An Especially Shameful Episode in Zionist History

written by Stanley Heller | October 28, 2021

I recently came across an awful article printed in 2018 on the Israeli news site *Ynet*. The article defended — actually glorified — a shameful period in Zionist history. It's a story about a "coin" created in 1934 in Germany, supposedly a rare and breathtaking find. On one side there's a six-pointed Jewish star. On the other a Nazi swastika! It had been created by the German Nazi government to memorialize a six-month trip by a Nazi leader to the British Mandate of Palestine to observe Jewish settlements.

Does the article's writer, Itay Ilnai, react with revulsion to the juxtaposition of these images? He does not. Instead he uses his skills to try to justify this abomination. The fateful trip came about when German Zionists enabled the SS officer in charge of the "Jewish Desk," Leopold Itz von Mildenstein, to come to Palestine and see how well things were going there. The Zionists saw the emergence of the Nazis as an *opportunity* for Palestine. That's the view of respected Israeli historian Tom Segev in his *The Seventh Million*.[1] The invitation to von Mildenstein was part of a strategy to convince the Nazis to fully cooperate in the plan to make Palestine a Jewish state.

Why bring all this up now? Because Zionists react to any criticism of their movement with self-righteous hysteria, lashing out with cries of "antisemitism." Case in point: the treatment of the former mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. In 2016, during an interview in which he defended a Labour MP colleague from an antisemitism charge, Livingstone said that in the early '30s Hitler "was supporting Zionism before he went mad and ended up killing six million Jews." Livingstone was inexact. The Nazis never supported the idea of creating a Jewish state in Palestine. They wanted to expel all Jews from Germany, but they were willing to support Zionist projects and institutions if that would help them force Jews out of Germany. However, Zionists didn't try to set the record straight. Instead, they started screaming that Livingstone was a "Hitler apologist" and got him suspended and later forced out of the Labour Party.

The Nazis and Zionists were indeed working together in the early and mid-1930's. They both thought they could use each other. Here's a quote from Alfred Rosenberg, infamous Nazi "theorist" and Hitler favorite. Back in 1920 he wrote: "Zionism must be actively supported so as to enable us annually to transport a specific number of Jews to Palestine, or in any case, across our borders."[2] One could object that those were just words, but on March 25, 1933, German Zionist leaders told the Nazis they would try to stop an anti-Nazi rally in New York scheduled for later that month.[3] That convinced the Nazis to work with them and with the Zionist leaders in Palestine.[4] The Nazis promoted the German Zionists to the position of spokesmen for all German Jews. They

concluded a “Transfer Agreement” with the Zionists of Palestine that would allow richer German Jews to emigrate to the British colony of Palestine with more of their assets. Historian Edwin Black, a fervent Zionist by the way, concluded in his study *The Transfer Agreement*, that the $30 to $100 million brought to the Jewish economy in Palestine through the agreement saved the whole wobbling .Zionist project.[5] That sounds like a whole lot of support to me

The “coin” — really a medallion; it couldn’t be used to buy anything — was given to those Germans who bought a subscription to *Der Angriff* (*The Attack*), the magazine of one of the most notorious propagandists in history, Joseph Goebbels. On the medallion (in German) are the words “A Nazi goes to Palestine and writes about it for The Angriff.” This “hateful alliance,” as Edward Black called it, lasted in some respects all the way until 1939. The Jewish-star-swastika embossed brass medallion symbolizes the whole period.

That Moment in History

The subheadline of the article in *Ynet* is “the forgotten moment in history when it might have still been possible to save the Jews of Europe from extermination.” Amazing. Ilnai isn’t embarrassed by what Zionist leaders did in the ’30’s. Instead, he ends his article quoting someone who claims that if only the world embraced the Zionist inter-war strategy all European Jews could have been saved.

This notion is utter bosh. Had all the Jews and Leftists who were protesting Hitler’s outrages instead followed the Zionists and stopped boycotting Germany, and urged all Jews to leave Germany, what would have happened? Would the Palestinians of Palestine have cheerfully allowed their homeland to become overwhelmingly Jewish? Would Britain have allowed 500,000 German Jews into their Mandate? Would the German Jews have voluntarily gone? Ilnai in the *Ynet* article starts one sentence, “In the beginning of the Nazi rule in Germany, way before anyone could have imagined the horrors that would be committed by the German people…” So if the mass murder of Jews was unimaginable in those years why would anyone expect hundreds of thousands of German Jews to flee to Palestine?

