



## PERSPECTIVES

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# Can the Farhud, a Slaughter of Jews by Their Longtime Arab Neighbors, Happen Again?

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** The world just marked the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Farhud, the Arab-Nazi pogrom against the Jews of Baghdad and Basra that occurred on June 1-2, 1941. The term Arab-Nazi is entirely appropriate, not simply because these Arabs were fascist in mind and deed, but because they explicitly [identified](#) with Germany's Nazi Party. Some of the rioters wore swastikas; [more than a few](#) marched in the Nuremberg torchlight parades. The Nazi ideology that motivated the Arab slaughterers of Jews in 1941—the desire to exterminate Jews from the face of the earth—motivates the Arabs and Muslims who assault Israelis and Jews today.

The word “farhud” means “violent dispossession.” During the Farhud riots in Iraq in 1941, Arabs turned against their longtime Jewish neighbors. Jews were [hunted](#) in the streets by [mobs wielding swords](#). When found, Jews were subjected to unspeakable torment. Girls were raped in front of their parents, fathers beheaded in front of their children, mothers brutalized in public, babies sliced in half and thrown into the Tigris River. A busload of Jewish schoolgirls was hijacked and the girls taken to a camp outside of town, where they were raped.

The Baghdad Arab mobs burned dozens of Jewish stores and invaded and looted Jewish homes. Many families tell a similar story: a wild mob pushed past the furniture stacked against the door, and with swords swinging, chased the Jews up to the roof. Frantically, the Jews would jump from roof to roof as they were pursued. When there were no more roofs to jump to, the children were thrown over the side in desperate hope that there would be someone on the ground below with a blanket to catch them.

We will never know how many hundreds were murdered or mutilated, because in the investigation that followed, many were afraid to come forward. Jews had dwelled in Iraq for some 2,700 years and had greatly uplifted that modern nation. But on those two days, the Farhud spelled the beginning of the end of Iraqi Jewry, totaling more than 140,000 souls.

After WWII, Iraq's Jews were systematically expelled, leaving them stateless and penniless. In an official terror campaign, they were threatened with imminent doom and were subsequently [airlifted out](#), mainly to Israel, as Arab nations sought to drop a humanitarian bomb on the new Jewish State.

The Arab outrage against the Jews of Iraq in 1941 was part of a public international ethnic cleansing program designed to target centuries-old Jewish communities across the Middle East. It was implemented by a wide coalition of Arab and Muslim nations, coordinated by the Arab League, and openly announced at the UN. The violence played out on the front page of the [New York Times](#).

Country after country, from Morocco on the North African coast to Iraq at the bottom rim of Asia Minor, targeted some 850,000 Jews, robbing them of their possessions, their homes, their businesses, and their citizenship. During the final days of this organized dispossession, as the Jews were being driven out of the lands they had known for centuries if not millennia, earrings were torn from earlobes, bracelets ripped from wrists, and with only the clothes they were wearing, they were hatefully [expelled](#).

They were rescued mainly by [emergency airlifts to Israel](#), where the resettled communities today constitute about half those families—exposing the lie that the population of Israel is wholly or mainly comprised of people from Brooklyn, Berlin, or Belarus. In fact, half of Israel's current Jewish population originated from just down the road, just next door, and just elsewhere in the extended Arab crescent.

The mass expulsions of the 1950s were the fruit of a worldwide alliance of Arabs and Muslims with the Nazis during the Hitler regime, both during the Holocaust and after WWII, with the embers of Jewish persecution still burning. Arabs approved of what Hitler was doing as early as 1933. Many joined the Nazi movement, led by Mufti of Jerusalem and war criminal [Hajj Amin Hussein](#).

German consulates from Tel Aviv to New Delhi were besieged with requests to join, emulate, or recruit for the Nazi movement. The Mufti met with Hitler in a highly publicized newsreel-recorded event and agreed to join in the

extermination of the Jews of Mandatory Palestine. In exchange for that service, Hitler agreed to recognize a Nazi-style Arab State.

The Mufti recruited thousands of Arabs and Muslims to fight in three Waffen-SS divisions: the [Handschar](#), the Skanderbeg, and the Kama. Those Arabs and Muslims fought in Nazi battlefield trenches and operational garrisons from Paris to Poland and beyond. These Islamic divisions were under the direct protection of Heinrich Himmler, architect of the Holocaust, who had a warm personal relationship with the Mufti. The Mufti also worked closely with Holocaust engineer Adolf Eichmann, calling him, in his postwar diary, a "[rare diamond](#)." The [Mufti visited](#) Nazi concentration camps and clearly understood the details and intent of the "Final Solution." He lobbied European governments and the Red Cross not to send more Jews, especially children, to Palestine, intending instead for them to go to death camps in Poland.

After Hitler's Reich fell in May 1945, some [2,000](#) leading Nazis escaped Nuremberg justice and fled to Arab countries via "[rat lines](#)" operated by the Catholic Church and other postwar clandestine operations. Once in the main Arab "confrontation" countries neighboring Israel, the Nazis adopted Muslim identities and took up senior security and military positions to create the postwar Middle East the world knows today.

Dr. [Aribert Heim](#) was notoriously known as "Dr. Death" for his grotesque pseudo-medical experiments on Jewish prisoners in the concentration camps. He was fond of decapitating Jews with healthy teeth so he could cook the skulls clean to make desk decorations. Dr. Heim converted to Islam and became "Uncle Tarek" Hussein Farid in Cairo, where he lived a happy life as a medical doctor for the Egyptian police.

