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THE SECRET CONTACTS: ZIONISM AND NAZI GERMANY, 1933-1941

KLAUS POLKEHN*

Anti-Semitism became official German government policy when Hitler was named Chancellor of the German Reich on January 30, 1933. The spring of 1933 also witnessed the beginning of a period of private co-operation between Zionism and the German fascist regime to increase the inflow of German Jewish immigrants and capital to Palestine. The Zionist authorities succeeded in keeping this cooperation a secret for a long period, and only since the beginning of the 1960's have criticisms of it been expressed here and there. The Zionist reaction has usually consisted of declarations that their onetime contacts with Nazi Germany were undertaken solely to save the lives of Jews. But the contacts were all the more remarkable because they took place at a time when many Jews and Jewish organizations demanded a boycott of Nazi Germany.

On the occasion of the Sixteenth Convention of the Israeli Communist Party, a paper was submitted at the outset of the conference in which it was stated that "after Hitler's taking of power in Germany, when all anti-fascist forces in the world and the great majority of the Jewish organizations proclaimed a boycott against Nazi Germany, contacts and collaboration existed between Zionist leaders and the Hitlerite government."¹ The paper quoted the Zionist official Eliezer Livneh (who had been editor of the Haganah organ during the Second World War) as declaring, during a symposium organized by the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* in 1966, "that for the Zionist leadership the rescue of Jews was not an aim in itself, but only a means"² (i.e., to establishing a Jewish state in Palestine). To question the reaction of the Zionist movement to German fascism, which in the course of its twelve-year rule murdered

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¹ Information Bulletin, Communist Party of Israel, 3-4, 1969, p. 196.

² Information Bulletin..., 3-4, 1969, p. 197.

millions of Jews, is a taboo in the eyes of the Zionist leaders. Only rarely is it possible to come across authentic evidence or documents concerning these occurrences. The following enquiry consists of information gathered up to this date about some important aspects of the cooperation between the Zionists and the fascists. It remains in the nature of things that this enquiry does not present a complete picture. This can only be possible when the archives (above all those in Israel), in which the documents concerning these events are under lock and key,³ are made available for scholarly research.

The Advent of Hitler

To the Zionist leaders, Hitler's assumption of power held out the possibility of a flow of immigrants to Palestine. Previously, the majority of German Jews, who identified themselves as Germans, had little sympathy with Zionist endeavours. German statistics, compiled prior to the assumption of power by the fascists, classified the Jewish minority only under the heading "Religious Faith," and it was left to the fascist legislators to introduce the concept "race" as a characteristic and thereby include even the long-assimilated descendants of members of the Jewish community as Jews.

According to the statistics, there lived in Germany in 1933 503,000 Jews, constituting 0.76 percent of the total population. Thirty-one percent of all German Jews lived in the capital, Berlin, where they made up 4.3 percent of the city's population. German statistics also indicate that the population of the Jews in Germany decreased in the years between 1871 and 1933 from 1.05 percent to 0.76 percent.⁴

These German Jews were overwhelmingly non or anti-Zionist, and prior to 1937, the Zionist Union for Germany (Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland (henceforth ZVFD) experienced great difficulty in gaining a hearing. Amongst the Jews of Germany counted in the year

³ In the book *Das Leben der Juden in Deutschland in Jahre 1933* (Life of the Jews in Germany in 1933) by Kurt-Jacob Ball-Kaduri (Frankfurt am Main, 1963) are cited, among others, the following "unpublished sources" which are kept in the Yad-Vashem Archive in Jerusalem. "Contributions to the history of the Haavara transfers" by Dr. Leo David (YWA 01/277), "Negotiations with the Gestapo in Berlin about Emigration 1936-1938" (YWA 01/130), "Leo Plaut and the Gestapo Chief Diels in Berlin in the Years 1933/34" (YWA 01/229), all in German.

⁴ These statistics are compiled according to Esta Bennathan. "Die demographische und wirtschaftliche Struktur der Juden," *Entscheidungsjahre, 1932. Zur Judenfrage in der Weimarer Republik* ("The demographic and economic structure of the Jews," in *The Crucial Year, 1932, Concerning the Jewish Question in the Weimar Republic*), Tübingen, 1966, pp. 89, 95.

1925, there were, for example, only 8739 persons (not even 2 percent) eligible to vote in the Zionist Conventions (that is, as members of Zionist organizations).⁵ At the regional elections of the Jewish community in Prussia that were held in February 1925, only 26 members out of 124 elected belonged to Zionist groups.⁶ A report by the Keren Hayesod submitted to the twenty-fourth session of the ZVFD in July, 1932, said: "In the course of evaluating the Keren Hayesod work in Germany, it should never be forgotten that we in Germany have to reckon not only with the indifference of extensive Jewish circles but also with their hostility."⁷

Thus at the time of the Hitler takeover the Zionists were a fundamentally small and insignificant minority with little influence and it was the non-Zionist organizations that played the dominant role amongst the Jews. At their head was the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (CV, or Central Union of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith), founded in 1893, which, as its name implies, considered German Jews as Germans and regarded its chief duty as being to combat anti-Semitism.

Corresponding to this fundamental position, the CV also declared its sharp rejection of Zionism. Thus a resolution passed by the main council of the CV on April 10, 1921, concluded with the words: "If the work for settlement in Palestine were nothing more than a task of aid and assistance, then from the point of view of the Centralverein nothing would be said against the promotion of this work. However, the settlement in Palestine is in the first place an object of national Jewish policy and hence its promotion and support should be rejected."⁸ Consequently, it was the CV above all which, in the years prior to Hitler's assumption of power, stood in the forefront of the progressive parties and organizations in their fight against anti-Semitism. Regarding this attitude, the Jewish author Werner E. Mosse remarked: "While the leaders of the CV saw it as their special duty to represent the interests of the German Jews in the active political struggle, Zionism stood for... systematic Jewish non-participation in German public life. It rejected as a matter of principle any participation

⁵ Dr. Alfred Wiener, *Juden und Araber in Palästina* (Jews and Arabs in Palestine), Berlin, 1929, p. 36.

⁶ According to Wiener, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁷ Quoted from Kurt Loewenstein, *Die innerjüdische Reaktion auf die Krise der deutschen Demokratie* (The Internal Jewish Reaction to the Crisis of German Democracy), in "The Crucial Year 1932," p. 363.

⁸ Quoted from Dr. Alfred Wiener, *Kritische Reise durch Palästina* (Critical Journey through Palestine), Berlin, 1927, p. 8.

in the struggle led by the CV.”⁹

The attitude of the Zionists towards the encroaching menace of fascist domination in Germany was determined by some common ideological assumptions: the fascists as well as the Zionists believed in unscientific racial theories, and both met on the same ground in their beliefs in such mystical generalizations as “national character (*Volkstum*) and “race”, both were chauvinistic and inclined towards “racial exclusiveness.” Thus the Zionist official Gerhart Holdheim wrote in 1930 in an edition of the *Süddeutsche Monatshefte*, dedicated to the Jewish question (a publication in which, amongst others, leading anti-Semites aired their views): “The Zionist programme encompasses the conception of a homogeneous, indivisible Jewry on a national basis. The criterion for Jewry is hence not a confession of religion, but the all-embracing sense of belonging to a racial community that is bound together by ties of blood and history and which is determined to keep its national individuality.”¹⁰ That was the same language, the same phraseology, as the fascists used. No wonder then that the German fascists welcomed the conceptions of the Zionists, with Alfred Rosenberg, the chief ideologue of the Nazi party, writing: “Zionism must be vigorously supported so that a certain number of German Jews is transported annually to Palestine or at least made to leave the country.”¹¹ With an eye on such statements, Hans Lamm later wrote: “...it is indisputable that during the first stages of their Jewish policy, the National Socialists thought it proper to adopt a pro-Zionist attitude.”¹²

With considerable perspicacity the CV remarked that the recognition by the Zionists of “certain postulates of the German nationalists” provided the anti-Semites with ammunition, and in a declaration of policy made by the CV, there was even talk of Zionism having dealt the movement a “stab in the back” in the struggle against fascism.¹³ But the Zionists saw that only the anti-Semitic Hitler was likely to push the anti-Zionist German Jews into the arms of Zionism. Robert Weltsch, who was then editor-in-chief of the German Zionist paper, *Jüdische Rund-*

⁹ Werner E. Mosse, *Der Niedergang der deutschen Republik und die Juden* (The fall of the German Republic and the Jews) in “The Crucial Year 1932,” p. 38.

