ideas of socialism and communism.

¹⁶Peel et al., *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, 131.

¹⁷The British understanding of the political influence of the religion of Islam was deeper than it usually appeared from the official policies and publications. A similar phenomenon happened in Bosnia during the war between 1991 and 1995, when a British battalion that was part of the UN forces was on duty in central Bosnia where Asian *mujahedeen* were active. While officials attempted to deny that they even existed, intelligence and lower-ranking officers questioned by international courts during war crimes investigations revealed entirely another picture: not only did the British know of their activities, but they prevented other sides, including their allies, from interfering with it. More about this unexplored topic can be seen in the documentary *The Third Campaign* by Croatian journalist Višnja Starešina (<http://www.thirdcampaign.com>). For a broader study of this phenomenon, I also recommend Arthur J. Evans’s *Illirian Letters: A Revised Selection of Correspondence from the Illyrian Provinces of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia, Addressed to the “Manchester Guardian” During the Year 1877* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), first published in 1878. The author, a correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, described turmoil and Muslim-Christian conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the last years of the Ottoman rule. Part of his work refers to inaccuracies found in the reports published by the British diplomatic mission in Sarajevo, whose staff downplayed the religious motive behind Muslim violence against Christians.

¹⁸Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 170–71. Taking a wider view, the Ottoman call for *jihad* was not that unexpected. Sultan Abdül-Hamid made religion a central theme and played the “Islamic

Jews.”¹⁹ Linking patriotism with hatred of the Jews would demand more explanation than the Peel Report’s authors provide,²⁰ since the same political powers just a few decades prior had assumed that patriotism (a term that was apparently used as synonymous with nationalism) would move Arabs to understand the *benefits* of the Jewish presence in their midst.

It would take years before political analysts (as opposed to members of the intelligence services) would start to distinguish patriotism from Islamism. Twenty years after the publication of Peel’s Report, the general perception of the course of affairs in the Middle East had not changed much. Even so, there were those who thought otherwise, such as S. D. Goitein and John Badeau. In an article published in 1959, Badeau pointed out that many analysts of the Middle East believed that modern ideas of nationalism had replaced the Islamic religion for good, and he warned against such a perception: “It is therefore understandable that many observers predict the rapid decay of Islamic influence in the Middle East. Yet, though the evidence of the practical impotency of traditional religion in many current affairs is unmistakable, this conclusion is unwarranted—at least as a generalization.”²¹ And indeed, by the early 1920s, a process of change of the nature of the Arab-Jewish conflict and of the forthcoming wider development in the Arab Middle East had begun to unfold. For how long and in which way the process advanced is not quite apparent; contemporary sources about the development of the Arab society in Palestine are limited and often unreliable.²² The eruption to the surface of religious hostility, however, was well recorded. On April 4, 1920, three holidays overlapped: the Jewish Passover, the Christian Easter, and the Muslim *Nabi Musa*. Arab rioters took to the streets and attacked the Jews of Jerusalem. The crowd shouted, “Muhammad’s religion was born with the sword!” Christian Arabs took part in the riots too. They displayed a sign on which was written, “Shall we give back the country to a people who

card” during the insurrection of Christian provinces that started in Bosnia in 1875, spread to Bulgaria and Armenia, and prompted Russian military involvement.

¹⁹Peel, *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, 131.

²⁰Ibid. There is a brief, but not very convincing, explanation two sentences earlier: “Nor is the conflict in its essence an interracial conflict, arising from any old instinctive antipathy of Arabs towards Jews. There was little or no friction, as we have seen, between Arab and Jew in the rest of the Arab world until the strife in Palestine engendered it”

²¹John S. Badeau, “Islam and the Modern Middle East,” *Foreign Affairs* 38, no. 1 (1959): 61; S. D. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages* (New York: Schocken Books, 1955). Goitein, writing in the 1950s, understood the Islamic factor behind Arab attitudes toward Jews and other non-Muslims in politics, and recognized the peril that the Muslim Brotherhood and militant Islam posed to Middle Eastern societies. Writing in 1955, he observed that “Islam is still in the position of a social force no one dares to defy” (228–29).

²²The Ottoman Empire kept poor records of its Palestinian province, as well as most other provinces, whereas data collected after 1918 were often marked by political and/or ideological issues. For more about the problem of sources, see Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984).

crucified our Lord Jesus?"²³ All the while the mob chanted, "*Nasbrab dam al-Yahud*" and "*Itbab al-Yahud*."²⁴

One of the leaders of the Arab mob, and probably a main inciter of the violence, even though there are some conflicting reports about his part in the events,²⁵ was a young member of the prominent Jerusalem Arab al-Husseini family, Muhammad Amin.²⁶ After the riots, he fled and was sentenced in absentia to ten years of prison by the British court martial but was soon pardoned by Sir Herbert Samuel, the newly appointed High Commissioner for Palestine. Liberal, well meaning, and—as history proved—lethally naïve, Samuel honored al-Husseini with the ad hoc title of Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.²⁷ Amidst the political processes in the Middle East thus was introduced "the most influential Palestinian Arab leader of the twentieth century" and the "driving force behind [the] deterioration [of the political situation in Palestine and Arab-Jewish relations]."²⁸

HAJ AMIN'S THEOLOGICAL ANTI-JUDAISM IN CONTEXT

There is hardly a book on the history of modern Palestine in which the name of Muhammad Haj Amin al-Husseini (1893– 1974)²⁹ does not appear. He is usually described as a zealous anti-Zionist who opposed any compromise with the Jews and fought their presence in Palestine by all means. Some historians have noticed the peculiarity of a cleric leading a nationalist movement, which was an "unusual phenomenon in the third world."³⁰ One of the methods he adopted was collaboration with the Nazis as soon as they appeared on the scene of history. Al-Husseini helped the Germans restore the pro-Nazi former prime minister of Iraq Rashid Ali al-Gaylani in April 1941. The success of that project was fleeting, and by June, al-Gaylani had been deposed again and forced into exile.³¹ Husseini fled too, first to

²³Morris, 1948, 95.

²⁴Ibid. Arabic: "We will drink the blood of the Jews" and "Death to the Jews."

²⁵"Amin, who was leading the demonstration, was reported to have tried to restrain the rioters"; *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986–2004), 12:67. See also Ženi Lebl, *Hadž-Amin i Berlin [Haj Amin and Berlin]* (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2003), 14–18; and Peel, *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, 177.

²⁶The mayor of Jerusalem at that time was Musa Kazim al-Husseini, Amin's close relative, who also incited Arabs to violence and was the same year removed from his post by the British.

²⁷For more about Husseini and Samuel, see *Sir Herbert Samuel and the Government of Palestine* (Kedourie: Chatham House Version, 2004), 52–81.

