

AMERICAN PRAVDA

JEWES AND NAZIS

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE 1930S AND 1940S



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Jews and Nazis

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Israeli Leaders and Nazi Germany

Around 35 years ago, I was sitting in my college dorm-room closely reading the *New York Times* as I did each and every morning when I noticed an astonishing article about the controversial new Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir.

Back in those long-gone days, the *Gray Lady* was strictly a black-and-white print publication, lacking the large color photographs of rap stars and long stories about dieting techniques that fill so much of today's news coverage, and it also seemed to have a far harder edge in its Middle East reporting. A year or so earlier, Shamir's predecessor Menachem Begin had allowed his Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to talk him into invading Lebanon and besieging Beirut, and the subsequent massacre of Palestinian women and children in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps had outraged the world and angered America's government. This eventually led to Begin's resignation, with Shamir, his Foreign Minister, taking his place.

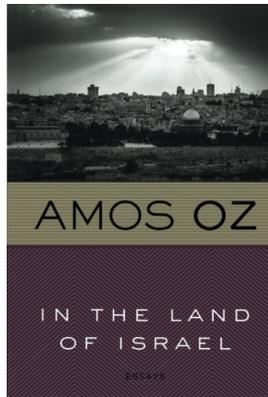
Prior to his surprising 1977 election victory, Begin had spent decades in the political wilderness as an unacceptable right-winger, and Shamir had an even more extreme background, with the American mainstream media freely reporting his long involvement in all sorts of high-profile assassinations and terrorist attacks during the 1940s, painting him as a very bad man indeed.

Given Shamir's notorious activities, few revelations would have shocked me, but this one did. Apparently, during the late 1930s, Shamir and his small Zionist faction had become great admirers of the Italian Fascists and German Nazis, and after World War II broke out, they had made repeated attempts to contact Mussolini and the German leadership in 1940 and 1941, hoping to enlist in the Axis Powers as their Palestine affiliate, and undertake a campaign of attacks and espionage against the local British forces, then share in the political booty after Hitler's inevitable triumph.

Now the *Times* clearly viewed Shamir in a very negative light, but it seemed extremely unlikely to me that they would have published such a remarkable story without being absolutely sure of their facts. Among other things, there were long excerpts from the official letters sent to Mussolini ferociously denouncing the “decadent” democratic systems of Britain and France that he was opposing, and assuring *Il Duce* that such ridiculous political notions would have no future place in the totalitarian Jewish client state they hoped to establish under his auspices in Palestine.

As it happens, both Germany and Italy were preoccupied with larger geopolitical issues at the time, and given the small size of Shamir’s Zionist faction, not much seems to have ever come of those efforts. But the idea of the sitting Prime Minister of the Jewish State having spent his early wartime years as an unrequited Nazi ally was certainly something that sticks in one’s mind, not quite conforming to the traditional narrative of that era which I had always accepted.

Most remarkably, the revelation of Shamir’s pro-Axis past seems to have had only a relatively minor impact upon his political standing within Israeli society. I would think that any American political figure found to have supported a military alliance with Nazi Germany during the Second World War would have had a very difficult time surviving the resulting political scandal, and the same would surely be true for politicians in Britain, France, or most other western nations. But although there was certainly some embarrassment in the Israeli press, especially after the shocking story reached the international headlines, apparently most Israelis took the whole matter in stride, and Shamir stayed in office for another year, then later served a second, much longer term as Prime Minister during 1986-1992. The Jews of Israel apparently regarded Nazi Germany quite differently than did most Americans, let alone most American Jews.



Around that same time, a second intriguing example of this quite different Israeli perspective towards the Nazis also came to my attention. In 1983, Amos Oz, often described as Israel's greatest novelist, had published *In the Land of Israel* to glowing reviews. This book was a collection of lengthy interviews with various representative figures in Israeli society, both moderate and extreme, as well as some coverage of the Palestinians who also lived among them.

Of these ideological profiles, one of the shortest but most widely discussed was that of an especially hard-line political figure, unnamed but almost universally believed to be Ariel Sharon, a conclusion certainly supported by the personal details and physical description provided. Near the very beginning, that figure mentioned that people of his ideological ilk had recently been denounced as "Judeo-Nazis" by a prominent liberal Israeli academic, but rather than reject that label, he fully welcomed it. So the subject generally became known in public discussions as the "Judeo-Nazi."