¹⁰ Gerhard Holdheim, *Der Zionismus in Deutschland* (Zionism in Germany) in *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* 12/1930, p. 855.

¹¹ Alfred Rosenberg, *Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten* (The Trail of the Jews in the Changing Ages), Munich, 1937, p. 153.

¹² Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (London, 1963), p. 53.

¹³ *CV-Zeitung*, IX, July 11, 1930.

schau, declared on January 8, 1933 (three weeks after Hitler's assumption of power) during the meeting of the local ZVFD Council: "The anti-liberal character of German nationalism [i.e., the reactionary tendencies of the German bourgeoisie — K.P.] meet with the anti-liberal position of Zionism and here we are faced with the chance of finding, not a basis for understanding but one for discussion."¹⁴

The call to Hitler on January 30, 1933 to become the head of government was followed by the take-over of all positions of authority by the National Socialist Party, which meant that sworn anti-Semites were now in power. The German Jews contemplated these happenings with deep misgivings, for the programme of the Nazi party included the demand to strip the Jews of citizenship (Point 5) and the removal of all Jews from public offices (Point 6), as well as the expulsion of all the Jews who had emigrated to Germany after August 2, 1914 (Point 8). Only the Zionists saw some benefit in this turn of events. (The British historian Christopher Sykes, certainly no anti-Zionist, gives as his opinion "that the Zionist leaders were determined at the very outset of the Nazi disaster to reap political advantage from the tragedy."¹⁵ The first public expression of this came from the Berlin Rabbi, Dr. Joachim Prinz, who was a committed Zionist and who directly after January 30, 1933, described the Hitler takeover as the "beginning of the Jew's return to his Judaism."¹⁶ In reference to the mounting fascist terror against the German Jews, Prinz wrote: "No hiding place hides us any longer. Instead of assimilation, we wish for the recognition of the Jewish nation and the Jewish race."¹⁷ This was definitely not the view of an isolated individual. The *Jüdische Rundschau*, the official organ of the ZVFD, wrote on June 13, 1933:

Zionism recognizes the existence of the Jewish question and wants to solve it in a generous and constructive manner. For this purpose, it wants to enlist the aid of all peoples; those who are friendly to the Jews as well as those who are hostile to them, since according to its

¹⁴ Minutes of the Session are in the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, quoted by Kurt Löwenstein in "The Crucial Year 1932," p. 388.

¹⁵ Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel* (London, 1965); German edition *Kreuzwege nach Israel* (Munich, 1967), p. 151.

¹⁶ Quoted from Hans Lamm, *Über die innere und äussere Entwicklung des Deutschen Judentums im Dritten Reich* (On internal and external development of German Jewry in the Third Reich), inaugural dissertation, Philosophische Fakultät der Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen, 1951, p. 161.

¹⁷ Hans Lamm, *ibid.*

conception, this is not a question of sentimentality, but one dealing with a real problem in whose solution all peoples are interested.¹⁸

By employing this argument, Zionism was adopting the same political line as the fascists.

On June 21, 1933, there was finally an official Zionist declaration of policy regarding the fascist takeover of power: "The Declaration of the Zionist Union for Germany in Reference to the Position of the Jews in the New Germany." In one section of this extensive document, it was emphasized that "In our opinion one of the principles of the new German state of national exaltation would make a suitable solution possible."¹⁹ The ZVFD, in its document, then cast a historic glance back at the position of the Jews in Germany, using such fascist terms as "ties of blood and race" and exactly like Hitler, postulating a "special soul" for the Jews. Then the Zionists stated: "For the Jew, too, origin, religion, common destiny and self-consciousness must be of crucial significance in shaping his life. This calls for the surmounting of the egoistical individualism that arose in the liberal age, and this should be achieved through the acquisition of a sense of common unity and a joyful assumption of responsibility."²⁰

After this avowal and reiteration of fascist theses there followed open recognition of the fascist state: "On the soil of the new state [i.e., fascist Germany], which drew up the race principle, we want to arrange the whole structure of our community in such a way, that for us, too, a fruitful application for the fatherland can be made possible in the sphere allotted to us."²¹ In conclusion, the Zionists condemned the struggle against the Hitler regime of the anti-fascist forces, which in the spring of 1933 had called for an economic boycott against Nazi Germany. "The boycott propaganda which they are making against Germany is in its very nature un-Zionist, since Zionism does not want to fight, but to persuade and to build."²²

In order to grasp the full significance of this declaration by the ZVFD,

¹⁸ Hans Lamm, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

¹⁹ Quoted from *In Zwei Welten. Siegfried Moses zum 75 Geburtstag* (In Two Worlds. For the 75th birthday of Siegfried Moses), Tel Aviv, 1962, pp. 118 ff.

²⁰ "Äusserung der Zionistischen Vereinigung für Deutschland zur Stellung der Juden im neuen deutschen Staat" (Statement of the Zionist Union of Germany regarding the State of the Jews in the new German State), published in *Zwei Welten, Siegfried Moses zum 75 Geburtstag* (Tel Aviv, 1962), p. 118 ff.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

one must again remember what had preceded it. The persecution of the Jews had already started and reached its first climax in a big pogrom on April 1, 1933, that encompassed all Germany. In the first days of March 1933, German Jewish citizens were mistreated in German cities (for example, Jewish shops in Brunswick were ransacked on March 11, 1933, and on March 13, Jewish lawyers were manhandled in front of the Hall of Justice in Breslau). The fascist authorities issued the "Law for the Restoration of the Character of Vocational Professions," which, amongst other things, led to the removal of 2000 Jewish scientists and scholars from German universities. The Eighteenth Zionist Congress, which convened in the summer of 1933, was nevertheless cool about this: when, during the session of the Zionist Congress taking place on August 24, 1933, the position of the German Jews was to be discussed, the Congress Presidium moved to prevent the discussion.²³ It also strenuously and successfully attempted to prevent the introduction of a resolution calling for the boycott of German goods, and placed great emphasis instead on the need to arrange the emigration of the German Jews. Protests against the events in Germany were kept to an absolute minimum.

The fascists rewarded the Zionists for their "restraint" and allowed the ZVFD to go on with its work unhindered. (This was at a time when all democratic and anti-fascist parties and organizations in Germany were subject to the most rigorous persecution, with their officials and members behind bars in prisons and concentration camps.) At the same time, the fascists placed all kinds of obstacles in the path of the non-Zionist organizations. These hindrances struck at the CV above all, for prior to 1933, the fascists had already seen the CV as "their chief Jewish opponents," as is indicated by numerous examples from the Nazi press.²⁴ The CV had always charged the Zionists with showing little interest in the "struggle [against fascism] ... and that [Zionism] followed a policy of indifference [in the face of the encroaching fascist danger] because it did not feel itself involved."²⁵

On March 1, 1933 the SA fascist terror troops occupied the central office of the CV and closed it. On March 5, 1933, the CV in Thuringia was banned because of "high treasonous intrigues." At the same time,

²³ See Joseph B. Schechtman, *Fighter and Prophet. The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story* (New York/London: 1961), p. 194.

²⁴ Arnold Paucher, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik* (The Jewish Struggle against anti-Semitism and National Socialism in the Last Years of the Weimar Republic), Hamburg, 1968, p. 32.

²⁵ Arnold Paucher, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

the Nazi state turned against other non-Zionist Jewish organizations, which, like the "Reich League of Jewish Veterans," for instance, represented a Jewish German nationalist position. Also banned was the "Union of National German Jews."

With this fascist support, the leaders of the Zionist Union for Germany were able to obtain a leading position amongst the German Jews for the first time. In the autumn of 1933, the "Reich Deputation of German Jews" was founded and all large Jewish organizations including the CV and the ZVFD participated in it. The leader of the Reich Deputation was Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck in whose person the divided attitude of the Reich Deputation towards Zionism was mirrored; Baeck was at one and the same time a member of the main council of the CV as well as the president of the Zionist settlement fund "Keren Hayesod" in Germany. The newly-created Reich Deputation offered the Zionist leaders a broader platform for their activity.