²⁸Efraim Karsh, *Palestine Betrayed* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 16; cf. Peters, *From Time Immemorial*, 309–10.

²⁹Data from *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 12:67–70. The year of Husseini's birth is not certain.

³⁰Morris, 1948, 12.

³¹Rashid Ali al-Gaylani (1892–1965) was an Iraqi politician and Arab nationalist who served three short terms as prime minister, the last of which as a result of a *coup d'état*. He was an opponent of Britain,

Italy and then to Germany. In Berlin, he befriended Himmler, associated with Hitler, and spent the war aiding the cause of Nazism. Those and other details from his career are not unknown to historians. However, there are still unresearched details of relevance for a better understanding of his role in the Holocaust. The German authors Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüppers have pointed out that until 2005, when their book *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz: das Dritte Reich, die Araber und Palästina [Crescent Moon and Swastika: The Third Reich, the Arabs, and Palestine]* was first published, there had not been any “comprehensive and scientific study” of Arab-German relations from the rise of Nazism in 1933 until its defeat twelve years later.³² One scholarly study of Haj Amin’s activities on behalf of the Nazis was done by a Jewish historian from the former Yugoslavia, Ženi Lebl. Lebl examined archives and primary sources previously not researched and published her findings in 2002 in the Serbian language. There are other historical books and articles written on the same topic that are, like Lebl’s book, rather unknown to the wider public, partly because they were written in the Croatian or the Serbian language. The particular interest about al-Husseini among historians from the former Yugoslavia is related to the fact that he organized Waffen-SS units in the provinces of Bosnia and Kosovo, the most notorious of which was the SS *Handžar*³³ Division. This division’s somewhat atypical and intriguing history has emerged as an object of interest in the context of the breakup of Yugoslavia; the subsequent wars among Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims; and the polemics regarding events related to World War II. Historical research undertaken for the purpose of furthering such polemics have more often than not been charged with strong ideological and nationalist sentiment and should be approached with much caution. Furthermore, al-Husseini also played a role as a Nazi agitator in other contexts. Thus, during Adolf Eichmann’s trial in Jerusalem in 1961, Dieter Wisliceny testified that

and in 1940–1941 he collaborated with Italy and Nazi Germany to bring Iraq into the Axis powers’ orbit. After a brief British-Iraqi war in May 1941, his troops were defeated, and he eventually found refuge in Berlin, where he was recognized by Hitler as head of the Iraqi government in exile. After the defeat of Nazism, he moved to Saudi Arabia.

³²Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüppers, *Nazi Palestine: The Plans for the Extermination of the Jews in Palestine*, trans. Krista Smith (New York: Enigma Books in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2010), viii. The authors worked with archival primary sources, most of which had not been published previously (see also Morse, *Nazi Connection*, 62). In 2012, a former soldier of the Handžar Division, Zvonimir Bernwald, published in German *Muslims in der Waffen-SS. Erinnerungen an die bosnische Division Handzar 1943–1945 [Muslims in the Waffen-SS. Memories of the Bosnian Handzar Division 1943–1945]* (Graz: Ares-Verlag, 2012). Two other books on the subject were published recently: David G. Dalin and John F. Rothmann, *Icon of Evil: Hitler’s Mufti and the Rise of Radical Islam* (New York: Random House, 2008), and Christopher Hale, *Hitler’s Foreign Executioners: Europe’s Dirty Secret* (Stroud: History Press, 2011).

³³The word *handžar* means “dagger.”

the two were close friends and alleged that Husseini was the “initiator” of the Nazi policy of extermination of European Jews.³⁴

Even though al-Husseini’s activism has been an almost-indispensable part of historical studies of the Arab-Zionist conflict in Palestine and is increasingly becoming an object of attention in studies of the Arab role in World War II, there is one particular feature of his career that has passed rather unnoticed in most of those studies, namely, al-Husseini seems to have been the very first prominent Arab leader and cleric who based his anti-Jewish incitement not on Arab nationalism, political activism, or anti-imperialist ideology, but on the religion of Islam according to its earliest texts. That is not to say that he disregarded all those other arguments in his agitation against Jews. Quite on the contrary; he allegedly memorized the whole text of the *Protocols*. He also stressed that Arabs should aid the German cause because Germany had never been a colonial power in the Arab Middle East and was now at war with the imperialist Britain and France. In various speeches and writings, the Mufti combined the *Protocol*-ish, anti-imperialist, ideological, economic, pragmatic, political, and religious arguments, depending on the audience. However, the Mufti’s references to Islamic canonical texts and their historical portrayal of the Jews as the prime reason why contemporary Muslims should confront Jews constitute the defining moment of the shift in the Arab Muslim view of the conflict over Palestine from primarily *quantitative* to primarily *qualitative*.

The Mufti expounded his thought in essays, some of which have been translated by Zvi Elpeleg. Elpeleg focused on those political writings of the Mufti that primarily explored British colonialism as a vehicle of Zionism, the reasons for Arab defeat in the wars over Palestine, and his own role in those events. It is evident that the target readers were Arabs. Even though religion was not the main theme, the Mufti referred to religious texts to provide additional explanation for Jewish political activities. Thus he wrote that the Jews “have no mercy and they are known for their malice, their rivalry, and their great rigidity, as they are described by Allah in the Quran.”³⁵ The Mufti presented a more systematic expression of his religious thought on the topic to Muslims who neither had a particular political interest in Palestine nor had developed anticolonialist resentment against Britain or France. Bosnian Muslims constituted just such an audience.³⁶ The religious Muslim attitude toward non-Muslims in Bosnia since it was first conquered by the Turks in 1463 has never been the subject of a comprehensive scholarly examination.

³⁴*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 12:69. In the same article, the author explains that the accusation has not been further investigated because it only came from one source.

³⁵Zvi Elpeleg, ed., *Through the Eyes of the Mufti: The Essays of Haj Amin, Translated and Annotated* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2009), 150.

³⁶Ironically, the imperial power that had troubled Bosnian Muslims in the past was Austria.

However, aspects of Muslim-Jewish relations relevant to understanding the Mufti's pamphlet *Islam and Judaism* are fairly well known.

