

Heidemarie Wawrzyn
Nazis in the Holy Land
1933–1948

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Preface

It is very important to me to start a Nazi country group in Palestine. I am sure it will be possible to do so. My official in charge knows from his own experience that many racial German comrades have settled down in the *Judenland*. These Germans, who have been living far away from their fatherland for many years, should not be abandoned. It is the holy task of National Socialism to help and support them to maintain their German mind-set.¹

Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, the future head of the *Auslands-Abteilung* (Overseas Department), sent these words in a letter from his office in Hamburg to Karl Ruff, a German architect from Haifa. It was in July 1932 that the Overseas Department began encouraging Germans in Palestine to establish a Nazi branch in the Holy Land. At that time, Palestine² already counted six NSDAP members — four men and two women.³ The foundation of a Nazi party in Palestine seems bizarre and contradictory. Even more astonishing is that no extensive research written in English has been done on this interesting and intriguing subject until today.

In 1952, H. Schmidt published a short article on National Socialist organizations in Palestine and the Middle East.⁴ Donald McKale, in a 1977 book provided roughly two pages of information on the Country Group Palestine and its anti-Jewish policy.⁵ Historian Paul Sauer,⁶ who published a comprehensive work on the history of the Temple Society in 1985, addressed one chapter to the issue of National Socialism but showed an excessively sympathetic attitude towards the Templers' involvement. Francis Nicosia, writing on the *Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (1998), came to the conclusion that a thorough study of the Christian groups in Palestine and their involvement in the NSDAP was at that

1 Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, Hamburg to Karl Ruff, Hamburg, 16 July 1932, Israel State Archives (hereafter ISTA), 821/1-5: "Es liegt mir viel daran, besonders in Palästina eine Landesgruppe ins Leben zu rufen, und dies ist möglich. Aus eigener Erfahrung weiss mein Sachbearbeiter, dass in dem Judenland sich viele völkische Volksgenossen angesiedelt haben, und gerade diese Deutschen, die vom Vaterlande schon lange Jahre fern sind, dürfen nicht verlassen werden, und es ist die heilige Pflicht des Nationalsozialismus, dafür zu sorgen, dass diesen ihre Deutschgesinnung auch erhalten bleibt."

2 Palestine here refers to the region and borders of the British Mandate of Palestine from 1920 to 1948 (without Transjordan). The term *Holy Land*, sometimes used in this study, refers to the same area.

3 Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, Hamburg to Karl Ruff, Hamburg, 16 July 1932, ISTA, 821/1-5.

4 H. Schmidt, "The Nazi Party in Palestine and the Levant, 1932–9," *International Affairs* 28, no. 4 (1952): 460–69.

5 Donald M. McKale, *The Swastika outside Germany* (Kent State, 1977), 125–26.

6 Paul Sauer, *Uns rief das Heilige Land. Die Tempelgesellschaft im Wandel der Zeit* (Stuttgart, 1985).

time still lacking and should be done.⁷ Ralf Balke's dissertation, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land* (2001), was the first book to provide extensive data and new details on the beginnings and development of the NS groups in Palestine, with a thorough examination of the relationship of the Nazis in Palestine with the *Auslands-Organisation* (AO) in Germany and its impact on Hitler's foreign policy.⁸ Thanks to his groundbreaking study, the present work can concentrate on elaborating the attitude of the Palestine-Germans⁹ towards their Arab and Jewish neighbors and their relationship with them, as well as the reactions they evoked by "planting" a Nazi organization in Palestine.

Balke's book was published in German and is therefore limited to German-speaking readers. In the last ten years, several articles on Nazi activities in Palestine have appeared in Hebrew in Israeli newspapers.¹⁰ This volume, *Nazis in the Holy Land, 1933–1948*, will hopefully find an extensive English readership. Because most of the previous publications concentrated on the members of the Temple Society, this study includes Protestant and Catholic Germans as well. Numerous Protestant newsletters and correspondence were surveyed to demonstrate the Protestants' engagement in the NSDAP in Palestine; the involvement of a few Catholics in the Nazi party in Palestine in the 1930s was a new discovery, deserving of further research.

What is completely new in this work is the documentation of the NS women's organization abroad, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Deutschen Frau im Ausland*, a substitute for the *NS Frauenschaft* (NS Women's League) in Germany. As it is often confused with the *NS Frauenschaft*, I decided to devote more attention to the overseas work group for women in particular, and to the women's National Socialist involvement in general, than to other NS groups in Palestine.