The Reich Deputation was not, as is sometimes claimed, founded at the behest of the fascist authorities. Ball-Kaduri writes: "So it came about that the establishment of the Reich Union took place without any interference from the state; with the establishment process completed, this was simply reported to the Reich Ministry of the Interior—the Gestapo did not show any interest at all."²⁶ It was only on July 4, 1939 that the ordinance regarding the compulsory establishment of the Reich Union of Jews in Germany was issued, changing the organization's name from Deputation to Union. This ordinance made it obligatory for all Jews to become members of the Reich Union. Paragraph 2 of this ordinance also fulfilled the Zionist aims by saying: "The Reich Union has as its goal the promotion of the emigration of all Jews."²⁷

The higher echelons of the Nazi party allowed various kinds of political activity. In this regard, for example, the Bavarian political police noted on July 9, 1935:

The Zionist organizations have for some time been collecting donations from their members and sympathizers with the intention of promoting emigration, the buying of land in Palestine, and the gaining of support for settlement in Palestine. These collections do not require government permission as they are held in closed Jewish circles. Moreover, on the part of the state police there is no objection against these arranged meetings since they deal with such funds as are meant to promote the practical solution of the Jewish problem.

²⁶ Ball-Kaduri, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

²⁷ *Reichsgesetzblatt* (Reich Law Bulletin) Part I, No. 118/1939, pp. 1097 ff.

After 1933, the fascists permitted the Zionists to continue with their propaganda. While all the newspapers in Germany were placed directly under the supervision of the Ministry of Propaganda (the newspapers published by the Communists or the Social Democratic Party or the trade unions and other progressive organizations were banned) the Zionist *Jüdische Rundschau* was allowed to appear unhindered.

Winfried Martini, the then correspondent in Jerusalem of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* who, according to his own testimony, had “close personal ties with Zionism” remarked later on the “paradoxical fact” that “of all papers, it was the Jewish [i.e., Zionist] press that for years retained a certain degree of freedom which was completely withheld from the non-Jewish press.”²⁸ He added that in the *Jüdische Rundschau* there was very frequently to be found a critical view of the Nazis without this in any way leading to the banning of the paper. Only with the end of the year 1933 onwards did it lead to a ban on selling this paper to non-Jews. The Jews should, according to the wish of the fascists, be converted to Zionism, even if this were done with arguments directed against the fascists. In this fashion, the circulation of this Zionist paper, which had until then been small,²⁹ underwent a rapid swing upwards.

That the Zionist newspaper could congratulate itself on being in the good books of the fascist leaders is understandable, when the position of the paper vis-à-vis the boycott of the Jews on April 1, 1933, is considered. This organized pogrom against Jewish citizens in Germany which aroused indignation all around the world and anger and revulsion in all decent Germans was not condemned outright by the paper; rather it was evaluated as a confirmation of Zionist views: “the fatal error of many Jews that one can represent Jewish interests under another cloak is removed,” wrote the *Jüdische Rundschau* referring to the pogrom; “The First of April 1933 can be a day of Jewish awakening and Jewish renaissance.”³⁰

The freedom of activity for the Zionists included the publishing of books as well as the newspaper. Until 1938, many publishing houses (among others, the Jüdische Verlag in Berlin-Charlottenburg and the Schochen-Verlag, Berlin) could publish Zionist literature unhindered. Thus there appeared with complete legality in fascist Germany works by Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion and Arthur Ruppin.

²⁸ Winfried Martini, “Hitler und die Juden” (Hitler and the Jews) in *Christ und Welt*, Stuttgart, June 16, 1961.

²⁹ Ball-Kaduri, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

³⁰ *Jüdische Rundschau*, April 4, 1933.

The Transfer of Capital

The first days of Nazi domination in Germany also brought about the beginning of economic collaboration between fascists and Zionists. In May 1933 the Zionist citrus-planting company "Hanotea" in Palestine was already applying to the Reich Ministry of the Economy for permission to transfer capital from Germany, thereby paving the way for the Haavara agreement that came later.

The "Hanotea" bought the German goods that it required, paying for them from the German bank accounts of Jewish emigrants. The emigrants then left Germany and received the equivalent value of the payments in real estate.³¹ As the experiences of the "Hanotea" seemed successful to the Zionist leaders, negotiations were carried out in the summer of 1933 between the Zionist side and the German Ministry of the Economy, leading to the signing of the so-called Haavara agreement.

The Haavara negotiations of 1933 were one of the occasions of Zionist history over which a veil has been drawn, since they constituted an instance of economic cooperation at a time when anti-fascist forces were attempting to lead a boycott against Nazi Germany. In commenting on these efforts, Nahum Goldmann, who then occupied a leading position in the Zionist movement, later wrote:

However, many Jewish groups refused to participate [in the boycott], either because many Jewish firms happened to be the business agents of German enterprises, or because some Jewish organizations, namely those in the United States, took up the position that it was unpatriotic to organize a boycott against a country with whom one's country maintained normal trade relations.³²

This argument may be valid in detail, but it veils the truth nevertheless, for those who broke the boycott were in the first place the Zionists themselves.

There are conflicting versions of the circumstances which led to the Haavara agreement. One version presents the view that the initiative for the negotiations with the fascist authorities came from the Zionist Union for Germany, which had interested Hoofien, the Director-General of the Anglo-Palestine Bank in Palestine, in the project. Hoofien, it is reported, travelled to Berlin in 1933 and there entered

³¹ See Werner Feilchenfeld, Dolf Michaelis, Ludwig Pinner, *Haavara-Transfer nach Palästina und Einwanderung deutscher Juden, 1933-1939*. (Haavara Transfer to Palestine and the Immigration of German Jews, 1933-1939), Tübingen, 1973.

³² Nahum Goldmann, *Staatsman ohne Staat* (Cologne/Berlin, 1970), p. 197. (The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann)

negotiations with Oberregierungsrat Hartenstein of the Reich Ministry of the Economy.³³ (For this reason the Haavara agreement is also often called the Hoofien Agreement, an appellation which reduces responsibility for the whole event to the sole personage of Hoofien.) Insofar as Hoofien was involved (an involvement which was probably necessary since it was a matter dealing with concrete agreements over questions of transfer that required the expertise of a professional banker) it is to be assumed that a matter of such importance could not be born of private initiative, and that it could not be set in motion without the authorization of Zionist institutions. Indeed it can be seen from other publications that the negotiations were handled in Berlin by the then chief of the political department of the Jewish Agency: Chaim Arlosoroff.³⁴ Finally, the agreement of 1935 was officially approved by the World Zionist Congress!

In the words of Ball-Kaduri, the Haavara agreement was concluded "in the form of a letter addressed to Herr Hoofien by the Reich Ministry of the Economy. The negotiations were carried out in a smooth way, as the Nazis were at that time still 'Zionist' inclined."³⁵

As a result of the agreement reached in Berlin, two companies were established: the Haavara company in Tel Aviv, and a sister company named Paltreu in Berlin. The procedure was carried out in the following manner: the Jewish emigrant paid his money (the minimum sum was around a thousand pounds sterling) into the German account of the Haavara (at the Wassermann Bank in Berlin or at the Warburg Bank

³³ Ball-Kaduri, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

³⁴ This is at least what the chairman of the Commission for Foreign and Security Affairs of the Israeli Knesset, Meir Argov, said in a parliamentary debate over the reparations agreement between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany (minutes of the Knesset on June 30, 1959). It remains to be said that the sudden assassination of Arlosoroff gave rise to the assumption that it could have been connected with the negotiations with Nazi Germany. Arlosoroff was killed in his flat on June 16, 1933 by two unidentified persons. His wife identified the murderer as a certain Abraham Stavsky, who was an active member of the Revisionist party led by Vladimir Jabotinsky (this party being the precursor of the Irgun). The Palestinian police arrested those who were suspected of the murder, but released them soon afterward. The police officer Yahuda Tannenbaum-Arezki, who belonged to the Zionist Mapai Party, declared despite the clear identification of Stavsky that "Abraham Stavsky did not kill Arlosoroff, Arabs did." Vladimir Jabotinsky himself demanded "to look for the murderers among the Arabs." But interestingly enough, a few days later — on July 7, 1933 — David Ben Gurion accused Jabotinsky of collaborating with the German fascists (in order to divert attention from his own collaboration?). See in this connection Joseph B. Schechtman's book, *op. cit.*, pp. 185, 202, 203. Also Albert M. Hyamson, *Palestine under the Mandate* (London, 1950), who made the observation that Arlosoroff was murdered "a few days after his return from Germany."