BOSNIA AND ITS JEWS: AN OVERVIEW

As a land where civilizations meet—or collide³⁷—Bosnia³⁸ was, and still is, in many aspects unique. Since the late fifteenth century its borders have separated Muslim and Christian territory. Croatia's long border with Bosnia was for centuries the front line of European defense against Turkish incursions, whereupon Croatia was called *antemurale christianitatis*. A land of turmoil deep within Europe, Bosnia has also been a place whose state of affairs must be interpreted cautiously, with awareness that its development profoundly influenced the rest of the Old Continent more than most Europeans would want to acknowledge. Antagonisms that had accumulated in Bosnia during the more than four centuries of Ottoman rule and the subsequent decades of Austrian occupation reached their peak when a Bosnian Serb terrorist assassinated Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914,³⁹ an event that led to World War I. Soon after, in 1918, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later renamed Yugoslavia) was founded, and the main antagonists emerged—non-Muslims, notably Croats and Serbs, a development that to a degree explains the somewhat faded interest in the Muslim treatment of their *dhimmis* [*Jewish and Christian citizens of an Islamic state*] during the Ottoman era, particularly among Croats. Throughout most of the twentieth century, the past and present relations between the country's Muslims and non-Muslims were cautiously styled by historians. The way these relations were presented in the most recent decades would easily lead one to believe that they were rather harmonious, were it not for the old Christian folk poems, legends, and novels, primarily of Serbian origin,⁴⁰ that have been studied at schools and are commonly known

³⁷Cf. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993), in which a significant part of the argument was built upon the author's perception of circumstances in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

³⁸The word "Bosnia" has been used in most references here, inasmuch as the majority of events described in this text took place in that part of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

³⁹The date on which *Vidoudan* (St. Vitus' Day) is celebrated has a special place in the Serbian historical mythology. It marks the Serbian defeat in 1389 at the Battle of Kosovo, after which Turks occupied Serbia, as well as several other important days in Serbian history.

⁴⁰The explanation for more historical material being produced by the Serbs than by the Croats is primarily related to the fact that Serbia proper had been occupied by the Turks, whereas Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and only parts of her current territory, such as Slavonia, were temporarily held by Turks. Generally speaking, when looking at the whole Balkan Peninsula, Turks committed more atrocities against the Serbian population than against the Croatian population. After the Turks withdrew, Serbian resentment against the Muslim population remained strong and lasted a long time, surfacing again during the 1991–1995 war. This antagonism was epitomized by the utterance of the Serbian general Ratko

to Bosnians of all nationalities. Of course, there are also sources written by contemporary chroniclers, available in archives and elsewhere, but they are mostly studied by professional historians only. And yet, at least one facet of Bosnian history seems to be fairly depicted in modern sources, notwithstanding its political correctness: the relations between Bosnian Muslims and the Bosnian Jewish population during their known common history.

A history of the Jews of Bosnia from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century was composed by the Bosnian Jewish historian Dr. Moritz Levy and published in 1911 in Sarajevo as *Die Sephardim in Bosnien [The Sephardim in Bosnia]*.⁴¹ These Jews were mostly of Sephardic origin, descendants of the Jews who settled the Ottoman lands after their expulsion from Spain. By 1565, there was a small Jewish community in Sarajevo.⁴² Not much is known about Jewish history in Bosnia until the early eighteenth century.⁴³ The conditions under which they lived in Bosnia varied; undeniably, at times they were victims of Muslim abuse, as were other *dhimmis*. Levy explains that as the sultan's favor toward the Jews declined, they were exposed to "various forms of violence" by the local pashas.⁴⁴ More often than they encountered physical abuse were they objects of extortion. In 1819, Rushdi-Pasha threatened to kill ten prominent Jews of Sarajevo, including the rabbi, unless the community paid an enormous amount of money that it could not collect. However, on the Friday on which the Jews should have been executed, some 3,000 local Muslims took up arms, attacked the pasha's compound, and liberated the Jews from the prison. In 1834, Wejhi-Pasha penalized the Jews for various offenses, extorting large amounts of money from the community. In both cases, local Muslims complained to the High Porte on behalf of the Jews, and both pashas were dismissed from their offices.⁴⁵ Levy opens Chapter 9 of his history with the remark that "it is hard to say a positive statement about the civic and judicial situation of Jews in Bosnia i.e. in Turkey. There was no law to protect [the] rights of non-Muslims." He proceeds to explain that the state's legislation was limited to the sharia law. But in 1840, Sultan Abdul Mejid issued a decree that upheld Jewish autonomy in religious and judicial affairs, granted them more rights,

Mladić, who after capturing the Muslim city of Srebrenica exclaimed: "We took revenge on Turks and *dabias* [the Janissary junta notorious for their oppression of Christian Serbs in the *Pashaluk* of Belgrade]."

⁴¹Levy was born in 1879 in Sarajevo. In 1941, he was sent to a concentration camp, where he died. His work was based on the *Pinakes*, as the chronicles and account books of Sarajevo's Jewish community were called.

⁴²Moritz Levy, *Sefardi u Bosni. Prilog historiji Jevreja na balkanskom poluotoku [Sephardim in Bosnia. A Contribution to History of Jews in the Balkan Peninsula]*, trans. Ljiljana Masal (Sarajevo: Bosanska biblioteka, 1996), 11. Sarajevo's Jewish community remained the largest such community in Bosnia. Later, several families settled in Travnik, where they built a synagogue in 1768, and in some other Bosnian towns.

⁴³Ibid., 19.

⁴⁴Ibid., 34.

⁴⁵Ibid., 65–68.

and forbade Muslims to “persuade or force a Jew to convert to Islam.”⁴⁶ It seems that from that time on, Jews increasingly enjoyed protection from the capriciousness of the local authorities. As the Ottoman Empire declined, the most significant animosity developed between the Muslims and those who challenged their rule, which were the Christians, mostly the Orthodox Serbs. During the Muslim-Christian wars of the 1870s, which ended the Ottoman rule and introduced the Austrian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bosnian Jews were not threatened by Muslims or other conflicting groups.⁴⁷

Other sources consulted for the purpose of this study include chronicles written by Bosnian Franciscans during the Ottoman rule and kept in the monasteries of Kraljeva Sutjeska, Kreševo, and Fojnica in Central Bosnia. Those chronicles were not intended for publication and wider dissemination but for “internal use,”⁴⁸ and therefore present reliable accounts of events, written without fear of repressive governmental censorship. The chronicles contain numerous descriptions of Muslim ill treatment of the *rayah*, or the Bosnian Christian population. Muslim abuse of Bosnian Jews, however, is a rare topic in these chronicles. One of the chroniclers, the Franciscan Bono Beniĉ (1708–1785) wrote a history of Bosnia from the year of the Turkish conquest until February 1785, a month before he died. Beniĉ served as the superior of all three monasteries and was a leading figure of the Central Bosnian Croatian Catholic community. He had access to sources, knowledge of the events, and the skills of a historian. Thus, in his chronicles he at times referred to documents written by Turkish authorities, which adds to the historiographical value of his text. In his work *Chronicles of the Sutjeska Monastery*, Beniĉ recorded several events connected to Jews. Thus, he noted how on April 26, 1747, the synagogue in Sarajevo burned down. There is no indication in the text that the burning of the synagogue was an act of arson.⁴⁹ Jews were mentioned in several other places, such as in the story of

