

Princeton Papers Volume X-XI



Germany and the Middle East, 1871-1945. Guest editor Wolfgang G. Schwanitz.

Before World War II, Germany intended Italy to be the main organizing power in the Middle East, replacing British and French rule. A Greater Arabia was to be set up under the influence of the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan. But initial German victories in the war, particularly the fall of Paris, changed everything. Now the Middle East became a potential battlefield at the crossroads between Asia, Africa, and Europe. For instance, Ankara sent Berlin essential raw materials for its war industry like chrome ore, and it was where the Nazis sold looted gold (mainly confiscated from Jews) for foreign currency. As in World War I, the Germans tried to incite Arab populations to jihad against the allied nations. As the war against the USSR dragged on and the tactics of "Blitzkrieg" failed, the Middle East became more and more important for the Nazis. After the fall of Moscow they regarded this region as the next main battleground for crushing the British Empire, as Adolf Hitler revealed to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in late 1941, adding that after his victory against the Russians he would pursue the Jews in the Middle East as he was doing already in occupied Europe.

New historical studies about Germany and Afghanistan, the relations between Berlin and Riyadh, German archeological research, Arab inmates in Nazi concentration camps, German Middle Eastern paradigms and prominent Germans like Dr. Fritz Grobba, Franz von Papen, and Oskar Ritter von

Niedermayer provide here deep insights into that period and region of world history.

About Wolfgang G. Schwanitz:

Wolfgang G. Schwanitz is the author of *Germans in the Near East, 1946-65* and *Gold, Bankers, and Diplomats: A History of the German Orient Bank, 1906-46* and editor of seven books on the Near and Middle East.