³⁵ Ball-Kaduri, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

in Hamburg). With this money, the Jewish importers could purchase German goods for export to Palestine, while paying the equivalent value in Palestinian pounds into the Haavara account at the Anglo-Palestine Bank in Palestine. When the emigrant arrived in Palestine, he received from this account the equivalent value of the sum he had paid in Germany (at which point Ball-Kaduri remarks: “after remitting the rather high expenses.”)³⁶

In connection with the emigration to Palestine that had been caused by the Haavara agreement, the Zionists established their own Palestine Shipping Company, which bought the German passenger ship “Hohenstein” and renamed it “Tel Aviv.” This ship embarked on its first trip from the German port of Bremerhaven to Haifa at the beginning of 1935. On this trip, the ship bore on its stern the Hebrew letters of the new name “Tel Aviv,” while from the mast fluttered the swastika; “a combination of metaphysical absurdity” wrote one of the passengers later.³⁷ The captain of the ship, Leidig, was a registered member of the Nazi Party!

The Haavara agreement doomed the attempt at an economic boycott of the Nazi state to failure and assured the fascist economy an extensive and unbroken export market in a situation where world trade still suffered from the traces of the international economic crisis of 1929.³⁸ This was emphasized in a memorandum by Stuckart, the Nazi State Secretary of the Reich Ministry of the Interior. In this memorandum dated December 17, 1937, it was stated: “The main advantages [of the Haavara agreement] are the following: the influence of the Haavara group in Palestine has led to the unusual but hoped-for contingency wherein of all places, Palestine is the country in which German goods are not boycotted by the Jewish side...”³⁹ At the same time, the Haavara procedure made possible a broadening of the Jewish emigration movement from Germany to Palestine, leading to the strengthening of the Zionist position in Palestine. The immigrants from Germany brought with them a higher degree of economic knowhow, among other things.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Winfried Martini, “Hebräisch unterm Hakenkreuz,” (Hebrew under the Swastika) in *Die Welt*, Hamburg, January 10, 1975.

³⁸ Nevertheless, in a report analysing German exports that was laid before Hitler towards the end of May 1933, it was concluded that: “The prospects for the sale of German goods abroad are extremely bad. The situation is not only politically unsatisfactory, but also economically so” (quoted in Kurt Patzold’s *Faschismus, Rassenwahn, Judenverfolgung* (Fascism, Racial Madness, Persecution of the Jews), Berlin, 1975, p. 123.

³⁹ Quoted from *Kennzeichen J* (Mark J), (Berlin: Helmut Eschwege, 1966), p. 132.

This also resulted in “selectiveness.” As the agreement demanded a minimum payment of a thousand pounds from the emigrant, only members of the Jewish bourgeoisie were able to avail themselves of its advantages, while workers of Jewish origin were left to their fate.⁴⁰ Thus in a recent examination of fascist racial policy, the following evaluation of the Haavara agreement can be considered perfectly just: “The solidarity principle that required the Jews in Germany to stand against their persecutors was torn asunder by capitalist interests. *Pecunia non olet*. Meanwhile, the measures undertaken by Jewish contractors with the sole aim of bringing capital out of fascist Germany to Palestine were receiving a high degree of consecration. It was claimed that the capital brought over to the Near East was placed at the service of the Jews. In reality however, in Palestine it served the same purpose as it did before in Germany: the profit interests of its owners.”⁴¹

The same book affirms that “the Zionist International wanted the Jewish emigrants from Germany to arrive on Palestinian soil not as have-nots, but as owners of capital that would help in the building of a capitalist state. Out of this desire, grew the Zionist interest to unite themselves with the anti-Semites.”⁴²

Indeed, prior to the founding of Israel, the Haavara transfer was a huge booster for the Zionist economy in Palestine. Zionist sources speak of a sum of 139.6 million Reichmarks — an enormous sum for that time — being transferred from Germany to Palestine.⁴³ Another source gives the

⁴⁰ According to statements from *Kennzeichen J*, the annual number of Jews leaving Germany was: 1934, about 23,000; 1935, 20,000; 1937, 23,000; and from January 1938 to September 1939, 157,000. Despite the efforts of the Zionists, only a part of this total emigrated to Palestine (in 1934, 37 percent; in 1935, 36 percent and 1937, 10.8 percent). Feilchenfeld, Michaelis, and Pinner give in their already-mentioned book the number of Jewish Germans who immigrated to Palestine by way of the Haavara transfer as being 50,000. The paper *Tagesspiegel*, which appears in Berlin, estimated the total number of German emigrants to Palestine between 1933 and 1940 as being 70,000 (*Tagesspiegel*, February 15, 1974). According to Zionist statements the immigrants from Germany made up in this period around 25 percent of the total of Jewish immigrants in Palestine. Working out the Haavara transfers in the context of the social strata of immigration gives an idea of immigrants according to their financial standing. The proportion of immigrants possessing more than a thousand Palestinian pounds increased from 10.3 percent of all immigrants in the year 1933 to 18.1 percent in the year 1936, while the number of immigrating Jewish workers sank in the same period from 35.8 percent to 17.2 percent. See Dr. T. Canaan, *Conflict in the Land of Peace* (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 41.

⁴¹ Kurt Patzold, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

⁴² Kurt Patzold, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

⁴³ See Feilchenfeld et. al., p. 277.

amount transferred as eight million pounds sterling⁴⁴ The capitalist Zionist economy thus grew. It was not a coincidence that the most important projects in Israel were founded or directed by emigrants from Germany. The largest Palestinian foundry and the cement industry were founded by the onetime director of the Berlin electricity and water company, Dr. Karl Landau. Dr. Arnold Barth of Berlin, Dr. Siegfried Sahlheine of Hamburg and Herbert Förder of Breslau were the first organizers of the Bank Leumi. Fritz Naphtals of Berlin and George Josephthal of Nuremberg made a giant enterprise out of the insignificant "Arbeiterbank." Some of the most important of Israeli firms were founded by Yekutiel and Sam Federmann of Chemnitz (now called Karl-Marx-Stadt); Yekutiel's entry in *Who's Who in Israel* (1962) describes him as "founder, the 'Israel Miami Group' (Dan Hotel); Israel partner of 'Isasbest'; founder and partner 'Israel Oil Prospectors Corp., Ltd.'; started the first oil drilling 'Mazal I'; president of numerous other companies."

The economic agreements between the Zionists and German fascism were approved by all institutions of the Nazi Reich. The Foreign Office had already taken up a pro-Zionist attitude on many occasions before 1933. (There were meetings between Chaim Weizmann and State Secretaries von Schubert and von Bulow.)⁴⁵

Only after the outbreak of the Palestinian Arab rebellion of 1936 did the first difference of opinion set in amongst the various fascist institutions about the usefulness of continuing the Haavara transfers. The Foreign Office now realized that the *de facto* support for Zionist policy would alienate Arabs against Hitler's Germany—a prospect that was not in the interest of the Nazi Reich. Döhle, the German Consul-General in Jerusalem, was spokesman for this point of view, and in an extensive memorandum dated March 22, 1937, he declared that "through our promotion of Jewish immigration... the position that was again captured by the Germans... would come to grief."⁴⁶ In taking this stand, Döhle was naturally not moved by concern for the Arabs as much as

⁴⁴ Meyer Weisgal and Joel Carmichael (Editors), *Chaim Weizmann, A Biography by Several Hands* (New York, 1961), p. 232.