Nazi activities drastically decreased with the beginning of the Second World War, but did not completely cease. Therefore, this study also covers the period of 1939 to 1945 and the years between the end of the war and the departure of the last group of Germans in 1950. In order to show the decisions and actions of the Nazis in Palestine in a broader context, and to put them into the perspective of the Jewish reality, sources, data, and testimonies from Jewish contemporaries were integrated into this work. A survey of NS groups worldwide was conducted to

7 Francis R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (London, 2000), 93.

8 Ralf Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land. Die NSDAP-Landesgruppe Palästina* (Erfurt, 2001).

9 Palestine-Germans refers to all Germans residing in Palestine, the region of the British Mandate of Palestine (excluding Transjordan).

10 Dalia Karpel, "Swastika in Jerusalem" *Haaretz*, 28 Feb. 2008; Alex Carmel, "What's This? Making Fun of Nazis?," *Haaretz*, 29 Oct. 1999; Moshe Temkin, "The History of the Hitler Youth in Jerusalem" (in Hebrew), *Yediot Achronot*, 1 Oct. 1999; L. Bahat, "Hitler Boulevard at the Corner of Kaplan" (in Hebrew), *Yediot Achronot*, 3 Mar. 2006.

compare the *Landesgruppe Palästina* to other NS groups abroad, and to analyze the similarities and differences between them.

As mentioned above, the founding of NS groups in Palestine seems bizarre and contradictory, especially if one takes in account that the initial contact between Palestine-Germans and National Socialists in Germany was not made by the *Auslands-Abteilung* in Germany but by a Palestine-German, born in Haifa. Among German consulate documents, one can find letters expressing “how awful it was to live as a good, pure German among Jews.” Why did Nazi party members and sympathizers remain in Palestine as long as possible? What was their relationship with local Jews and Arabs? How could they — living among Jews and Arabs — accept the racial theory of the Third Reich? Was their antisemitism different from that of those who lived in Germany?

Compared to the figure of 2,000 to 2,500 Germans living in Palestine, the Nazi party in Palestine was of small size and limited significance.¹¹ Nevertheless, a miniature Third Reich with local NS groups, Hitler Youth program, and associations for women, teachers, and others, was established by ambitious NS officials living in Palestine. Did local Jews and Arabs take note of the Nazi party and its activities? How did they respond to German National Socialism in their country? How did this influence their perception of Palestine-Germans in general? This book will address these questions. Furthermore, it will hopefully motivate historians and other researchers to conduct further studies on this topic. More than seven hundred names of those who joined the NS groups in Palestine were collected, along with data about age, gender, and profession (See Appendix II), in order to facilitate additional research, on, for example, the social components of the Nazi branches abroad.

¹¹ Yad Vashem Archives (hereafter YVA), R 3/11, data of 6 June 1937; YVA, R 3/27 and R3/30, correspondence of the German Consul General, Jerusalem, 1937 and 1938.

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Introduction

An Overseas Organization for a Worldwide Nazi Network

The NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party) was founded in Germany in 1920 and came to power in January 1933. At this time approximately thirty million Germans, that is, German citizens and those of German descent (*Volksdeutsche*) lived outside Germany.¹² The strong concern of the NSDAP was the continuation of the German language, traditions, and character summarized in the term *Deutschtum*. Hitler and his followers believed that "it was Germany's mission to unify the thirty million Germans outside the Reich into a world-wide German *Volksgemeinschaft* (racial community)."¹³ They were obsessed with the idea of saving the Germanic population and preserving it from anti-German "elements" ("world Jewry," communism, and liberalism). Nazi groups outside Germany were established "as bases from which the historic struggle against the alleged plot could be carried on worldwide. The Jew, Nazi officials firmly believed, was out to enslave the world's Aryan population; thus, it was crucial in fighting such a menace to confront it not only in Germany but throughout the world."¹⁴ As a consequence, the Nazis established agencies to care for those Germans who lived in foreign countries, one of which was the Auslands-Organisation (AO),¹⁵ supporting the Nazis' efforts abroad and encouraging the formation of NS groups. Its propaganda, training program, and political agitation were aimed at increasing the number of *Landesgruppen* (country groups), expanding Germany's influence in foreign countries and building a strong Pan-German movement in each country.¹⁶

According to McKale's study on Nazi party organizations in foreign countries, Nazi members abroad first developed their activities in the Americas, South