That he described himself in such terms was hardly an exaggeration, since he rather gleefully advocated the slaughter of millions of Israel's enemies, and the vast expansion of Israeli territory by conquest of neighboring lands and expulsion of their populations, along with the free use of nuclear weapons if they or anyone else too strongly resisted such efforts. In his bold opinion, the Israelis and Jews in general were just too soft and meek, and needed to regain their place in the world by once again becoming a conquering people, probably hated but definitely feared. To him, the large recent massacre of Palestinian women and children at Sabra and Shatila was of no consequence whatsoever, and the most unfortunate aspect of the

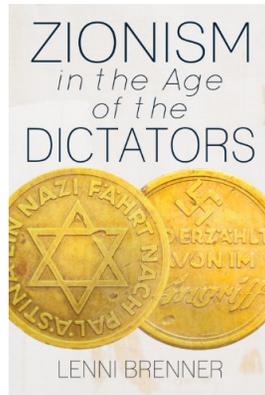
incident was that the killers had been Israel's Christian Phalangist allies rather than Israeli soldiers themselves.

Now rhetorical excess is quite common among politicians and a shroud of pledged anonymity will obviously loosen many tongues. But can anyone imagine an American or other Western public figure talking in such terms, let alone someone who moves in higher political circles? These days, Donald Trump sometimes Tweets out a crude misspelled insult at 2am, and the American media is aghast in horror. But given that his administration leaks like a sieve, if he routinely boasted to his confidants about possibly slaughtering millions, we surely would have heard about it. For that matter, there seems not the slightest evidence that the original German Nazis ever spoke in such ways privately, let alone while a journalist was carefully taking notes. But the "Judeo-Nazis" of Israel are another story.

As near as I can recall, the last even slightly prominent figure in American public life who declared himself a "Nazi" was George Lincoln Rockwell during the 1960s, and he was much more of a political performance artist than an actual political leader. Even as marginalized a figure as David Duke has always hotly denied such an accusation. But apparently politics in Israel is played by different rules.

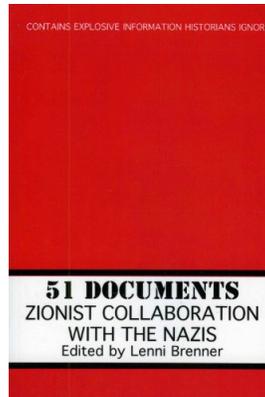
In any event, Sharon's purported utterances seem to have had little negative impact upon his subsequent political career, and after spending some time in the political wilderness after the Lebanon disaster, he eventually served five years as Prime Minister during 2001-2006, although by that later date his views were regularly denounced as too soft and compromising due to the steady rightward drift of the Israeli political spectrum.

Zionism in the Age of the Dictators



Over the years I've occasionally made half-hearted attempts to locate the *Times* article about Shamir that had long stuck in my memory, but have had no success, either because it was removed from the *Times* archives or more likely because my mediocre search skills proved inadequate. But I'm almost certain that the piece had been prompted by the 1983 publication of [*Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*](#) by Lenni Brenner, an anti-Zionist of the Trotskyite persuasion and Jewish origins. I only very recently discovered that book, which really tells an extremely interesting story.

Brenner, born in 1937, has spent his entire life as an unreconstructed hardcore leftist, with his enthusiasms ranging from Marxist revolution to the Black Panthers, and he is obviously a captive of his views and his ideology. At times, this background impairs the flow of his text, and the periodic allusions to "proletarian," "bourgeoisie," and "capitalist classes" sometimes grow a little wearisome, as does his unthinking acceptance of all the shared beliefs common to his political circle. But surely only someone with that sort of fervent ideological commitment would have been willing to devote so much time and effort to investigating that controversial subject and ignoring the endless denunciations that resulted, which even included physical assaults by Zionist partisans.



In any event, his documentation seems completely airtight, and some years after the original appearance of his book, he published a companion volume entitled *51 Documents: Zionist Collaboration with the Nazis*, which simply provides English translations of all the raw evidence behind his analytical framework, allowing interested parties to read the material and draw their own conclusions.

Among other things, Brenner provides considerable evidence that the larger and somewhat more mainstream right-wing Zionist faction later led by future Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin was almost invariably regarded as a Fascist movement during the 1930s, even apart from its warm admiration for Mussolini's Italian regime. This was hardly such a dark secret in that period given that its main Palestine newspaper carried a regular column by a top ideological leader entitled "Diary of a Fascist." During one of the major international Zionist conferences, factional leader Vladimir Jabotinsky entered the hall with his brown-shirted followers in full military formation, leading the chair to ban the wearing of uniforms in order to avoid a riot, and his faction was soon defeated politically and eventually expelled from the Zionist umbrella organization. This major setback was largely due to the widespread hostility the group had aroused after two of its members were arrested by British police for the recent assassination of Chaim Arlosoroff, one of the highest-ranking Zionist officials based in Palestine.