⁴⁵ According to Ernst Marcus, *Das deutsche Auswärtige Amt und die Palästinafrage in den Jahren 1933-1939* (The German Foreign Office and the Palestine Question in the years 1933-1939) YWA 01/11; quoted by Ball-Kaduri, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

⁴⁶ Report by Döhle dated March 22, 1937. The Chief of the Foreign Affairs Organization in the German Foreign Office, Haavara, 1938, Series 72, Jewish State, Palestine (Political Archives of the Foreign Office in Bonn); quoted by Heinz Tillmann, *Deutschlands Araberpolitik im zweiten Weltkrieg* (Germany's Arab Policy in the Second World War), Berlin, 1965, p. 63.

he was anxious about the political interests of German fascism. He added that Germany need “not worry unduly about the sympathies of Palestinian Arabs regarding Germany, since what is required is not even a question of an active Arab policy so much as the need to avoid the conspicuous promotion lent to the building of the Jewish national home.”⁴⁷ Döhle feared “that the Arab mood might turn around, and that we might be accused of actively participating in the fight against them.”⁴⁸

Döhle’s fears were shared by other fascist authorities. Thus the Office for Foreign Trade at the Auslandsorganisation of the Nazi party (the party office in charge of foreign affairs) stated in all frankness: “Politically, it [the Haavara transfer] means giving valuable support to the establishment of a Jewish national home with the help of German capital.”⁴⁹

On December 17, 1937 it was stated in the already quoted memorandum of State Secretary Stuckart of the Reich Ministry of the Interior that since the beginning of the Arab rebellion in Palestine “the advantages of the [Haavara] procedure have grown smaller while the disadvantages are becoming larger.”⁵⁰

Stuckart was of the opinion that if the establishment of a Jewish state was unavoidable, then “everything that would promote the growth of such a state should be refrained from.” Then Stuckart declared clearly: “There is no doubt that the Haavara procedure has made the greatest contribution to the tremendously rapid building of Palestine [i.e., the Zionist colonies — K.P.]. The procedure did not only come up with the largest sums of money (from Germany!); it also provided the most intelligent men amongst the immigrants, and finally, provided the necessary machines and industrial equipment — also from Germany.”⁵¹

The fears of these officials (which, as we shall see, contradicted the views of the SS and the Gestapo) were finally brought before Hitler. Hitler, as is seen in a memorandum of the Political Trade Department of the Foreign Office, dated January 27, 1938, decided that the Haavara procedure should be continued.⁵² This positive stand taken by Hitler vis-à-vis the strengthening of the Zionist colonization of Palestine stayed unchanged in the face of complaints emanating from the Foreign Of-

⁴⁷ Heinz Tillmann, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁴⁸ Heinz Tillmann, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁴⁹ Memorandum by the Office of the Chief of the Foreign Affairs Organization of the NSDAP (Nazi Party), dated June 5, 1937, quoted by Tillmann, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁵⁰ *Kennzeichen J*, p. 133.

⁵¹ *Kennzeichen J*, p. 133.

⁵² See Tillmann, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

fice and the Auslandsorganisation of the Nazi Party about the rising hostility of the Palestinians to Germany. Thus the office of the Auslandsorganisation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded anew in a memorandum dated November 12, 1938 that "an initiative should be undertaken for the overdue cancellation of the Haavara agreement."⁵³ Jon and David Kimche confirm the fact that Hitler, "with unambiguous determination, ordered the promotion of mass immigration to Palestine,"⁵⁴ and that Hitler laid down the fundamental decision that the "Jewish emigration should be further promoted by all available means. There can thus be no question about the Führer's opinion that such emigration should be above all channelled towards Palestine."⁵⁵ Finally, even Winfried Martini confirms the pro-Zionist position of leading fascist circles during the Arab revolt of 1936-39. He writes that as a correspondent of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* in Palestine, his reports about the revolt "were rather clearly favourable to the Jewish side," and that this did not draw any objections from any Nazi officials.⁵⁶

Hitler thus remained the guarantor of the Haavara transfers, which were only halted at the outbreak of the Second World War.⁵⁷

Cooperation with the Nazi Intelligence Services

During the first days of fascist domination in Germany, the Zionists held a direct line to the fascist repression apparatus which developed into loose collaboration between the Zionist leadership and the terror organizations of the Nazi Reich (the Gestapo, SS, etc). Before 1933, the Zionist official, Leo Plaut, already "had a connection" with the political police and with the police official Oberregierungsrat Rudolf Diels (supposedly a schoolfriend of Plaut). When Diels was first appointed chief of the secret police in 1933, he retained his connection with Plaut. "Indeed Plaut even had the secret telephone number of Diels and could call him anytime."⁵⁸ One can only speculate about the details of these contacts because the documents regarding them are kept under lock and key at

⁵³ Heinz Tillmann, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁵⁴ Jon and David Kimche, *Des Zornes und des Herzens Wegen* (Secret Roads), Berlin, 1956, p. 26.

⁵⁵ Kimche, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁵⁶ Winfried Martini, "Hitler und die Juden," in *Christ und Welt*, Stuttgart, June 6, 1961.

⁵⁷ The emigration of Jews from Germany was prohibited in 1941 by order of SS Chief Himmler; see Leon Poliakov and Joseph Wulff, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden* (The Third Reich and the Jews), Berlin, 1955, p. 89.

⁵⁸ Ball-Kaduri, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

the Yad-Vashem archives in Jerusalem. However, it is to be supposed that it was through these contacts that a meeting was arranged between the then Prussian Prime Minister Hermann Goering (later sentenced to death by the Nuremberg International Tribunal as a war criminal) and the leaders of German Jewish organizations. The meeting took place on March 26, 1933. Among the representatives of the Zionists taking part was the official, Kurt Blumenfeld, but he was silent about this episode in his memoirs.⁵⁹

Such contacts were conducted covertly, but evidence exists pointing to preparations then underway for cooperation between the Zionists and the SS (the organization that dominated the whole police and secret service apparatus of the fascist state). Not long after the takeover of power by the fascists, the paper *Der Angriff*, published by the chief Nazi propagandists, carried a travel report from Palestine, which presented Zionist colonization in Palestine in positive terms. The report, entitled "A Nazi travels to Palestine," "was almost devoid of criticism."⁶⁰

The writer's pseudonym of "Lim" concealed the identity of SS-Untersturmführer (equivalent in army rank to lieutenant) Leopold von Mildenstein. Mildenstein was active in the SD (the security service of the SS) which was originally established as the internal secret service organization of the Nazi party, but which from 1934 ceased to be merely the party police and police-command instrument, and developed into the dominant internal political secret service of the fascist dictatorship.⁶¹ It also became the organization for the political command and cadre-formation body of the fascist security police. That Mildenstein should have been the man to write an outspokenly pro-Zionist series of articles was no mere coincidence, since in 1934 in Office II of the SD (inland) there had been born Department II-112, the so-called "Judenreferat" (Office for Jewish Affairs) presided over by himself. According to Martini Mildenstein was "discreetly advised by the Zionist officials" during his Palestine trip.⁶² Mildenstein's department was in charge of fascist Jewish policy until 1938. This policy was formulated by the official organ of the SS, *Das Schwarze Korps*, in the following words: "The time may not be far distant when Palestine once again receives the sons whom it lost a thousand years ago. Our wishes along with the good will of the state

⁵⁹ Kurt Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage* (The Jewish Question Experienced), Stuttgart, 1962.

⁶⁰ Winfried Martini in *Christ und Welt*, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ Alwin Ramme, *Der Sicherheitsdienst der SS* (The Security Service of the SS), Berlin, 1970, p. 59.

⁶² Winfried Martini in *Christ und Welt*, *op. cit.*

accompany them.”⁶³ There have been attempts to depict the pro-Zionist policy of the SS as being the personal attitude of Mildenstein, rather than the reflection of an official entente between Zionists and fascists. But not only does the quotation from the *Schwarze Korps* contradict this; Mildenstein himself, a few years later, extracted his Palestine travel report from the *Angriff* to publish it in book form. But this time he turned the originally pro-Zionist tendency into unmasked anti-Semitism.⁶⁴

The Zionist leaders who had “discreetly advised” the director of the SD “Judenreferat” during his Palestine trip, continued their contacts with the SS and SD. Naturally, few details are known about these contacts, the record of which is highly classified material. One of the few documents about these occurrences that is available is a memorandum by Professor Franz Six,⁶⁵ dated June 17, 1937, which bears the classification “Secret Matter for the Command.”⁶⁶ This memorandum contains information about a visit of the Zionist emissary Feivel Polkes to Berlin. Polkes was a member of the general staff of the Zionist underground army, the Haganah, with the rank of commander.⁶⁷ SS-Oberscharführer Herbert

⁶³ *Das Schwarze Korps*, Berlin, May 15, 1935.

⁶⁴ Leopold von Mildenstein's book appeared in 1941.

⁶⁵ Professor Dr. Franz-Alfred Six, born on December 8, 1909, was a member of the Nazi Party from 1930. In 1936 he was appointed SS-Hauptsturmführer to the post of director of the Central Department of the Press and Library at the SD main office. Then he took over the directorship of the Department II (inland) in the SD main office. Six was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment for war crimes by an American tribunal in April, 1948. In January 1951, this sentence was reduced to ten years and on September 30, 1952 he was released. The Israelis who are always on the hunt for Nazi war criminals have not shown any interest in exposing Six, who was privy to the collaboration between the Zionists and the Fascists.