¹² Donald M. McKale, *The Swastika Outside Germany* (Kent State, Ohio, 1977), 4. *Volksdeutsche* were defined as people whose language and culture had German origins but who did not hold German citizenship. Used by Hitler and his followers, the term *Volksdeutsche* carried racial implications; the National Socialists also introduced the term *Auslandsdeutsche*, which generally referred to German citizens residing abroad.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁵ *Auslands-Organisation* — Overseas Organization of the NSDAP from February 1934 to 1945. From May 1931 to Feb. 1934, the organization was called *Auslands-Abteilung* — Overseas Department. Rolf Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land. die NSDAP-Landesgruppe Palästina* (Erfurt, 2001), 31–34; McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, xiv.

¹⁶ McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, 3–8; cf. Frank Foerster, *Mission im Heiligen Land. Der Jerusalems-Verein zu Berlin 1852–1945* (Gütersloh, 1991), 177.

Africa, and China as early as the end of the 1920s — long before the Overseas Department was founded. “Nazi activities in the United States also began in the 1920s. The large number of Germans who had migrated to the United States ... offered promising recruitment possibilities for the National Socialists ... In Latin America, nearly 1.5 million persons of German descent and roughly 180,000 Reich citizens lived chiefly in southern Brazil, Argentina ..., Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay.”¹⁷ The very first Nazi group abroad to officially receive the rank of a local NS group (*Ortsgruppe*), in July 1928, was in Timbó in Brazil.¹⁸

Party branches for German citizens outside Germany were often created by private individuals who felt politically frustrated by the Weimar regime but nevertheless had a strong loyalty to their homeland.¹⁹ Wherever they could find “political friends” (*Gesinnungsgenossen*), they founded groups to inform others about Hitler and encourage them to contact the offices of the NSDAP in Germany.²⁰ According to a statistical analysis by the Auslands-Organisation, the social composition of NS groups abroad was little different from the largely young, middle-class party membership inside Germany itself. The majority (90 percent) of party members abroad were male, under thirty-eight years of age, “and engaged in some type of business activity or other middle class profession.”²¹ They persistently used the German language in daily conversation, and they formed close-knit communities with their own cultural groups, clubs, and schools.²²

Most *Landesgruppen* consisted of several departments and various offices. The *Landesgruppenleiter* (country group head) engaged party members to handle membership and financial records, and work with the press, radio, films, local economic affairs, the harbor service, and welfare organizations. To support their propaganda and indoctrination work, the AO sent NS films, short wave radio sets, pamphlets, books, and even swastika banners.²³ In general, the established party branches abroad were small and of limited significance. In order to encourage party members to recruit new members, the Overseas Department in Hamburg gave everyone who had recruited five new members a copy of Hitler’s

¹⁷ McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, 12–13.

¹⁸ Jürgen Müller, *Nationalsozialismus im Lateinamerika: Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP in Argentinien, Brasilien, Chile und Mexiko, 1931–1945* (Stuttgart, 1997), 95.

¹⁹ McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, 12–13; Emil Ehrich, *Die Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP* (Berlin, 1937), 8–9.

²⁰ McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, 12.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 120. See also Müller, *Nationalsozialismus im Lateinamerika*, 128–34 (collective biography of NSDAP members in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile).

²² McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, 12.

²³ *Ibid.*, 123.

Mein Kampf.²⁴ Over the years, however, the propaganda and political agitation showed results. By 1937, the Auslands-Organisation was administering approximately 30,000 Nazi party members, organized in roughly forty-nine Landesgruppen around the world.²⁵

²⁴ ISTA, 821/1-5, circular, 2 Dec. 1932.

²⁵ McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, 120, 122.

1 Establishing and Developing the NSDAP in Palestine

The beginning of the Landesgruppe Palestine was similar to that of the other NS groups abroad. German architect Karl Ruff began a regular correspondence with the Nazis in Germany in November 1931.²⁶ He had been born in Haifa in 1904 to parents who were part of the Temple Society. In the 1920s, he spent several years in Germany studying architecture and civil engineering (*Bauingenieurwesen*); he returned to Haifa in 1929–30. A letter of December 1930 shows him to be a German patriot with an anti-Jewish, anti-Polish attitude, someone who hoped for Germany to increase its political strength. Ruff called Germany his beloved fatherland and referred to Palestine as “our beautiful Palestine.” In 1930, he planned to found sports clubs in Haifa and Sarona to organize German youth in Palestine.²⁷ At the beginning of 1932, he requested application forms from Germany in order to officially join the NSDAP. He and one of his friends (Walter Aberle) were accepted as party members retroactive to 1 January 1932.²⁸ In July of that year, the Overseas Department encouraged Karl Ruff to introduce an organizational network for Nazis in Palestine.²⁹ Ruff and his friends were soon ambitiously engaged in lecturing on NS theories and recruiting new members, so 1932 can be seen as the beginning of the Nazi movement in Palestine.