Indeed, the inclination of the more right-wing Zionist factions toward assassination, terrorism, and other forms of essentially criminal behavior was really quite remarkable. For example, in 1943 Shamir [had arranged the assassination of his factional rival](#), a year after the two men had escaped together from imprisonment for a bank robbery in which bystanders had

been killed, and he claimed he had acted to avert the planned assassination of David Ben-Gurion, the top Zionist leader and Israel's future founding-premier. Shamir and his faction certainly continued this sort of behavior into the 1940s, successfully assassinating Lord Moyne, the British Minister for the Middle East, and Count Folke Bernadotte, the UN Peace Negotiator, though they failed in their other attempts to kill [American President Harry Truman](#) and [British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin](#), and [their plans to assassinate Winston Churchill](#) apparently never moved past the discussion stage. His group also [pioneered the use of terrorist car-bombs and other explosive attacks against innocent civilian targets](#), all long before any Arabs or Muslims had [ever thought of using similar tactics](#); and Begin's larger and more "moderate" Zionist faction did much the same. Given that background, it was hardly surprising that Shamir later served as director of assassinations at the Israeli Mossad during 1955-1965, so if the [Mossad did indeed play a major role in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy](#), he was very likely involved.

The Nazi-Zionist Economic Partnership of the 1930s



The cover of the 2014 paperback edition of Brenner's book displays the commemorative medal struck by Nazi Germany to mark its Zionist alliance, with a Star-of-David on the front face and a Swastika on the obverse. But oddly enough, this symbolic medallion actually had absolutely no connection with the unsuccessful attempts by Shamir's small faction to arrange a Nazi military alliance during World War II.

Although the Germans paid little attention to the entreaties of that minor organization, the far larger and more influential mainstream Zionist

movement of Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion was something else entirely. And during most of the 1930s, these other Zionists had formed an important economic partnership with Nazi Germany, based upon an obvious commonality of interests. After all, Hitler regarded Germany's one percent Jewish population as a disruptive and potentially dangerous element which he wanted gone, and the Middle East seemed as good a destination for them as any other. Meanwhile, the Zionists had very similar objectives, and the creation of their new national homeland in Palestine obviously required both Jewish immigrants and Jewish financial investment.



After Hitler had been named Chancellor in 1933, outraged Jews worldwide had quickly launched an economic boycott, hoping to bring Germany to its knees, with London's *Daily Express* famously running the banner headline "Judea Declares War on Germany." Jewish political and economic influence, then just like now, was very considerable, and in the depths of the Great Depression, impoverished Germany needed to export or die, so a large scale boycott in major German markets posed a potentially serious threat. But this exact situation provided Zionist groups with an excellent opportunity to offer the Germans a means of breaking that trade embargo, and they demanded favorable terms for the export of high-quality German manufactured goods to Palestine, together with accompanying German Jews. Once word of this major *Ha'avara* or "Transfer Agreement" with the Nazis came out at a 1933 Zionist Convention, many Jews and Zionists were outraged, and it led to various splits and controversies. But the economic deal was too good to resist, and it went forward and quickly grew.

The importance of the Nazi-Zionist pact for Israel's establishment is difficult to overstate. According to a 1974 analysis in *Jewish Frontier* cited by Brenner, between 1933 and 1939 over 60% of all the investment in Jewish Palestine came from Nazi Germany. The worldwide impoverishment of the Great Depression had drastically reduced ongoing Jewish financial support from all other sources, and Brenner reasonably suggests that without Hitler's financial backing, the nascent Jewish colony, so tiny and fragile, might easily have shriveled up and died during that difficult period.

Such a conclusion leads to fascinating hypotheticals. When I first stumbled across references to the *Ha'avara* Agreement on websites here and there, one of the commenters mentioning the issue half-jokingly suggested that if Hitler had won the war, statues would surely have been built to him throughout Israel and he would today be recognized by Jews everywhere as the heroic Gentile leader who had played the central role in reestablishing a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine after almost 2000 years of bitter exile.