⁶⁶ This document is kept in the archives of the American Commission for the Study of War Documents in Alexandria, Virginia, USA. These documents were also made available on microfilm to other archives (exact designation : Records of the Reich leader of the SS and Chief of German Police, Washington, 1958). The documents quoted here are available on the RFSS film roll 411, frames 2936012 and 2936069. Alwin Rammé writes in his book *Der Sicherheitsdienst der SS* on page 21: “The evaluation of these films is made difficult because of their bad quality in parts. Documents which are especially revealing are often photographed badly and rendered difficult to read — this having been done not unintentionally by those in charge” (National Archives, Washington).

⁶⁷ According to recent information, Feivel Polkes today lives in Haifa. Tuvia Friedmann, author of the book *Ich Jagte Eichmann* (I Hunted Eichmann) and director of the Institute for Documentation in Haifa, stated in a letter dated January 25, 1970 that the documents concerning Polkes' visit to Berlin have been known in Israel since 1947; he also stated that he had talked to Polkes about these events and Polkes had declared that it was all “a misunderstanding.” Friedmann further wrote that it was allegedly not possible to check this complicated matter further since only copies were available and not the original documents.

Hagen, who succeeded Mildenstein as director of the Judenreferat, claimed in his papers that Polkes held the “leadership of the whole self-defence apparatus of the Palestinian Jews.”⁶⁸

In Palestine, Polkes had been in close contact with the correspondent of the “German News Agency,” Dr. Reichert, who was active in the Palestine espionage network of the SD. This ring was directed by the SD agent Otto von Bodelschwingh, who lived in Haifa as a salesman. It was Dr. Reichert who acquired an entry visa for Polkes to visit Germany.

Polkes stayed in Berlin from February 26 to March 2, 1937, holding several meetings with SD agents representing the Nazi regime, two of which were with SS-Hauptscharführer Adolf Eichmann (Eichmann had by then taken up work at the “Judenreferat”). Here, Polkes offered to collaborate with the German regime telling Eichmann that he was interested above all in “accelerating Jewish immigration to Palestine, so that the Jews would attain a majority over the Arabs in his country. For this purpose, he worked together with the secret services of England and France and he also wanted to cooperate with Hitler’s Germany.”⁶⁹ Hagen noted further in his report about Polkes’ visit to Berlin: “He also declared his readiness to provide Germany with services in the form of information, so long as that did not conflict with his personal objectives... He would, among other things, vigorously support the foreign interests of Germany in the Middle East...”⁷⁰ Höhne commented on Polkes’ offer with the words: “...behind it there clearly stands the immigration policy of the Haganah.”⁷¹

The SS immediately awarded Polkes’ cooperative intentions with the instructions put forth by Six. “Pressure is being exerted on the Reich Deputation of the Jews in Germany in order to compel Jews emigrating from Germany to head only to Palestine and not to any other country.” That was exactly what the Zionists wanted, but Six added: “Such a measure lies entirely in the German interest and it is already being put into effect by the Gestapo.”⁷²

Feivel Polkes, the Haganah commander, went out of his way to help in the development of cooperation between Zionists and fascists; he even extended an invitation to Eichmann to visit Palestine as guest of the

⁶⁸ RFSS film roll 411.

⁶⁹ Quoted from Heinz Höhne, *Der Orden unter dem Totenkopf* (Order under the Skull), Gütersloh, 1967, p. 309.

⁷⁰ Memorandum by Hagen, RFSS film roll 411, p. 4.

⁷¹ Heinz Höhne, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

⁷² Memorandum by Six in RFSS film roll 411.

Haganah. Six noted: "In the work of making contacts, the name of SS-Hauptscharführer Eichmann of Department II-112 comes to mind before any other. He had talks with Polkes during the latter's stay in Berlin and he was invited by him to visit the Jewish colonies in Palestine under his guidance."⁷³

The trip to Palestine undertaken by Eichmann and Hagen is only an episode in the history of collaboration between Zionism and Nazi Germany. But it was both a meaningful and revealing one that has become the subject of considerable falsification. Rather than admit the fact that the infamous and notorious murderer of the Jews, Adolf Eichmann, was at one time invited to Palestine by the Haganah, Zionist writers reversed the blame and claimed that the purpose of Eichmann's visit was to make contact with the Palestinian rebels, or even to conspire with the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Al-Husseini. The inventor of this story seems to be the well-known Zionist Simon Wiesenthal, who by 1947 was already making the claim that Eichmann had planted a network of agents in the Palestinian settlement of Sarona and had taken up "contact with the Grand Mufti."⁷⁴ In 1951 Leon Poliakov published a similar version in *Die Welt*,⁷⁵ and Gerald Reitlinger borrowed it two years later for his book *The Final Solution*,⁷⁶ in which Eichmann was supposedly sent to Palestine "in order to make contact with the Arab rebels." From then onwards the legend grew, with the American Quentin Reynolds even claiming that Eichmann had paid a visit to the Grand Mufti.⁷⁷ Eichmann's biographer Comer Clarke went so far as to claim that Eichmann carried with him 50,000 dollars in "Nazi gold" to offer to the Palestinian rebels.⁷⁸

When such myths are compared with the actual events, one reason why the Israeli government was so anxious about holding the trial of Eichmann in Israel and in no other place becomes clear; only in Israel could Zionist contacts with the Nazis be kept out of public view.⁷⁹ Only

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Simon Wiesenthal, *Grossmufti-Grossagent der Achse* (Grand Mufti — Grand Agent of the Axis), Salzburg/Vienna, 1947, p. 12.

⁷⁵ Leon Poliakov, *Breviaire de la Haine* (Paris, 1951).

⁷⁶ Gerald Reitlinger, *The Final Solution* (London, 1953).

⁷⁷ Quentin Reynolds, *Minister of Death* (New York, 1960), pp. 77-78.

⁷⁸ Comer Clarke, *Eichmann, The Man and his Crimes* (New York, 1960), pp. 35-37.

⁷⁹ The prosecution in the Eichmann trial produced a document that was allegedly written by Haj Amin al-Husseini, and which referred to Eichmann as "a jewel for the Arabs." This "piece of evidence" was such a crude falsification that even the pro-Israeli *Allgemeine Zeitung =*

there would there be enough pressure for Eichmann, on trial for his life, to make false declarations before the court. "It is true," said Eichmann during his trial, "that one of the purposes of my Palestine trip in 1937 was to take up contact with Mufti Al-Husseini."⁸⁰ But the travel report of Eichmann and Hagen found in the secret archives of SS Chief Himmler paints a different picture.⁸¹ This is the gist of the travel report: Eichmann and Hagen left Berlin on September 26, 1937, in the guise of editors of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, arriving in Haifa on October 2, 1937, on the ship *Romania*. As the British authorities refused to allow the two SS emissaries to disembark (pointing to the Arab revolt), Eichmann and Hagen went on to Egypt. Here they met not Haj Amin Al-Husseini,⁸² but their old acquaintance, Feivel Polkes the Haganah officer.

The travel report of Hagen and Eichmann contains an exact rendering of the conversations with Polkes which took place on October 10 and 11, 1937 in Cairo's Café Groppi. Polkes at once laid out the Zionist plans in complete frankness before the SS men (Polkes' statements as noted down by Eichmann and Hagen are not only interesting in connection with Zionist-fascist cooperation, but are also important as testimony to the expansionist policy of the Zionists): "The Zionist state must be established by all means and as soon as possible so that it attracts a stream of Jewish emigrants to Palestine. When the Jewish state is established according to the current proposals laid down in the Peel Paper,⁸³ and in line with England's partial promises, then the borders may be pushed further outwards according to one's wishes."

Polkes then praised the results of the anti-Semitic terror in Germany: "Nationalist Jewish circles expressed their great joy over the radical German policy towards the Jews, as this policy would increase the Jewish population in Palestine, so that one can reckon with a Jewish majority in Palestine over the Arabs in the foreseeable future."

Polkes once again pointed to the necessity of accelerating the removal

= concluded on June 28, 1961 that "the value of this document is questionable." Hannah Arendt writes in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* that one of the motives for holding the trial in Israel was "to ferret out other Nazis — for example the connection between the Nazis and some Arab rulers" (p.8.) But Hannah Arendt finally came to the conclusion that the claims over Eichmann's contacts with Haj Amin al-Husseini "were unfounded" (p. 10).