Here’s a heresy. Did the Zionists of Palestine even want mass emigration of Europe’s Jews during the ’30s? Sure, they wanted a Jewish state, but they wanted a slow buildup of Palestine. Talking about Polish Jews, top Zionist leaders like David Ben Gurion “feared that a ‘torrent’ of Polish Jews coming to Palestine could overwhelm the Zionist project.” Tom Segev wrote that the British colonial government let the Jewish Agency decide to whom to give the immigration certificates. He says within the Jewish Agency “there were frequent protests about the preference given to German Jews.”[6] The Agency had a strategy for immigration. It “preferred healthy young Zionists, ideally with agricultural training.”[7]

It needs to be noted that if you didn’t meet Zionist standards, Zionist Palestine didn’t want you. In an article written in *Haaretz* in 2019, Segev writes about the Jewish Agency’s actions toward the unwanted. “There were those who were in effect forced to leave, including old people and people with chronic disease. They were considered a burden on the community. To get rid of them, they were threatened with the loss of official support, including medical services. At most a few hundred people were affected, apparently, but the practice shows the Zionist movement’s willingness to be cruel toward those who did not contribute to its national goals.” Segev says emigrants were sent sometimes to “Austria or even Germany, even in the first years of the Nazi regime.”

An incident in 1939 shows more of the attitude of Zionist leaders in Palestine towards the threatened Jews of Europe. It concerns the Jews of the ill-fated voyage of *The St. Louis*. It’s well-known that in 1939 the ship left Hamburg with 934 German Jews. It made it to Cuba, but only a few people with

visas were allowed to disembark. Attempts to land in the United States were not allowed. The ship had to turn back. All the passengers went back to Europe, most to the continent and some to Britain. What Tom Segev reveals in *The Seventh Million* is that the Jewish Agency didn't want them to come to Palestine! He writes, "The Joint Distribution Committee asked the Jewish Agency to allot the passengers several hundred immigration certificates from the quota. The Jewish Agency refused."[8]

At any rate by 1936 von Mildenstein and the Nazis who favored helping put Jews in a country of their own had lost favor in the party. Von Mildenstein got into an argument with his boss Reinhard Heydrich about Palestine. An up-and-coming Nazi star, Adolph Eichmann, wrote a pamphlet warning about "the dangers of a strong Jewish state in the Middle East." Von Mildenstein was transferred to the Foreign Ministry. Nazi measures against Jews grew ever worse. Hitler made it known he wanted Jews not only out of Germany, but out of all of Europe. Two years later the Nazis launched Kristallnacht.

An Alternative Vision

The fantasy that the Nazis would purposely help create a Jewish state was idiotic and dangerous, but there is truth to the notion that the early 1930s were a time when things might have been utterly different. In the first few years of his Reich Hitler was weak. He had a tiny army and an economy in chaos. A significant boycott of German goods was underway. Poland and Czechoslovakia, knowing of Hitler's plans for them, talked about a preventive invasion. (France had occupied part of Germany just a few years earlier for non-payment of debts.) If the Zionists had passionately opposed Hitler, if Stalin had more quickly ended his absurd go-it-alone "Third Period," and if liberals and conservatives like Roosevelt and Chamberlain had realized how utterly dangerous Hitler was, an international anti-fascist alliance might have destroyed the Nazi Reich in 1935 rather than in 1945.

It's a lot of "if's," I know, but certainly the Zionist policy of appeasing Hitler and giving up on the Jews of Germany (and Europe) without a fight was the very worst course of action. And the utter hypocrisy of the British and Israeli Zionists condemning Livingstone's *words* while not mentioning that their movement grandparents actually made *deals* with the Nazis that undermined the fight against Hitler? That's deserving of contempt.

There is one thing in Ilani's article that I found interesting. He wrote, "Even before Adolf Hitler was named chancellor, the Federation decided to contact Nazi Party officials who they thought might support the Zionist goal." This I did not know. So, while the Left was fighting the Nazis in the streets and desperately trying to prevent them from coming to power, the Zionists were already bargaining with the Nazis. Utterly despicable.

Again all this is important to remember and understand. We need to know all this history and lots more about Zionist leaders' dealings with Jew haters so we can immediately confront and neutralize Zionist slander the next time they falsely cry "antisemitism."

1. Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million* (New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1991; Owl Edition, 2000). See, for example, p. 18.

2. Edwin Black, *The Transfer Agreement* (Washington, D.C., Dialog Press, 2009), p. 173.

3. Black, *The Transfer Agreement*, p. 173.

4. Black, *The Transfer Agreement*, p. 173.

5. Black, *The Transfer Agreement*, p. 379.

6. Segev, *The Seventh Million*, p. 45.

7. Segev, *The Seventh Million*, p. 42.

8. Segev, *The Seventh Million*, p. 44n. See also Robert N. Rosen, *Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust* (New York: 2006).