In July of that year, Karl Ruff received a letter from the Overseas Department in Hamburg, Germany. Ernst Bohle, the future head of the Auslands-Organisation, wrote:

It is very important to me to start a Nazi branch in Palestine. I am sure it will be possible to do so. My official in charge knows from his own experience that many racial German comrades settled down in the *Judenland* (the Jews' land). These Germans, who have been living far away from their fatherland for many years, should not be abandoned. It is the holy task of National Socialism to help and support them to maintain their German mind-set. I think the number of our fellow Germans is three thousand. They successfully established German settlements and erected German churches and schools. Not far from Jerusalem there is the German Colony SARONA with approximately two hundred people who strongly uphold *Deutschtum*. Most of the settlers come from Wuerttemberg. Not far from Haifa at the bottom of the Mount Carmel, there is another German colony with almost five hundred settlers. Should not Dr. Hoffmann, a son of old German settlers, help organize our movement of freedom? Just as in Haifa, there are also German colonies in Rephaim/Jerusalem and in

26 Correspondence 1931/32, ISTA, 821/1-5; Rolf Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land. Die NSDAP-Landesgruppe Palästina* (Erfurt, 2001), 41, 79–80.

27 Schumacher Institute, P-RK-63, P-RK-66 (correspondence).

28 Rolf Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 41.

29 Ernst Bohle, Hamburg to Karl Ruff, Haifa, 16 July 1932, ISTA, 821/1-5.

Wilhelma near Jaffa. You probably know everything which I have written to you; but my information is intended to stimulate your recruitment campaign. All the locations mentioned above have to be preserved for us, especially in the coming Third Reich.³⁰

At this time, six Palestine-Germans (*Palästina-Deutsche*) were members of the NSDAP, scattered in different areas such as the German colonies in Haifa, Bethlehem in the Galilee, Jaffa, and Jerusalem. The new NS group consisted of two women and four men: Walter Aberle, Karl Bez, Rudolf Gassmann, Gertrud Koch, Karl Ruff, and Maria Wohlfarth.³¹

Karl Ruff, the leading figure at that time, wrote to Bohle in September 1932 about the motivation of the very first party members in Palestine,

The newly recruited, small circle feels loyal to our great movement. This loyalty is mainly based on their love for their homeland and the understanding that our fatherland greatly depends on unity and concord, especially to demonstrate its power abroad. They know that such unity can only be achieved by subordination under a responsible leader.³²

Ruff also informed Bohle about a gathering of the party members on the day of the *Reichstagswahl* (election) in November 1932. The party members had come together in Haifa to hear the election results on the radio, arriving from Jerusalem,

30 Ibid., “Es liegt mir viel daran, besonders in Palästina eine Landesgruppe ins Leben zu rufen, und dies ist möglich. Aus eigener Erfahrung weiss mein Sachbearbeiter, dass in dem Judenland sich viele völkische Volksgenossen angesiedelt haben, und gerade diese Deutschen, die vom Vaterlande schon lange Jahre fern sind, dürfen nicht verlassen werden, und es ist die heilige Pflicht des Nationalsozialismus, dafür zu sorgen, dass diesen ihre Deutschgesinnung auch erhalten bleibt. Ich glaube, nicht fehl zu gehen, wenn ich die Zahl unserer Volksgenossen auf annähernd 3000 Kopf zähle. Diese haben es verstanden, deutsche Siedlungen erstehen zu lassen und deutsche Kirchen und Schulen zu bauen. Nicht weit entfernt von Jerusalem ist die deutsche Siedlung SARONA, die etwa 200 Kopf zählt; das Deutschtum wird dort immer sehr hoch gehalten. Die meisten Siedler sind Württemberger. Auch nicht weit entfernt von Haifa liegt eine etwa 500 Köpfe zählende deutsche Kolonie am Fuße des Karmelberges. Sollte denn Dr. Hoffmann dort, der doch ein Sohn alter deutscher Palästina-Siedler ist, nicht mit dazu beitragen können, unsere Freiheitsbewegung mit zu organisieren? Ebenso wie in Haifa sind deutsche Kolonien in Rephaim b/Jerusalem und in Wilhelma b/Jaffa.