This sort of astonishing counter-factual possibility is not nearly as totally absurd as it might sound to our present-day ears. We must recognize that our historical understanding of reality is shaped by the media, and media organs are controlled by the winners of major wars and their allies, with inconvenient details often excluded to avoid confusing the public. It is undeniably true that in his 1924 book *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had written all sorts of hostile and nasty things about Jews, especially those who were recent immigrants from Eastern Europe, but when I read the book back in high school, I was a little surprised to discover that these anti-Jewish sentiments hardly seemed central to his text. Furthermore, just a couple of years earlier, a vastly more prominent public figure such as British Minister Winston Churchill had [published sentiments nearly as hostile and nasty](#), focusing on the monstrous crimes being committed by Bolshevik Jews. In Albert Lindemann's *Esau's Tears*, I was surprised to discover that the author of the famous Balfour Declaration, the foundation of the Zionist project, was apparently also quite hostile to Jews, with an element of his motivation probably being his desire to exclude them from Britain.

Once Hitler consolidated power in Germany, he quickly outlawed all other political organizations for the German people, with only the Nazi Party and

Nazi political symbols being legally permitted. But a special exception was made for German Jews, and Germany's local Zionist Party was accorded complete legal status, with Zionist marches, Zionist uniforms, and Zionist flags all fully permitted. Under Hitler, there was strict censorship of all German publications, but the weekly Zionist newspaper was freely sold at all newsstands and street corners. The clear notion seemed to be that a German National Socialist Party was the proper political home for the country's 99% German majority, while Zionist National Socialism would fill the same role for the tiny Jewish minority.

In 1934, Zionist leaders invited an important SS official to spend six months visiting the Jewish settlement in Palestine, and upon his return, his very favorable impressions of the growing Zionist enterprise were published as a massive 12-part series in Joseph Goebbels's *Der Angriff*, the flagship media organ of the Nazi Party, bearing the descriptive title "A Nazi Goes to Palestine." In his very angry 1920 critique of Jewish Bolshevism activity, Churchill had argued that Zionism was locked in a fierce battle with Bolshevism for the soul of European Jewry, and only its victory might ensure amicable future relations between Jew and Gentile. Based on available evidence, Hitler and many of the other Nazi leaders seemed to have reached a somewhat similar conclusion by the mid-1930s.

During that era extremely harsh sentiments regarding Diaspora Jewry were sometimes found in rather surprising quarters. After the controversy surrounding Shamir's Nazi ties erupted into the headlines, Brenner's material became the grist for an important article by Edward Mortimer, the longtime Middle East expert at the august *Times of London*, and the 2014 edition of the book includes some choice extracts from Mortimer's February 11, 1984 *Times* piece:

Who told a Berlin audience in March 1912 that "each country can absorb only a limited number of Jews, if she doesn't want disorders in her stomach. Germany already has too many Jews"?

No, not Adolf Hitler but Chaim Weizmann, later president of the World Zionist Organization and later still the first president of the state of Israel.

And where might you find the following assertion, originally composed in 1917 but republished as late as 1936: “The Jew is a caricature of a normal, natural human being, both physically and spiritually. As an individual in society he revolts and throws off the harness of social obligation, knows no order nor discipline”?

Not in *Der Sturmer* but in the organ of the Zionist youth organization, Hashomer Hatzair.

As the above quoted statement reveals, Zionism itself encouraged and exploited self-hatred in the Diaspora. It started from the assumption that anti-Semitism was inevitable and even in a sense justified so long as Jews were outside the land of Israel.

It is true that only an extreme lunatic fringe of Zionism went so far as to offer to join the war on Germany’s side in 1941, in the hope of establishing “the historical Jewish state on a national and totalitarian basis, and bound by a treaty with the German Reich.” Unfortunately this was the group which the present Prime Minister of Israel chose to join.

The very uncomfortable truth is that the harsh characterizations of Diaspora Jewry found in the pages of *Mein Kampf* were not all that different from what was voiced by Zionism’s founding fathers and its subsequent leaders, so the cooperation of those two ideological movements was not really so totally surprising.

However, uncomfortable truths do remain uncomfortable. Mortimer had spent nineteen years at the *Times*, the last dozen of them as the foreign specialist and leader-writer on Middle Eastern affairs. But the year after he wrote that article including those controversial quotations, [his career at that newspaper ended](#), leading to an unusual gap in his employment history, and that development may or may not be purely coincidental.

Also quite ironic was the role of Adolf Eichmann, whose name today probably ranks as one of the most famous half-dozen Nazis in history, due to his postwar 1960 kidnapping by Israeli agents, followed by his public show-trial and execution as a war-criminal. As it happens, Eichmann had been a

central Nazi figure in the Zionist alliance, even studying Hebrew and apparently becoming something of a philo-Semite during the years of his close collaboration with top Zionist leaders.

Brenner is a captive of his ideology and his beliefs, accepting without question the historical narrative with which he was raised. He seems to find nothing so strange about Eichmann being a philo-Semitic partner of the Jewish Zionists during the late 1930s and then suddenly being transformed into a mass-murderer of the European Jews in the early 1940s, willingly committing the monstrous crimes for which the Israelis later justly put him to death.