⁸⁰ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Zurich, July 12, 1961.

⁸¹ RFSS film roll 411.

⁸² According to Gerald Reitlinger's claim (See *Die Endlösung*, Berlin, 1956, p. 29).

⁸³ A Royal Commission under Lord Peel examined the situation in Palestine in 1937 after the outbreak of the Arab revolt and discussed a first plan to divide Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state.

of Jews from Germany, and repeated his readiness to provide the SD with secret information. He did come up with two pieces of “information” immediately, as Eichmann noted in his travel report. The first was designed to arouse fascist hostility against the Arab nationalist movement. Eichmann noted: “According to Polkes’ information, the Pan-Islamic World Congress convening in Berlin is in direct contact with two pro-Soviet Arab leaders: Emir Shekib Arslan and Emir Adil Arslan.” The second item which Eichmann registered in his travel report concerned that party which had unequivocally committed itself to the forefront of the struggle against fascist terror and anti-Semitic outrages: the German Communist Party. “The illegal Communist broadcasting station whose transmission to Germany is particularly strong, is, according to Polkes’ statement, assembled on a lorry that drives along the German-Luxembourg border when transmission is on the air.” (This information offers an interesting insight into where the Zionist leaders saw their allies and where their opponents!)

The meetings between Eichmann and Polkes were not isolated accidental events. They fall into a longer-term framework of cooperation between fascists and Zionists. Following the trip of Eichmann and Hagen, the collaboration was cemented by the “Mossad Aliyah Beth,” which had been created by the Haganah as an illegal immigration organization, after Britain had throttled Jewish immigration to Palestine as a result of the Peel paper. At the end of 1937, i.e., a few months after Eichmann’s trip, emissaries of the Mossad were taking up activity in the house of the Reichsvereinigung (Reich Union) at Meineckestrasse 10, Berlin-Charlottenburg,⁸⁴ with the permission of the fascist authorities in Berlin. The two emissaries, Pina Ginsburg and Moshe Auerbach, had travelled to Germany from Palestine for this purpose.

Jon and David Kimche, in their book *Secret Roads*, dated Ginsburg’s arrival in Berlin in the summer of 1938.⁸⁵ Ginsburg had introduced himself officially to the Gestapo as emissary of the “Union of Communal Settlements,” declaring that he was there on a special mission, and that his task converged with the intentions of the Nazi government, his objective being the organization of the emigration of German Jews to Palestine. Only with the support of the Nazi leaders could the project be carried through on a large scale.⁸⁶ The Gestapo had then discussed with Ginsburg “how to promote and expand illegal Jewish immigration into Palestine against the will of the British mandate government.”

⁸⁴ Heinz Höhne, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

⁸⁵ Jon and David Kimche, *Des Zornes und des Herzens Wegen*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

The fascist authorities had in the meantime begun to change their methods of pressure on the German Jews. They no longer left it up to the Zionist organizations alone to arrange emigration to Palestine. In Vienna (Austria had been occupied by Hitler's Germany in March 1938), the "Central Office for Jewish Emigration" was established and placed under the charge of Adolf Eichmann. In the early summer of 1938 Eichmann had met another emissary of the Mossad, Bar-Gilead, in Vienna. The latter requested permission to establish training camps for emigrants so that they could be prepared for their work in Palestine.⁸⁷ After passing on this request to Berlin, Eichmann granted permission and supplied all the requirements for the establishment of training camps. By the end of 1938, around a thousand young Jews had been trained in these camps.⁸⁸

In the meantime, Ginsburg in Berlin was able, with the help of the Nazi authorities, to establish similar training camps. Jon and David Kimche wrote: "The Palestinian [Ginsburg], who had come to Berlin prepared for anything, had no pangs of conscience against supping with the devil and securing his own portion of the meal."⁸⁹

In her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Hannah Arendt commented in reviewing the information of the Kimches:

...these Jews from Palestine spoke a language not totally different from that of Eichmann... they had been sent to Europe by the communal settlements in Palestine, and they were not interested in rescue operations — that was not their job. They wanted to select "suitable material" and their chief enemies... were not those who made life impossible for Jews in the old countries, Germany and Austria, but those who barred access to the new homeland; that enemy was definitely Britain, not Germany... they were probably among the first Jews to talk openly about mutual interests...⁹⁰

The Proposal for a War Alliance with Hitler

While the majority group in the Zionist movement, the wing of the "Labour" party (Ben Gurion, etc.) and the "General Zionists" (Weizmann and the others), carefully camouflaged their contacts with the fascists, and spoke in public against them, the right wing of Zionism, the Revisionist party (the forerunner of the terrorist Irgun Zvai Leumi and the later Herut party in Israel) had openly expressed its admiration on

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16; even this meeting plays no part in the Eichmann trial.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹⁰ Hannah Arendt, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

many occasions before 1933 for people like Hitler and Mussolini. An example of this is found in a trial held in Jerusalem in 1932 when the lawyer Cohen, a member of the Revisionist party, declared in defending the perpetrators of outrages in the university: "Yes, we entertain great respect for Hitler. Hitler has saved Germany. Without him it would have perished four years ago. And we would have gone along with Hitler if he had only given up his anti-Semitism."⁹¹

Vladimir Jabotinsky, the then leader of the Revisionists, who maintained good relations with the fascist movement in Europe,⁹² was also accused of attempting to seek a close relationship with Hitler's Germany. There was now clearly a competition among the different Zionist factions to achieve private collaboration with the fascists while publicly denouncing each other's similar activity. (Reference should be made to the circumstances surrounding the assassination of Chaim Arlosoroff.) The Zionist paper *Davar* in July 1933 published an article by David Ben Gurion which contained a strong charge: "...Just after Hitler's accession to power in Germany, when the persecutions of Jews and Marxists were at their height, Mr. Vladimir Jabotinsky arrived in Berlin and in a public address incited against Marxists and Communists in Zionism and in Palestine."⁹³ If that was the case, then it meant that Jabotinsky wanted to torpedo the Zionist-fascist negotiations in order to bring himself into the game as a negotiating partner with the Nazis. Nonetheless, Jabotinsky strove to refute Ben Gurion's charge by pointing out that he had spoken on Radio Warsaw on April 28, 1933 and demanded the setting up of a worldwide economic boycott of Germany, simultaneously with the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish state "as the only adequate answer to the Hitlerite menace."⁹⁴ There was an obvious allusion here to the Zionist majority's Haavara negotiations. But Jabotinsky could not dispute the fact that the Revisionist paper *Hazit Haam*, appearing in Palestine, "was allegedly treating this movement [the fascists] with a pronounced slant of sympathetic understanding. The editors of the paper... he was told, though aware of Hitler's rabid anti-Semitism, saw in

⁹¹ *Die Weltbühne*, Berlin, May 31, 1932.

⁹² For a time the Italian dictator Mussolini had supported the Revisionists and permitted them to establish in Italy a school for training navy soldiers. Jabotinsky had in 1932 made the proposal that the mandate over Palestine should go to Italy because Mussolini would be more amenable to furthering the cause of the Jewish state than Britain was.

⁹³ Joseph Schechtmann, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

National Socialism elements of a genuine movement of national liberation.”⁹⁵

For fascist Germany, collaboration with the Zionist majority was undoubtedly more important than cooperation with the Revisionist “opposition.” Nonetheless, even the Revisionists were allowed to continue their political activities in Germany. The members of the Revisionist youth organization “Brit Trumpeldor” (about whom Schechtmann mentions reports that it “was adapting itself to certain features of the Nazi regime”) ⁹⁶ was the only non-fascist organization in Germany to receive from the Nazis the permission to wear uniform.

It was, finally, members of the Irgun, who, in their intention of collaborating with the German fascists a year and a half after the outbreak of the Second World War (at a time when the massacre of Jews in occupied Poland had already begun) went so far as to make the fascist authorities an incredible offer of cooperation. (The Irgun, which split from the Haganah and then rejoined forces with it in 1948, has been an integral part of the State of Israel since then; its longtime leader Menahem Begin served in the Israeli government as a minister from 1967 to 1970 and today leads the Likud bloc in the Israeli parliament.)