⁴⁶Ibid., 69–73. The decree was in fact published in November 1839. Known as *Tanzimat Ferman*, it was applicable even to other non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

⁴⁷Sources about the Jewish situation during this period (the 1860s and 1870s) are scarce. Some valuable contemporary sources critical to the Turkish and Muslim treatment of the non-Muslim population in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not mention Jews at all (e.g., Evans, *Illirian Letters*). Levy wrote that during the last twenty years of Ottoman rule, when Turkish-Christian relations grew tense, the only non-Muslim whom the Bosnian Wali respected was a leader of the Jewish community. He also wrote that the Turkish ruler in Sarajevo in the 1870s delivered mosque sermons urging tolerance and friendship toward the Jews but demanded Jewish financial support for Turkish war efforts against Austro-Hungarian invading troops (Levy, *Sefardi u Bosni*, 86–87.). The author of this article recently spoke to the leader of the Jewish community in Sarajevo, Jakob Finci, who is well versed in Bosnian Jewish history, and he had no knowledge of any Jewish troubles caused by Muslims as a result of these events.

⁴⁸Bono Beniĉ, *Ljetopis sutjeskog samostana: privedio, latinske i talijanske dijelove preveo, uvod i bilješke napisao dr. fra. Ignacije Gavran* [*Chronicles of Sutjeska Monastery*; edited, Latin and Italian chapters translated, and Introduction written by Franciscan Ignacije Gavran], trans. Ignacije Gavran, ed. Iz Bosne Srebrene (Sarajevo, Zagreb: Synopsis, 2003), 31.

⁴⁹Ibid., 173. (“ono jutro izgori ĉifutana sarajevskih ĉifuta”). The word *ĉifut*, meaning *Jew*, is of Turkish origin and is today usually considered inappropriate.

a Franciscan who converted to Islam whom the author alleged to be a crypto-Jew. There is only one place in Beniĉ's chronicle in which Turkish violence against Jews is recorded. In 1751, Turks in Sarajevo hanged a Jew, but the reason was that he had uttered blasphemy cursing a Christian, probably an Orthodox Serb (*Vlah*).⁵⁰

Somewhat more references to Jews under Turkish rule can be found in the doctoral thesis of the Bosnian Croatian author and Nobel Prize laureate Ivo Andrić, *Die Entwicklung des geistigen Lebens in Bosnien unter der Einwirkung der türkischen Herrschaft* [*The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the influence of Turkish Rule*].⁵¹ Before examining Christian and Jewish conditions under Muslim rule, Andrić quotes twenty-four points of the Pact of Omar, with the remark that those were applied in Turkish provinces in "somewhat changed and milder form."⁵² Regarding the Jews, Andrić wrote that Jewish men and women were forbidden to wear certain clothes reserved for the ruling (Muslim) class; when they broke these rules—and they did so often—they were fined.⁵³ In 1602, during the brutal rule of Dželali Hasan-Pasha, "all merchants, mostly Jews, fled to neighboring countries."⁵⁴ In 1794, the Jews of Sarajevo obtained an imperial edict to rebuild their burned synagogue.⁵⁵ Andrić also wrote that Jews were subject to "blackmail" and at times exposed to violence by the pashas, and that they could rescue themselves from all their troubles by paying off Turkish officials. The Turks were prone to bribery, which was a "vice of their race" ("Rassenlaster").⁵⁶ Andrić's history is generally focused on the abuse of the Christian population at the hands of the Turks, and the Jews are mentioned *en passant*, which again suggests that they were not singled out for ill treatment by Muslims. As Andrić researched both Bosnian Jewish chronicles and the works of historians (he quotes Levy on numerous occasions), it is with much certainty that we can conclude that he found no examples of particular Muslim animosity toward or abuse of Jews, because he would not shun to

⁵⁰Ibid., 181. On the meaning of the word *Vlah*, see page 18 of the Introduction. If the word is used by a Muslim, it may mean any Christian (either Croat Catholic or Orthodox Serb). Like the word *Čifut*, it also carries a somewhat derogatory connotation, which was probably not as strong in the eighteenth century as it is today.

⁵¹Andrić was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1961. His most famous novel was *The Bridge on the Drina* [*Na Drini ćuprija*], written, like most of his novels, in the Serbian language. His doctoral thesis was written in German and defended in 1924. The first translation of this dissertation into the Serbian language was made in 1982.

⁵²Ivo Andrić, *Die Entwicklung des geistigen Lebens in Bosnien unter der Einwirkung der türkischen Herrschaft - Razvoj duhovnog života u Bosni pod uticajem turske vladavine* [*The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Rule*], trans. Zoran Konstantinović (Beograd: Zadužbina Ive Andrića, 1982), 71 (70). Pages in parenthesis refer to the German-language text.

⁵³Ibid., 77–79 (76–78), see footnote 14 on 209 (208). (Cf. Levy, *Sefardi u Bosni*, 58–59).

⁵⁴Ibid., 101 (100). It is rather apparent here that wealthy merchants of any non-Muslim origin were the target of his brutality, and not specifically Jews because of their Jewishness.

⁵⁵Ibid., 85 (84).

⁵⁶Ibid., 105–07 (104–106); see also 217 (216), n. 71.

record them.⁵⁷ The situation in which the Jewish community in Bosnia lived prior to the Holocaust has been summarized by Esther Gitman as follows: “Although the Jews of Sarajevo, with a shared memory of four centuries, had known some discrimination, they had never encountered life-threatening situations.”⁵⁸ With much certainty it can be established that Bosnian Muslims, during their common history with the Jews, never adopted animosity toward Jews as a major political, social or religious theme.

THE BOSNIAN MUSLIM ATTITUDE TOWARD JEWS, 1941–1945

During the 1930s and early 1940s, some 14,000 Jews associated with twenty-four Jewish communities lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁵⁹ Some anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish texts were published in the Muslim papers of the time, but Jews and Zionism were by no means a major concern of Bosnian Muslims. What is more, those texts were often translations of foreign authors’ articles. A newspaper called *Islamski svijet* (*Islamic World*) published an article titled “Activities of Zionism in the Century of Injustice” written by Ihsan bey El Džabiri and translated by Hidajet Kulenović. In the same paper, several months later, there was an article titled “Events in Palestine,” taken from a Croatian journal, and without the author’s name. Both articles’ main themes were criticism of British imperialism during the Wauchope’s mandate in Palestine and criticism of political Zionism. Muslim-Jewish animosity was related to the conflict over Palestine, with the explanation that such animosity did not exist before in the history of the two peoples.⁶⁰ In 1941,

⁵⁷ Andrić was not seeking to be apologetic about the Turkish rule, and he used rather harsh words to describe some brutal practices of theirs, such as the abduction of Christian children. He also criticized the famous Croatian historian Truhelka for stating that there is no evidence of the compulsory conversion of Christians to Islam by the Muslims; cf. 55 (54). Because of his forthright description of Turkish treatment of non-Muslims (not only in this work, but allegedly even in his novels), several books have been published in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the last twenty years in which Ivo Andrić has been portrayed as an anti-Muslim author. One of them is Professor Muhsin Rizvić’s *Bosanski muslimani u Andrićevo svijetu* [*Bosnian Muslims in Andrić’s World*] (Sarajevo: Ljiljan, 1995).