This is certainly possible, but I really wonder. A more cynical observer might find it a very odd coincidence that the first prominent Nazi the Israelis made such an effort to track down and kill had been their closest former political ally and collaborator. After Germany's defeat, Eichmann had fled to Argentina and lived there quietly for a number of years until his name resurfaced in a celebrated mid-1950s controversy surrounding one of his leading Zionist partners, then living in Israel as a respected government official, who was denounced as a Nazi collaborator, eventually ruled innocent after a celebrated trial, but later assassinated by former members of Shamir's faction.

Following that controversy in Israel, Eichmann supposedly gave a long personal interview to a Dutch Nazi journalist, and although it wasn't published at the time, perhaps word of its existence may have gotten into circulation. The new state of Israel was just a few years old at that time, and very politically and economically fragile, desperately dependent upon the goodwill and support of America and Jewish donors worldwide. Their remarkable former Nazi alliance was a deeply-suppressed secret, whose public release might have had absolutely disastrous consequences.

According to the version of the interview later published as a two-part story in *Life Magazine*, Eichmann's statements seemingly did not touch upon the deadly topic of the 1930s Nazi-Zionist partnership. But surely Israeli leaders must have been terrified that they might not be so lucky the next time, so we may speculate that Eichmann's elimination suddenly became a top national priority, and he was tracked down and captured in 1960. Presumably, harsh

means were employed to persuade him not to reveal any of these dangerous pre-war secrets at his Jerusalem trial, and one might wonder if the reason he was famously kept in an enclosed glass booth was to ensure that the sound could quickly be cut off if he started to stray from the agreed upon script. All of this analysis is purely speculative, but Eichmann's role as a central figure in the 1930s Nazi-Zionist partnership is undeniable historical fact.

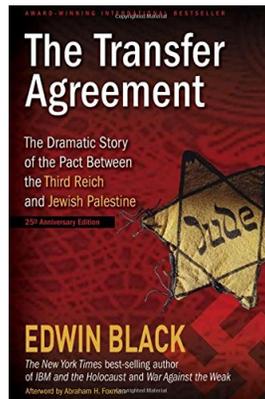
Just as we might imagine, America's overwhelmingly pro-Israel publishing industry was hardly eager to serve as a public conduit for Brenner's shocking revelations of a close Nazi-Zionist economic partnership, and he mentions that his book agent uniformly received rejections from each firm he approached, based on a wide variety of different excuses. However, he finally managed to locate an extremely obscure publisher in Britain willing to take on the project, and his book was released in 1983, initially receiving no reviews other than a couple of harsh and perfunctory denunciations, though Soviet *Izvestia* took some interest in his findings until they discovered that he was a hated Trotskyite.

His big break came when Shamir suddenly became Israel's Prime Minister, and he brought his evidence of former Nazi ties to the English-language Palestinian press, which put it into general circulation. Various British Marxists, including the notorious "Red Ken" Livingstone of London, organized a speaking tour for him, and when a group of right-wing Zionist militants attacked one of the events and inflicted injuries, the story of the brawl caught the attention of the mainstream newspapers. Soon afterward the discussion of Brenner's astonishing discoveries appeared in the *Times of London* and entered the international media. Presumably, the *New York Times* article that had originally caught my eye ran sometime during this period.

Public relations professionals are quite skilled at minimizing the impact of damaging revelations, and pro-Israel organizations have no shortage of such individuals. Just before the 1983 release of his remarkable book, Brenner suddenly discovered that a young pro-Zionist author named Edwin Black was furiously working on a similar project, apparently backed by sufficient

financial resources that he was employing an army of fifty researchers to allow him to complete his project in record time.

Since the entire embarrassing subject of a Nazi-Zionist partnership had been kept away from the public eye for almost five decades, this timing surely seems more than merely coincidental. Presumably word of Brenner's numerous unsuccessful efforts at securing a mainstream publisher during 1982 had gotten around, as had as his eventual success in locating a tiny one in Britain. Having failed to prevent publication of such explosive material, pro-Israel groups quietly decided that their next best option was trying to seize control of the topic themselves, allowing disclosure of those parts of the story that could not be concealed but excluding items of greatest danger, while portraying the sordid history in the best possible light.