A few months before the cooperation offer of January 1941, a split had taken place between the then minority faction of the Irgun which supported Britain against Nazi Germany in the war, and the grouping in the Irgun that was opposed to any such pro-British policy. Irgun committee member Abraham Stern played a prominent role in this latter grouping which was supported at the time of the split by most Irgun members. It was by the anti-British activists of this group that the offer of Irgunist collaboration was made.

The offer that was extended is contained in a document whose full details have until now been very secret. It is taken from a report by the Naval attaché at the German Embassy in Turkey—an official who was in charge of secret missions there. This report, which is still kept in a locked archive in Britain, tells of contacts the attaché had with emissaries of the “Irgun Zvai Leumi (National Military Organization — NMO).” A memorandum dated January 11, 1941 speaks of “Fundamental Features of the Proposal” by the Irgun “concerning the solution of the Jewish Question in Europe and the active participation of the NMO on the side of Germany.”

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

The note's text is as follows:

It is often stated in the speeches and utterances of the leading statesmen of National Socialist Germany that a New Order in Europe requires as a prerequisite the radical solution of the Jewish question through evacuation. ("Judenreines Europa")

The evacuation of the Jewish masses from Europe is a precondition for solving the Jewish question; but this can only be made possible and complete through the settlement of these masses in the home of the Jewish people, Palestine, and through the establishment of a Jewish state in its historic boundaries.

After confirming their joint fundamental views of Zionism and fascism in this fashion, the Irgun activists offered their organization as an ally, as the document went on to say:

The solving in this manner of the Jewish problem and thus the bringing about with it of the liberation of the Jewish people once and for all, is the objective of the political activity and the years long struggle of the Jewish freedom movement: the National Military Organization (Irgun Zvai Leumi) in Palestine.

The NMO, which is well-acquainted with the goodwill of the German Reich government and its authorities towards Zionist activity inside Germany and towards Zionist emigration plans—[one should notice in this respect the fascist-Zionist cooperation in the years stretching between 1933 and 1939—K.P.] — is of the opinion that:

1. Common interests could exist between the establishment of a new order in Europe in conformity with the German concept, and the true national aspirations of the Jewish people as they are embodied by the NMO.
2. Cooperation between the new Germany and a renewed Hebrew nation (völkisch-nationalen-Hebräertum) would be possible and
3. The establishment of the historical Jewish state on a national and totalitarian basis and bound by a treaty with the German Reich would be in the interest of maintaining and strengthening the future German position of power in the Near East.

Thus what was on offer was no more and no less than the establishment of a fascist Jewish state in Palestine as an ally of German fascism!

"Proceeding from these considerations, the NMO in Palestine offers to take an active part in the war on Germany's side, provided the above-mentioned national aspirations of the Jewish liberation movement are

recognized by the German Reich government.” After thus proposing to participate actively with German fascism in the fight against the anti-Hitler bloc, the Irgun Zionists went on to make their proposal even more specific in the document:

This offer by the NMO, whose validity extends over the military, political and information levels, inside and also according to certain organizational preparations outside Palestine, would be bound to the military training and organizing of Jewish manpower in Europe, under the leadership and command of the NMO. These military units would take part in the fighting to conquer Palestine, in case such a front is formed.

The indirect participation of the Israeli freedom movement in the drawing up of the New Order in Europe, already in its preparatory stage, would be connected with a positively radical solution of the European Jewish problem in conformity with the above-mentioned national aspirations of the Jewish people. This would strengthen to an uncommon degree the moral basis of the New Order in the eyes of the entire world.

The cooperation of the Israeli freedom movement would also be in line with one of the recent speeches of the German Reich Chancellor in which Herr Hitler stressed that any combination and any alliance would be entered into in order to isolate England and defeat it.

This astonishing document requires no further comment. It need only be added that the anti-Semitism and the liquidation work that had already started to eliminate European Jews prevented German fascism from accepting this alliance offer. But two years later, the Irgun was embarking on terrorist raids against British institutions in the Near East, thereby actively weakening the anti-Hitler alliance in its fight against German fascism, a fight that would also lead to the rescue of European Jews.

Conclusion

Whenever the story of fascist-Zionist cooperation is revealed, Zionist writers use the ready excuse that contact with the Nazis was only taken up with a view to saving the lives of Jewish citizens. Even though some of the above-mentioned facts contradict this argument, there are still two questions to be raised: Was there really no other way to save the European Jews? Was this the real motive of the Zionists as they dealt with the devil?

There can be no question about the fact that the only possibility of preventing millions of Jews from being murdered (as well as preventing the Second World War, which cost the lives of millions) lay in overthrowing the fascist dictatorship when it was just at the beginning of its period of domination. But the Zionist leaders were uninterested in this — their sole objective was to increase the number of the Jewish population in Palestine. As they shared the anti-assimilationist views of Nazism concerning the Jewish race, the fascist dictatorship was no tragedy for them, but a confirmation of their position. As David Ben Gurion put it: “What Zionist propaganda for years could not do, disaster has done overnight.”⁹⁷

The Zionist leaders not only did nothing against fascism; they even took action that sabotaged the anti-fascist front (through the prevention of an economic boycott by their Haavara agreement). In practice, they also rejected attempts to save the German Jews which did not have as their aim the settlement of the Jews in Palestine. The following example is from the Evian Conference: When after 1933 the majority of the capitalist countries refused to take in Jewish refugees from Germany, the American President, Roosevelt, called for a world conference on refugees to convene in the Swiss town of Evian. This conference took place between June 6-15, 1938, with 32 capitalist countries attending. The conference failed, since the participants refused to take in Jewish refugees. One would assume that the Zionist movement, which was also represented in Evian, would have attempted to exert pressure on the governments to lift the restrictions. But, on the contrary, the Zionist leaders tabled a motion at the beginning of the conference calling for the admission of 1.2 million Jews into Palestine. They were not interested in other solutions and, as Christopher Sykes later commented: “They looked on the whole thing with indifferent hostility from the very beginning... the truth of the matter was that what was being attempted in Evian in no way conformed with the idea of Zionism.”⁹⁸

Thus the Zionist leaders share the responsibility for the failure to rescue a greater number of European Jewry. One should in all justice remember that those Jews who survived the monstrous fascist domination owed their lives to the soldiers of the anti-Hitler bloc, and especially to those of the Soviet army, who underwent terrible sacrifices in defeating the fascist dictatorship.

Zionist leaders falsify history when they claim today that no one during the years of fascism stood by the side of the persecuted Jews except the Zionists. Robert Weltsch, who himself had in the year 1933 taken up no

⁹⁷ David Ben Gurion, *Rebirth and Destiny of Israel* (New York, 1954), p. 41.

⁹⁸ Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel* (London, 1965).

clear stand against the fascists, advanced the thesis that no one at all in Germany had taken up the cause of the persecuted.⁹⁹

But the study of historic documents shows this to be incorrect. Apart from the many courageous acts of individuals to help the persecuted, the German Communist Party from the very first days of the fascist dictatorship condemned the anti-Semitic outrages as an integral ingredient of the regime in power. While the Zionist organization Hashomer Hazair in Germany was still declaring in 1932 “that participation of the Chaluzian youth¹⁰⁰ in the struggle of the German working class... was not the way to express our political engagement,”¹⁰¹ and while for the Hashomer Hazair “the resistance against the communists was of particular importance”¹⁰² the German Communist Party was making the following declaration in reference to the Jewish pogrom of November 9, 1938: “The German working class stands in the forefront of the struggle against the persecution of the Jews... the liberation of Germany from the shame of the Jewish pogroms will coincide with the hour of liberating the German people from the brown tyranny.”¹⁰³

The German communists called for the setting up of an anti-fascist popular front, but the Zionists were not interested. During the Nineteenth Zionist Congress in Lucerne in 1935 Chaim Weizmann stated: “The only dignified answer to all that has been done to the Jews in Germany is a large and a beautiful and a just home in Eretz Israel — a strong home.”¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ See Kurt Patzold, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁰ “Chaluzian” means a Zionist volunteer for emigration.

¹⁰¹ *Jüdische Rundschau*, August 30, 1932.

¹⁰² Ball-Kaduri, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

¹⁰³ Quoted from *Kenzeichen* 7, p. 105.

¹⁰⁴ Chaim Weizmann, *Reden und Aufsätze* (Speeches and Essays) Berlin, 1937, p. 259.