⁵⁸ Esther Gitman, *When Courage Prevailed: The Rescue and Survival of Jews in the Independent State of Croatia 1941–1945* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2011), 36. See also Gitman’s Ph.D. thesis *Rescue and Survival of Jews in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), 1945–1945* (New York: City University of New York, 2005), 1:97–170. Sachar asserts that at the time when Jews comprised 10 percent of the population of Sarajevo, “Jewish holidays were legal for the entire city”; Howard M. Sachar, *Diaspora: An Inquiry into the Contemporary Jewish World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 314.

⁵⁹ *Kratka Kronologija Jevrejske Zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini* [*A Brief Chronology of the Jewish Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina*], accessed December 2, 2014, at <http://elmondosefarad.wikidot.com/kratka-kronologija-jevrejske-zajednice-u-bosni-i-hercegovini>.

⁶⁰ Ihsan Bey al-Jabiri, *Islamski svijet* no. 31, 13–14 (“ne treba izvoditi zaključak, da smo mi [Arap] neprijatelji židovskog naroda, daleko od toga. Mi dijelimo njegove bolove i tuge koji prolaze od nasilja što ih taj narod podnosi u drugim zemljama i simpatični su nam uspjesi koje on postiže”); also unknown author, *Islamski svijet* no. 62, 4 (“i nikada kao danas nijesu Arapi i Židovi činili dva tako neprijateljska tabora”). Cf. Peel, *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, 131.

the Bosnian Muslim paper *Muslimanska svijest* (*Muslim Awareness*) published in four issues translated portions of a biography of Muhammad in which the main theme was the Prophet's conflict with the Jews. This text depicted Jews as religious enemies of Islam, using perhaps the harshest language to be seen in a Bosnian publication of the time, comparable only with the Mufti's pamphlet *Islam and Judaism*.⁶¹ It may have moved some Bosnian Muslims to active participation in the ongoing persecution of the Jews within the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), but the message of Muslim-Jewish *religious* animosity attracted no wide attention. The beginning of the war brought political radicalization among most ethnic and ideological groups of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Muslims included. Individual Jews of Sarajevo were accused by Muslims of being subversive, accusations that the Jewish community denied, calling upon accusers to bring forward evidence. Since many Jews were prior to the war politically affiliated with the Serbs, they were now targeted by both Muslims and Croats. A consequence of Muslim sympathies toward Nazism was increased violence against Jews from early 1941 onwards. When German troops entered Sarajevo in April 1941, they were welcomed as liberators by a jolly Muslim crowd. The mob then plundered the synagogue, which had been damaged by bombardment, and even some Jewish stores.⁶² An observer noted that "Jews feared Muslims more than Germans."⁶³ Croatian troops from Zagreb entered Sarajevo some ten days after the Germans. Within two years most of the Jews of Sarajevo and Bosnia had perished or been sent to concentration camps. The Muslims took part in their persecution, as they did in their rescue.⁶⁴ The vast majority of Jews fell victim to the Nazi policy of extermination perpetrated by Croat and Muslim supporters of Nazism, and not to Muslim religious hatred.

In 1943, when the Waffen-SS *Handžar* Division was formed, many if not most Bosnian Muslims who joined it did so for two main reasons:

⁶¹Essad Bey, *Kako je Muhamed a.s. uništio židove u Arabiji* [*How Did Muhammad a.s. Destroy the Jews in Arabia*]. It is apparent that the author was acquainted with the early Islamic texts, even though he applied some odd interpretations and exaggerations. Essad Bey wrote his *Biography of Muhammad* in the German language in the early 1930s, and he may have influenced Mufti's writing on the subject. It should also be noted that Bey (born Lev Nissimbaum, also known as Kurban Said) was a Jewish convert to Islam, and his interest in the topic was probably related to that experience. He wrote on many different historical issues but is rarely esteemed as a reliable scholar. I am indebted to Naida Michal Brandl from the Department of Judaic Studies in the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb for bringing this text to my attention.

⁶²Zlatko Hasanbegović, *Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija 1929–1941. (U ratu i revoluciji 1941. – 1945)* [*The Yugoslav Muslim Organization, 1929–1941. [In the War and Revolution, 1941–1945]*] (Zagreb: Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar, Bošnjačka nacionalna zajednica za Grad Zagreb i Zagrebačku županiju, Medžlis Islamske zajednice Zagreb, 2012). A contemporary eyewitness quoted wrote that the Muslim merchants of Sarajevo did not like Jews, and yet he knew not one among the elderly who approved the plundering of Jewish shops and stores (735).

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴More than forty citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina were recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations," of which, assuming from the name, more than 50 percent were Muslims (cf. *La Benevolencia*, accessed March 2, 2014, at <http://www.benevolencia.eu.org/content/view/42/37/>).

to fulfill the Muslim ambition to bring Bosnia under direct German rule⁶⁵ and for the purpose of an organized defense against the Serbs. Serbian units, mostly Četniks, committed massacres of the Muslim population in Bosnia, particularly in its eastern territories bordering Serbia.⁶⁶ Some massacres were committed only weeks before the Mufti arrived in Sarajevo. He found a Muslim religious community ready for enlistment but largely indifferent toward his main objective—destruction of the Jews. How disinterested Bosnian Muslims were regarding the issue of Jews was apparent from the official paper of the *Handžar* Division, which features very few anti-Semitic texts in its first eight issues. It seems that even enlistment of some of their coreligionists to the notorious Waffen-SS was not enough for anti-Semitism to attract Bosnian Muslims' wider attention. Only after the Mufti delivered sermons in Bosnia in which he claimed that Jews were according to the Quran the greatest enemies of the Muslims did anti-Semitic texts appear in issues nine through eleven.⁶⁷ Anti-Zionist texts also appeared in other Bosnian papers not related to the Islamic community, such as *Sarajevski novi list* (*Sarajevo New Paper*), in which Jews were accused of bringing injustice and terror to Palestine. In January 1945, in the same paper, the Zionists were accused of harboring the ambition not only to conquer Palestine, but also to achieve dominance “over all lands and all people.” In a somewhat confused statement, Zionism was defined as a political enterprise and its Jewish character was slightly neutralized, as if to say that not all Jews were Zionists.⁶⁸ Zuckerman argues in his doctoral research⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Bosnia-Herzegovina was part of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), the puppet-state of Nazi Germany established on April 10, 1941, and run by the Ustaša movement. However, Bosnian Muslim “autonomists” already in April 1941 had requested to be granted autonomy from the state and to be ruled directly by Germany (cf. Enver Redžić, *Bosna i Hercegovina u Drugom svjetskom ratu* [*Bosnia and Herzegovina in World War II*] [Sarajevo: Grafičko-izdavačka kuća OKO, 1998], 110.). It should be noted that, as on most other issues regarding World War II in Yugoslavia, there is no consensus among historians regarding the principal reasons, objectives, and significance of the division. Some historians do not consider that autonomist ambitions were a significant force among Bosnian Muslims (cf. Hasanbegović, *Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija*).