Black's book, *The Transfer Agreement*, may have arrived a year later than Brenner's but was clearly backed by vastly greater publicity and resources. It was released by Macmillan, a leading publisher, ran nearly twice the length of Brenner's short book, and carried powerful endorsements by leading figures from the firmament of Jewish activism, including the Simon Weisenthal Center, the Israel Holocaust Memorial, and the American Jewish Archives. As a consequence, it received long if not necessarily favorable reviews in influential publications such as *The New Republic* and *Commentary*.

In all fairness, I should mention that in the Foreword to his book, Black claims that his research efforts had been totally discouraged by nearly everyone he approached, and as a consequence, he had been working on the project with solitary intensity for many years. This implies the near-

simultaneous release of the two books was purely due to chance. But such a picture is hardly consistent with his glowing testimonials from so many prominent Jewish leaders, and personally I find Brenner's claim that Black was assisted by fifty researchers far more convincing.

Since both Black and Brenner were describing the same basic reality and relying upon many of the same documents, in most respects the stories they tell are generally similar. But Black carefully excludes any mention of offers of Zionist military cooperation with the Nazis, let alone the repeated attempts by Shamir's Zionist faction to officially join the Axis Powers after the war had broken out, as well as numerous other details of a particularly embarrassing nature.

Assuming Black's book was published for the reasons I suggested, I think that the strategy of the pro-Israel groups largely succeeded, with his version of the history seeming to have quickly supplanted Brenner's except perhaps in strongly leftist or anti-Zionist circles. Googling each combination of the title and author, Black's book gets eight times as many hits, and his Amazon sales ranks and numbers of reviews are also larger by roughly that same factor. Most notably, neither the Wikipedia articles on ["The Transfer Agreement"](#) and ["The Ha'avara Agreement"](#) contain any mention of Brenner's research whatsoever, even though his book was published earlier, was far broader, and only he provided the underlying documentary evidence. As a personal example of the current situation, I was quite unaware of the entire *Ha'avara* history until just a few years ago when I encountered some website comments mentioning Black's book, leading me to purchase and read it. But even then, Brenner's far more wide-ranging and explosive volume remained totally unknown to me until very recently.

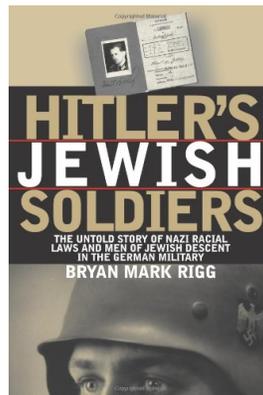
Hitler's Jewish Soldiers

Once World War II began, this Nazi-Zionist partnership quickly lapsed for obvious reasons. Germany was now at war with the British Empire, and financial transfers to British-run Palestine were no longer possible. Furthermore, the Arab Palestinians had grown quite hostile to the Jewish immigrants whom they rightfully feared might eventually displace them, and once the Germans were forced to choose between maintaining their relationship with a relatively small Zionist movement or winning the

political sympathy of a vast sea of Middle Eastern Arabs and Muslims, their decision was a natural one. The Zionists faced a similar choice, and especially once wartime propaganda began so heavily blackening the German and Italian governments, their long previous partnership was not something they wanted widely known.

However, at exactly this same moment a somewhat different and equally long-forgotten connection between Jews and Nazi Germany suddenly moved to the fore.

Like most people everywhere, the average German, whether Jewish or Gentile, was probably not all that political, and although Zionism had for years been accorded a privileged place in German society, it is not entirely clear how many ordinary German Jews paid much attention to it. The tens of thousands who emigrated to Palestine during that period were probably motivated as much by economic pressures as by ideological commitment. But wartime changed matters in other ways.



This was even more true for the German government. The outbreak of a world war against a powerful coalition of the British and French empires, later augmented by both Soviet Russia and the United States, imposed the sorts of enormous pressures that could often overcome ideological scruples. A few years ago, I discovered a fascinating 2002 book by Bryan Mark Rigg, *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers*, a scholarly treatment of exactly what the title implies. The quality of this controversial historical analysis is indicated by the glowing jacket-blurbs from numerous academic experts and an extremely favorable treatment by an eminent scholar in *The American Historical Review*.

Obviously, Nazi ideology was overwhelmingly centered upon race and considered racial purity a crucial factor in national cohesion. Individuals possessing substantial non-German ancestry were regarded with considerable suspicion, and this concern was greatly amplified if that admixture was Jewish. But in a military struggle against an opposing coalition possessing many times Germany's population and industrial resources, such ideological factors might be overcome by practical considerations, and Rigg persuasively argues that some 150,000 half-Jews or quarter-Jews served in the armed forces of the Third Reich, a percentage probably not much different than their share of the general military-age population.