Two of Goebbels's best propagandists, Alfred Zingler and Dr. Johann von Leers, became Mahmoud Saleh and Omar Amin, respectively, and went to work for the Egyptian Information Department. Erich Altern, a Gestapo agent and Himmler's coordinator in Poland, became Ali Bella and worked as a military instructor at training camps for Palestinian terrorists. Franz Bartel, an assistant Gestapo chief in Katowice, Poland, became El Hussein and a member of Egypt's Ministry of Information. Hans Becher, a Gestapo agent in Vienna, became a police instructor in Cairo. Wilhelm Boerner, a brutal Mauthausen guard, became Ali Ben Keshir and worked in the Egyptian Interior Ministry and as an instructor for a Palestinian terrorist group. There are hundreds more.

After the fall of Nazi Germany, the most popular name for a newborn Arab or Muslim boy, after "Muhammad," was "Hitler." The brother of the Egyptian

supreme military leader Field Marshal Muhammad Hussein Tantawi was a high official named [Hitler Tantawi](#).

The hate lines and battle lines of the modern postwar Middle East were constructed, sharpened, politicized, and made more lethal by senior Nazis carrying out Hitler's final legacy. These well-placed Nazis ensured that Iraq and other Arab nations applied the Eichmann method—identification, confiscation, and deportation—to almost a million Jews who had long been citizens of those nations. Several Nazi transplants would eventually work with the KGB to create the PLO and even helped train Yasser Arafat.

Israel is fighting the same Hitlerian principles today that civilization fought in the 1940s.

The Arab-Nazi continuum was essentially forgotten until I connected them in my 2010 book, [The Farhud—Roots of The Arab-Nazi Alliance in the Holocaust](#). The book coalesced a movement of Sephardic Jews who demanded that their persecution and expulsion be recognized. On June 15, 2015, at an event at UN headquarters in New York City, I led a group of Jewish leaders who proclaimed June 1-2 International Farhud Day, a commemoration that is now observed in many countries.

But enough history. Let's talk about last month, last week, and even the hours before this article was written. We have seen a resurgence of Nazi-style pro-Palestinian, anti-Jewish violence on Europe's and America's streets. This is not anti-Zionist or anti-Israel agitation. It is undisguised Jew hatred.

Mobs waving Palestinian flags have been driving through Jewish neighborhoods and marching down streets, calling out for Jews, humiliating them, threatening them, chasing them, trying to run them over, and beating them in gang assaults. This prompts the question, "Can the Farhud of 80 years ago occur again today in Europe, the Middle East, or even the US?"

In Hitler's day, they screamed that the Jews should get out of Europe and go back to Palestine. Today they scream, "Get out of Palestine"—but where to?

The world asks why the Jews did not fight back against the Nazis in WWII. Today, they ask how it is that the Jews dared fight back against unremitting rocket terror launched by the new Nazis.

Farhuds have had many names over the course of history. In 1096 in Germany, in 1190 in York, and in the 1390s in Spain, they were "massacres." In late nineteenth-century Russia, they were known as *pogroms*. In Nazi Germany, they were called *aktionen*. In eastern Europe, as the Einsatzgruppen led local crowds in grisly exterminations, it was the "Holocaust of Bullets."

There is not enough paper in the world to list all the bloody atrocities that have befallen the Jews over the centuries.

I know many Jews are now afraid to wear the *kippah* openly. This is why I have decided to wear one whenever I go out in public. Not because I am observant, but because I am defiant.

The Palestinian-Arab bands hunting for Jews with impunity are cowards. They do not face their enemy one on one. They form mobs of 10 or 20 people and surround a few weak-looking Jews, often elderly, often religious. A few weeks ago in London, they called out on loudspeakers as they drove through the streets to [slaughter Jewish men](#) and [rape Jewish daughters](#). Videos are piling up from Los Angeles, New York, London, and Germany showing Jews being surrounded and beaten in the streets. These scenes are reminiscent of the run-up to the Holocaust, the farhuds, and so many other similar bloodlettings. This is because Arab militants and pro-Palestinian agitators still idealize Hitler and share his ideology with regard to the Jews.

[Hezbollah gives a Nazi salute](#). This mentality has infected the mainstream, too, with major editors at the AP and the BBC, to name a few, tweeting: “Hitler was right.” A few weeks ago, the Anti-Defamation League clocked [17,000 tweets](#) in mid-May with permutations of that hashtag. A week later there were another 70,000. But who’s counting?

The pro-Palestinian mob has been emboldened by the summer protests and violence that now seem so normative. They are encouraged by leftists and progressive Democrats in “the Squad” who seem to control their entire party. Even Chuck Schumer, Jerry Nadler, and Nancy Pelosi are quaking in fear of being primaried. Just as damaging are the misguided, completely uninformed, and self-destructive comments by ultra-liberal Jewish groups. The Squad and the powerful Democratic minority continually issue antisemitic dog whistles via their tweets and comments.

Patently false derisions of Israel as an apartheid state—an utter lie—give green lights to pro-Palestinian gangsters to ramp up their street violence and threats and make Jews afraid to gather, stand up for Israel, or even attend their own synagogues. Anti-Jewish agitation has gone from weekly to hourly.

In the Middle Ages, Jews were accused of religious crimes, poisoning crimes, eugenic and genetic crimes—all fake. Today they are accused of apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and occupation crimes that are equally fake.

To those who, on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Farhud, wonder if a Farhud could happen again, the better question might be: When?

*Edwin Black is the New York Times bestselling author of [IBM and the Holocaust](#). He is the originator of International Farhud Day. This article was adapted from his book [Farhud—Roots of the Arab Nazi Alliance in the Holocaust](#) and from a recent monologue for the Farhud Day episode of [The Edwin Black Show](#).*