⁶⁶ Redžić, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 174. The author explains that this was the “strongest argument” in the “propaganda for education of the Muslim SS Division.” Total Muslim losses in the NDH amounted to 255,000. Apparently most of those killed (29,000) were victims of Četniks (cf. Vladimir Žerjavić, *Population Losses in Yugoslavia 1941–1945* [Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 1997], 95, Table 8a).

⁶⁷ Ivo Goldstein, “Ustaška ideologija o Hrvatima muslimanske vjere i odgovor u časopisu Handžar,” [*Ustasha Ideology on the Croats of Islamic Faith and the Response in the review Handžar*]. *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu* [*The Journal of the Institute of Croatian History*] 38, no. 1 (2006): 273. The eleventh issue, published in October 1943, was the last one.

⁶⁸ Boško Zuckerman, *Psihologija holokausta: protužidovska propaganda u NDH i Srbiji 1941–1945* [*Psychology of Holocaust—Anti-Jewish Propaganda in NDH and Serbia 1941–1945*] (Zagreb: Židovska vjerska zajednica Bet Israel, 2011), 312–14. The text in bold under the title reads: “Historijski pregled razvitka toga pokreta dokazuje, da se ovdje ne radi o promičbenom podhvatu židovstva, nego o političkim činjenicama” [*Historical survey shows that the movement is not about promoting Judaism but about politics*] (314).

⁶⁹ In a groundbreaking work, Zuckerman researched the main papers and journals published in the NDH and Serbia during the Holocaust as anti-Semitic propaganda.

that anti-Semitic propaganda in the NDH and in Serbia was “very similar,” with the main themes in both lands being race, the economy, politics, and ideology. Religion appears to be a rather rare theme. Zuckerman only briefly addresses the impact of the anti-Semitic propaganda on the religious feelings of non-Jews. Those non-Jews were apparently Croatian Catholics and Serbian Orthodox Christians, and the method of their incitement was the fabrication of Talmudic messages.⁷⁰ Islam and Muslims are not even mentioned.

Zuckerman’s study indicates the absence of any significant Islamic anti-Jewish propaganda in Nazi-ruled Bosnia-Herzegovina. While the Mufti was highly esteemed by the Bosnian Muslims, the main reason for this esteem was the perception of him as an advocate of Bosnian-Muslim interests in Berlin, not his theological interpretation of Muslim-Jewish relations. The Bosnian Muslim historian Zija Sulejmanpašić asserts that Bosnian Muslims interpreted the Mufti’s anti-Jewish religious incitement as “nothing but ceremonial protocol phrases.” When the Mufti spoke about “World Jewry,” they believed that he actually meant the Zionists.⁷¹ This explanation is fairly acceptable. For the Mufti, there was an obvious reason to expound to the Bosnian Muslims why they should engage in a religious battle with the Jews, and not only in a political, economic, and ideological struggle with Zionism and imperialism.⁷² That Muslims were the prime target audience of his pamphlet *Islam and Judaism* is apparent from its content: the episodes from early Islamic history are retold as if to someone who has never heard them but who should be deeply concerned upon hearing them. The Mufti’s pamphlet made little difference, if for no other reason than that by the time the *Handžar* Division was established, most Bosnian Jews had already been killed or sent to concentration camps.⁷³

⁷⁰Zuckerman, *Psibologija holokausta*, 317.

⁷¹Zija Sulejmanpašić, *SS divizija Handžar: Istine i laži [13th SS Division ‘Handžar’: The Truth and Lies]* (Zagreb: Kulturno društvo Bošnjaka Preporod, 2000), 135–39.

⁷²There was in Bosnia a somewhat paradoxical phenomenon in which the Mufti encouraged global Muslims to support a nonimperialistic Germany, whereas Bosnian Muslims preferred to enlist in the German army because they hoped to come under German political rule.

⁷³By September 1941, some 70 percent of the Jews of Sarajevo had been sent to concentration camps by the Ustaše (Gitman, *When Courage Prevailed*, 37). Many Muslims took part in the Ustaše movement in Bosnia and Croatia, and some served in Pavelić’s government. The vice president of the NDH was the Bosnian-born Muslim Džaferbeg Kulenović. Kulenović, however, was not active in the establishment of the *Handžar* Division (Redžić, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 302). Many Muslims identified themselves as Croats of Mohammedan faith, although their identity has been divided. Some Muslims during World War II identified with Serbs and even joined Četniks, mostly in Herzegovina (*ibid.*, 63–64, 320, 72). Two decades after the war, “Muslim” was recognized as a separate nationality in Yugoslavia, and during the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s most Muslims opted to be identified as the “Bosniak” (Bošnjak) nationality.

CONCLUSION: THE MUFTI'S GUIDE TO A PERPLEXED COMMUNITY

Kedourie's "Islam without dogmas," which existed in the Arab world for only a brief period of time, has long been the normal state of affairs among Bosnian Muslims, particularly regarding the dogmas relevant to this study, i.e., Islamic canonical perceptions of Jews. This was the prime obstacle to the Mufti's religious incitement of Bosnian Muslims. As Hale observed:

Although Bosnian Muslims and Haj Amin el-Husseini had the faith of Islam in common, their political worlds did not overlap until the middle of the Second World War. If they looked outside their own homeland, the majority of Bosnian Muslims followed events in neutral Turkey but had little interest in the broader Islamic movement or noticed the protests of Palestinian Arabs against Jewish immigration. These matters naturally obsessed Haj Amin el-Husseini, however, and led him in due course to seek an alliance with the anti-Semitic German Reich.⁷⁴

The Mufti never really succeeded in Bosnia; not long after the *Handžar* Division was dismantled, Nazism was defeated and the war came to an end. Some soldiers of the *Handžar* Division moved to the Middle East for fear of returning to Communist-ruled Yugoslavia and later joined Arab armies in the war of 1948.⁷⁵ In Bosnia, Muslims and Jews resumed their prewar relations. Anti-Zionism was an official position during most years of Tito's Communist regime, but the Arab-Israeli conflict has never been an important issue in the Bosnian Muslim community. There have been some exceptions, such as Husein Efendi Đozo's call for *jihad* against the Jews at the World Congress of *ulemas* in Cairo in 1968.⁷⁶ The fact that one of the most prominent Israeli generals and the ninth Chief of Staff of the IDF, David Elazar (1925–1976),

⁷⁴Hale, *Hitler's Foreign Executioners*, 21.16.