Germany's long-integrated and assimilated Jewish population had always been disproportionately urban, affluent, and well-educated. As a consequence it is not entirely surprising that a large proportion of these part-Jewish soldiers who served Hitler were actually combat officers rather than merely rank-and-file conscripts, and they included at least 15 half-Jewish generals and admirals, and another dozen quarter-Jews holding those same high ranks. The most notable example was Field Marshal Erhard Milch, Hermann Goering's powerful second-in-command, who played such an important operational role in creating the Luftwaffe. Milch certainly had a Jewish father, and according to some much less substantiated claims, perhaps even a Jewish mother as well, while his sister was married to an SS general.

Admittedly, the racially-elite SS itself generally had far stricter ancestry standards, with even a trace of non-Aryan parentage normally seen as disqualifying an individual from membership. But even here, the situation was sometimes complicated, since there were widespread rumors that Reinhard Heydrich, the second-ranking figure in that very powerful organization, actually had considerable Jewish ancestry. Rigg investigates that claim without coming to any clear conclusions, though he does seem to think that the circumstantial evidence involved may have been used by other high-ranking Nazi figures as a point of leverage or blackmail against Heydrich, who stood as one of the most important figures in the Third Reich.

As a further irony, most of these individuals traced their Jewish ancestry through their father rather than their mother, so although they were not

Jewish according to rabbinical law, their family names often reflected their partly Semitic origins, though in many cases Nazi authorities attempted to studiously overlook this glaringly obvious situation. As an extreme example noted by an academic reviewer of the book, a half-Jew bearing the distinctly non-Aryan name of Werner Goldberg actually had his photograph prominently featured in a 1939 Nazi propaganda newspaper, with the caption describing him as the “The Ideal German Soldier.”

The author conducted more than 400 personal interviews of the surviving part-Jews and their relatives, and these painted a very mixed picture of the difficulties they had encountered under the Nazi regime, which varied enormously depending upon particular circumstances and the personalities of those in authority over them. One important source of complaint was that because of their status, part-Jews were often denied the military honors or promotions they had rightfully earned. However, under especially favorable conditions, they might also be legally reclassified as being of German Blood, which officially eliminated any taint on their status.

Even official policy seems to have been quite contradictory and vacillating. For example, when the civilian humiliations sometimes inflicted upon the fully Jewish parents of serving half-Jews were brought to Hitler’s attention, he regarded that situation as intolerable, declaring that either such parents must be fully protected against those indignities or all the half-Jews must be discharged, and eventually in April 1940 he issued a decree requiring the latter. However, this order was largely ignored by many commanders, or implemented through a honor-system that almost amounted to “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” so a considerable fraction of half-Jews remained in the military if they so wished. And then in July 1941, Hitler somewhat reversed himself, issuing a new decree that allowed “worthy” half-Jews who had been discharged to return to the military as officers, while also announcing that after the war, all quarter-Jews would be reclassified as fully “German Blood” Aryan citizens.

It has been said that after questions were raised about the Jewish ancestry of some of his subordinates, Goering once angrily responded I will decide who is a Jew! and that attitude seems to reasonably capture some of the complexity and subjective nature of the social situation.

Interestingly enough, many of part-Jews interviewed by Rigg recalled that prior to Hitler's rise to power, the intermarriage of their parents had often provoked much greater hostility from the Jewish rather than the Gentile side of their families, suggesting that even in heavily-assimilated Germany, the traditional Jewish tendency toward ethnic exclusivity had still remained a powerful factor in that community.

Although the part-Jews in German military service were certainly subject to various forms of mistreatment and discrimination, perhaps we should compare this against the analogous situation in our own military in those same years with regard to America's Japanese or black minorities. During that era, racial intermarriage was legally prohibited across a large portion of the US, so the mixed-race population of those groups was either almost non-existent or very different in origin. And when Japanese-Americans were allowed to leave their wartime concentration camps and enlist in the military, they were entirely restricted to segregated all-Japanese units, but with the officers generally being white. Meanwhile, blacks were almost entirely barred from combat service, though they sometimes served in strictly-segregated support roles. The notion that an American with any appreciable trace of African, Japanese, or for that matter Chinese ancestry might serve as a general or even an officer in the U.S. military and thereby exercise command authority over white American troops would have been almost unthinkable. The contrast with the practice in Hitler's own military is quite different than what Americans might naively assume.

The Racial Focus of Traditional Judaism

This paradox is not nearly as surprising as one might assume. The non-economic divisions in European societies had almost always been along lines of religion, language, and culture rather than racial ancestry, and the social tradition of more than a millennium could not easily be swept away by merely a half-dozen years of National Socialist ideology. During all those earlier centuries, a sincerely-baptized Jew, whether in Germany or elsewhere, was usually considered just as good a Christian as any other. For example, Tomas de Torquemada, the most fearsome figure of the dreaded Spanish Inquisition, actually came from a family of Jewish converts.

Even wider racial differences were hardly considered of crucial importance. Some of the greatest heroes of particular national cultures, such as Russia's Alexander Pushkin and France's Alexandre Dumas, had been individuals with significant black African ancestry, and this was certainly not considered any sort of disqualifying characteristic.

By contrast, American society from its inception had always been sharply divided by race, with other differences generally constituting far smaller impediments to intermarriage and amalgamation. I've seen widespread claims that when the Third Reich devised its 1935 Nuremberg Laws restricting marriage and other social arrangements between Aryans, non-Aryans, and part-Aryans, its experts drew upon some of America's long legal experience in similar matters, and this seems quite plausible. Under that new Nazi statute, pre-existing mixed-marriages received some legal protection, but henceforth Jews and half-Jews could only marry each other, while quarter-Jews could only marry regular Aryans. The obvious intent was to absorb that latter group into mainstream German society, while isolating the more heavily-Jewish population.

Ironically enough, Israel today is one of very few countries with a similar sort of strictly racially-based criteria for citizenship status and other privileges, with [the Jewish-only immigration policy now often enforced by DNA testing](#), and marriages between Jews and non-Jews legally prohibited. A few years ago, the world media also carried [the remarkable story](#) of a Palestinian Arab sentenced to prison for rape because he had had consensual sexual relations with a Jewish woman by passing himself off as a fellow Jew.

Since Orthodox Judaism is strictly matrilineal and controls Israeli law, even Jews of other branches can experience unexpected difficulties due to conflicts between personal ethnic identity and official legal status. The vast majority of the wealthier and more influential Jewish families worldwide do not follow Orthodox religious traditions, and over the generations, they have often taken Gentile wives. However, even if the latter had converted to Judaism, their conversions are considered invalid by the Orthodox Rabbinate, and none of their resulting descendants are considered Jewish. So if some members of these families later develop a deep commitment to their Jewish heritage and immigrate to Israel, they are sometimes outraged to discover that they are officially classified as "goyim" under Orthodox law

and legally prohibited from marrying Jews. These major political controversies periodically erupt and [sometimes reach the international media](#).

Now it seems to me that any American official who proposed racial DNA tests to decide upon the admission or exclusion of prospective immigrants would have a very difficult time remaining in office, with the Jewish-activists of organizations like the ADL probably leading the attack. And the same would surely be true for any prosecutor or judge who sent non-whites to prison for the crime of “passing” as whites and thereby managing to seduce women from that latter group. A similar fate would befall advocates of such policies in Britain, France, or most other Western nations, with the local ADL-type organization certainly playing an important role. Yet in Israel, such existing laws merely occasion a little temporary embarrassment when they are covered in the international media, and then invariably remain in place after the commotion has died down and been forgotten. These sorts of issues are considered of little more importance than were the past wartime Nazi ties of the Israeli prime minister throughout most of the 1980s.

But perhaps the solution to this puzzling difference in public reaction lies in an old joke. A leftist wit once claimed that the reason America has never had a military coup is that it is the only country in the world that lacks an American embassy to organize such activities. And unlike the U.S., Britain, France, and many other predominately-white countries, Israel has no domestic Jewish-activist organization filling the powerful role of the ADL.

Over the last few years, many outside observers have noted a seemingly very odd political situation in Ukraine. That unfortunate country possesses powerful militant groups, whose public symbols, stated ideology, and political ancestry all unmistakably mark them as Neo-Nazis. Yet those [violent Neo-Nazi elements are all being bankrolled and controlled](#) by [a Jewish Oligarch](#) who holds dual Israeli citizenship. Furthermore, that peculiar alliance had been mid-wifed and blessed by some of America’s leading Jewish Neocon figures, such as Victoria Nuland, who have successfully used their media influence to keep such explosive facts away from the American public.

At first glance, [a close relationship between Jewish Israelis and European Neo-Nazis](#) seems as grotesque and bizarre a misalliance as one could imagine, but after recently reading Brenner's fascinating book, my perspective substantially shifted. Indeed, the main difference between then and now is that during the 1930s, Zionist factions represented a very insignificant junior partner to a powerful Third Reich, while these days it is the Nazis who occupy the role of eager suppliants to the formidable power of International Zionism, which now so heavily dominates the American political system and through it, much of the world.