⁷⁵Cf. Seth Frantzman and Jovan Čulibrk, "Strange Bedfellows: The Bosnians and Yugoslav Volunteers in the 1948 War in Israel/Palestine," *Istorija 20. veka Instituta za savremenu istoriju, Beograd [History of the 20th Century of the Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade]* 1 (2009): 189–201.

⁷⁶Laslo Sekelj, *Antisemitism and Jewish Identity in Serbia After the 1991 Collapse of the Yugoslav State* (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 1998), 8. Husein Efendi Đozo (1912–1982) was a chief imam of the *Handžar* Division. Đozo was a well-educated cleric and a graduate of the al-Azhar University, and he almost certainly understood the inconsistencies in the Mufti's political theology. His later references to the Arab-Zionist conflict reveal a different view on the topic, one that is more adjusted to the Islamic canon and tradition than to *Protocol*-ish anti-Semitism. Đozo blamed Israeli-Zionist success on Western imperialism and Arab disunity, and not on Jewish strength; see Husein ef. Đozo, *Islam u vremenu (Izvršni odbor Udruženja ilmiije za SR BiH, Sarajevo, 1976)*. His book, published in Sarajevo in 1976, reveals restraint in attributing powers to Jews, compared to the accounts found in Hussein's pamphlet. The reason might be Đozo's extraordinary acquaintance with the Islamic sources (some historians consider Đozo to be the most prominent reformer of Islamic thought in the history of Bosnian Muslims; cf. Zlatko Hasanbegović, "Izlišno je pitanje treba li osnovna škola u Đozinu Podrinju nositi njegovo ime," *Oslobođenje, sedmični magazin od 2. studenoga 2013* [2013]: 36) [To question whether the primary school in Dozo's Drina valley should be named after him is needless]

was born and raised in Sarajevo has never been discussed as an important topic; it certainly did not jeopardize the Bosnian Jewish community in any way.⁷⁷ The Mufti's pamphlet faded from memory. A few copies were buried in the archives. Muslim involvement in SS divisions was largely perceived as an embarrassment, and the point that the *Handžar* Division was the only SS unit to attempt to mutiny has been proudly emphasized. A primary school in the eastern Bosnian Muslim town of Goražde was recently named after Husein Efendi Đozo. Complaints by parents (most of whom were Muslims) and others were published in Bosnian papers, but the main body of the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Rijaset*) has not condemned or justified the deed.⁷⁸ Indeed, it is hard to find an instance in the post-1945 Bosnia-Herzegovina when a Jew has been mistreated by a Muslim because of his or her religion.⁷⁹

In the Arab Muslim world, however, the Mufti's thought did take root. The canonical picture of the Jews has been retrieved from the medieval literature and tradition and made relevant in modernity.⁸⁰ What is more,

Oslobodjenje Weekly magazine, 2 November 2013, but his caution as well as the Yugoslavian authorities would not tolerate anti-Semitic agitation, which was not the case after 1967, when anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism became the country's official ideology.

⁷⁷Sachar observed that "antisemitism altogether remained as thinly rooted among the people of Yugoslavia after 1944 as it had been in the prewar years"; Sachar, *Diaspora*, 315.

⁷⁸This issue triggered controversy and was reported in most countries of the former Yugoslavia. The Croatian Muslim historian Hasanbegović in an interview with the major Sarajevo paper *Oslobođenje* admitted that part of the Muslim population did cherish sympathies for the Axis powers and their "anti-Jewish invectives," but he put Đozo's Nazi career in the context of the Bosnian Muslim struggle for survival. He argued that Đozo, as well as the Grand Mufti, collaborated with the Nazis to achieve national and anti-imperialistic goals (Hasanbegović, "Izlišno je pitanje," 34–36.).

⁷⁹While I worked on this paper, I spoke to several of my Jewish friends from Sarajevo, and they shared their personal and family experiences of living within a dominantly Muslim community. Their experiences were mostly very positive. No one had had firsthand negative experience, though some recalled hearing rumors about individual cases of ill treatment of Jews in the town of Travnik, which I was unable to verify. It should also be noted that Jews in Bosnia-Herzegovina (as in other republics of the former Yugoslavia) do not emphasize their Jewishness; most of them are assimilated, secular, and apparently non-Zionist. They are primarily active in cultural events and in cherishing the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust. During the recent war in Bosnia (1991–1995), the Jewish community of Sarajevo was active in extending humanitarian aid to Jews and non-Jews alike, and as such, they were generally granted special protection by all warring sides. Convoys organized by the Jewish community of Sarajevo in which civilians of all nationalities were evacuated from the besieged city were regarded as being among the safest. The author's sister of Croat nationality and her two young children were rescued by one such convoy. An interesting example that additionally illustrates this point today is that an Israeli company was granted the project of processing data gathered during the census held in October 2013 (see Izraelci dobili posao obrade popisa pučanstva u BiH [Israelis got the job of processing population census in Bosnia and Herzegovina], accessed February 12, 2013, at <http://www.poslovni.hr/vijesti/izraelci-dobili-posao-obrade-popisa-pucanstva-u-bih-207602>). This was the first census held since Bosnia-Herzegovina became an independent state, and its political implications are expected to be significant. The data gathered are therefore sensitive, and their processing demands caution.

⁸⁰Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites* (London: Phoenix, 1997), 128. Lewis explains as follows: "In modern times, under external influences which are easily recognizable, Muhammad's conflict with the Jews has been portrayed as a central theme in his career, and their enmity to him given a cosmic significance. This is new, and related directly to new situations and influences."

this picture has been modified in accordance with the pattern set by the Mufti. In the discourse he sought to impose on the Muslim community, the canonical Jew, vicious and mean but defeated by Allah and his Prophet, was transformed into a menace whose defeat demanded the rallying of the whole *ummah*. The medieval Christian perception of the Jew as a host for “cosmic evil”⁸¹ who was capable of hurting God, God’s messengers, and whole societies, entered into a tradition to which it never belonged. Whether the eclecticism of such a portrayal of the Jews and its incompatibility with the Islamic canon went unnoticed by the Mufti or was introduced by him on purpose to serve an immediate political cause, even at the expense of the religious tradition, makes no difference. Clerics who succeeded him would have probably objected, were it not for the stunning Israeli military successes particularly in the 1948/49 war of Independence, and 1967 Six Day War and the humiliating return of a part of *dar al-islam* (the Abode of Islam) back into *dar al-harb* (the Abode of War). Being “a society of unusually keen historical awareness,”⁸² the Muslim world seems to have allowed history to reinterpret parts of its canon. This would not be the first time in the religion’s complete history, but it would be the first time in its modern history that a major change has been introduced. The concept of *an-nasikh wal-mansukh* permits the introduction of new ideas that run opposite to the older ones, which when applied to the case of redefining Jewish menace would constitute a precedent inasmuch as the concept itself is primarily perceived as applicable only to the revelational era of Islam.⁸³ Furthermore, scholars have noted that

⁸¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 129.

⁸² Bernard Lewis, *Faith and Power: Religion and Politics in the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 169.

⁸³ Cf. Surah 2:106. While the principal verse for the theory of abrogation is Surah 22:52 (John Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* [New York: Prometheus Books, 2004], 60), it is relevant for this study that in verses 8:65–66 it has been applied to settle a military issue, and in other verses (22:52, 16:101, etc.) it appears in polemics with Jews and Christians (cf. Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies*, 197–201). The Prophet Muhammad abrogated some divine revelation and replaced it with new divine revelation as a result of both his “inner development” and external “circumstances he encountered” (Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981], 30.). The possibility of the legitimacy of abrogation of the divine revelation appeared even in later history, apparently primarily due to the second cause, i.e., external circumstances. Caliph Omar was portrayed in some traditions as authorized to abrogate the Prophet’s *sunnah* and even Quranic verses (see Herbert Berg, ed., *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins* [Leiden: Brill, 2003], 165–66). The main discussion on this subject among Islamic scholars seems to be over the issue of whether or not *hadith* can abrogate Quranic verse (Wael B. Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 136–38). However, since abrogation can be applied outside of Islam (such as the abrogation of Judaism and Christianity), the concept opens the way for wider application. For more, see John Burton’s article “Abrogation” in Jane Dammen McAuliffe, ed., *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001, 2001–2006), 1:11–19. Sayyid Ali Muhammad (the Bab) announced that he was the Hidden Imam whose appearance and the new religious order he brought abrogated the whole Quran (see William McCants “I never understood any of this from ‘Abbās Effendi”: Muammad ‘Abdāh knowledge of the Bahā’ī teachings and his friendship with ‘Abdu’l-Bahā’ ‘Abbās. in Moshe Sharon, ed., *Studies in Modern Religions, Religious Movements and the Babi-Baha’i Faiths* [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 278).

early Islamic history was not only interpreted, but often also forged to fulfill political need; as Moshe Sharon explained, “in most cases, the tradition represents the history not as it was, but rather as it should have been according to the motives and needs of whoever compiled the tradition.”⁸⁴ Both of these phenomena, even though their origin was medieval, are basically political and pragmatic,⁸⁵ and since Islam has no strict doctrines in the Christian meaning of the word, there is no reason why they should not reappear again in history, if circumstances demand it. The creation of the Jewish state is one of the greatest challenges that Islam has ever faced, and a response congruous with that made to the challenges that the Islamic community encountered in its early history should not be too surprising. Ironically, the most despised of its perceived adversaries prompted one of the most radical theological changes in the development of Islamic religious and political thought known to us. The alleged Jewish accomplishments listed in Article 22 of the Charter of Hamas are so impressive that it is hard to imagine any of the classic Islamic thinkers attributing even a portion of them to Jews, let alone the ability to “wipe out the Islamic Caliphate,” which the Jews were accused of attempting to do by starting World War I. The heterogeneous mixture of Islamic canonical understanding and Christian medieval mythology is perhaps best embodied by the charter’s Article 28, which states that “Israel, by virtue of its being Jewish and of having a Jewish population, defies Islam and the Muslims.” This interpretation also epitomizes the core problem: Jews were not defeated by the early Muslim community because they were weak and the Muslims strong. To the contrary, even when the proportion of strength was to the advantage of the Jews and their polytheistic allies, Allah defeated them to expose their theological and religious flaws.⁸⁶ On the other hand, the military success of the early Islamic community, from the Prophet’s *hijra* (flight from Mecca to Medina) through the *Rashidun* era (the time of the first four caliphs, 632–661), served as probably the most persuasive argument of the theological truth of Islam.⁸⁷ What has changed? The theological premises of Islam and Judaism most certainly have not. So why would Allah deliver

⁸⁴Moshe Sharon, *Pillars of Smoke and Fire: The Holy Land in History and Thought* (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1988), 225; Moshe Sharon, *The Birth of Islam in the Holy Land*. See also idem, “The Decisive Battles in the Arab Conquest of Syria,” *Studia Orientalia* 101, no. 1 (2007): 297–357.

⁸⁵It is true that *an-nasikh wal-mansukh* has often been mentioned in the context of the abrogation of the so-called Satanic verses, which is, strictly speaking, a dogmatic issue. But the wider context of this issue is also political. The dogmatic and the political have always been closely intertwined throughout Islamic history, even though the emphasis on one or the other has varied depending on the issues and events.

⁸⁶Martin Gilbert, *In Ishmael’s House: A History of Jews in Muslim Lands* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 24–25. Gilbert stresses three Jewish transgressions according to the Quran: (1) Jewish rebellion against Moses, (2) Jewish disobedience toward God, and (3) Jewish refusal to receive Islam.

⁸⁷Cf. F. E. Peters, “The Quest of the Historical Muhammad,” *Journal of Middle East Studies*, no. 23 (1991): 298; Kedourie in Martin S. Kramer, ed., *Middle Eastern Lectures* (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1995), 75.

his community into the hands of its foulest adversary? The perplexed Muslim community demanded answers.

Within the course of a century, “Islam without dogmas” was challenged, confused, diluted, defied, and then reawakened to the call to restore its former glory by going back to its roots and its long-neglected dogmas. In the process of reviving the canonical view of the Jews, Islam has been penetrated by some “dogmas without Islam.” The merging of these two phenomena resulted in an eclectic political and religious ideology that probably poses the greatest menace to Israel in the foreseeable future. Haj Amin al-Husseini might not have been the most important protagonist of that complex, intricate, and lengthy process, but he heralded it. The question that yet remains to be answered is, Did he also initiate it? His pamphlet *Islam and Judaism* points toward an affirmative answer to that intriguing question.

ORCID

Boris Havel  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7809-9408>