Alles, was ich Ihnen hier schreibe, wissen Sie ja bestimmt auch, aber meine Mitteilungen sollen Ihnen neue Anregung geben zum Werben; denn alle die erwähnten Plätze müssen besonders im kommenden Dritten Reich uns erhalten bleiben.”

31 Ibid.

32 Karl Ruff, Haifa, to Ernst Bohle, 30 Sept. 1932, ISTA, 821/1-5: “Die Zugehörigkeit des bisher geworbenen kleinen Kreises zu unserer großen Bewegung gründet sich vor allem auf Liebe zum Vaterlande und dann auf die Erkenntnis, dass unserem Vaterlande Einigkeit, ganz besonders zum Zwecke der Macht nach außen hin, sehr not tut, und dass eine solche Einigkeit nur durch Unterordnung unter einen verantwortungsbewussten Führer zustande kommen kann.”

Jaffa, and Bethlehem. Two members of the SA also joined this “radio meeting.” Bohle from the Overseas Department in Hamburg (1932) wrote back to Ruff expressing his pleasure in hearing about this event.³³

Six members were still too few to establish a local Nazi group (*Ortsgruppe*) or support point (*Stützpunkt*), since a local group was supposed to have at least twenty-five members.³⁴ Ruff decided to hold lectures on National Socialist issues in winter 1932 in order to attract more Germans to the NSDAP.³⁵ The German Society (*Deutscher Verein*) in Jaffa and the Schwarz family often hosted propaganda events as well.³⁶ After the Nazis’ accession to power in 1933, the number of party members in Palestine increased.

In November 1933, Dr. Iven of the ministry of propaganda was sent to Palestine, where he gave speeches to Germans in Haifa, Jaffa-Sarona, and Jerusalem. He visited the German community in Jerusalem on November 16, and the next day gave a talk on “National Socialist Germany” at the Templers’ community hall in Sarona.³⁷ Party membership was increasing; in Jerusalem, it had expanded to 30–50 persons.³⁸ Ludwig Buchhalter, head of the NS group in Jerusalem, informed Ruff about the successful evening with Dr. Iven, adding with delight that Dr. Rohrer,³⁹ an influential member of the Temple Society in Jerusalem, had become a member even before the propaganda meeting took place, and was a useful addition to the Nazi party in Palestine.⁴⁰

In autumn 1933, the Auslands-Abteilung began developing a strong organizational network for Palestine with Karl Ruff nominated as confidential NS agent for Palestine (*Landesvertrauensmann*), an expression of gratitude for his early engagement on the behalf of the NSDAP in Palestine. The new position made Ruff head of the growing NS organization in the region which included Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon.⁴¹ Due to the political situation and organizational problems (Palestine and Transjordan were under British rule, while Syria and Lebanon belonged to the French Mandate), this regulation was valid only

³³ Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, Hamburg to Ruff, Haifa, 22 Nov. 1932, ISTA, 821/1-5.

³⁴ A support point was supposed to have seven members; Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 47–48.

³⁵ Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, Hamburg to Ruff, Haifa, 21 Oct. 1932, ISTA, 821/1-5.

³⁶ Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 51.

³⁷ *Die Warte des Tempels*, 15 Dec. 1933, 180.

³⁸ The data varies from source to source. Cf. Monthly Report, NS support point in Jerusalem, Nov. 1933, ISTA, 821/5-5; Buchholz to Ruff, 17 Nov. 1933, ISTA, 823/8-5; Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 51.

³⁹ Probably Dr. Herbert Rohrer, see list of names, appendix.

⁴⁰ Buchholz to Ruff, 17 Nov. 1933, ISTA, 823/8-5.

⁴¹ Correspondence, 1933, ISTA, 823/8-5; correspondence, Mar. 1934, ISTA, 822/15-5.

for a year, after which Syria and Lebanon received the status of a country group (Landesgruppe), separate from Palestine and Transjordan.⁴²

When Ruff was nominated in November 1933, the NS groups in Haifa and Jaffa had enough members to be named a support group (Stützpunkt), led by Karl Ruff in Haifa and Cornelius Schwarz in Jaffa, both members of the Temple Society.⁴³ Encouraged by the new, local hierarchy, Ruff and Schwarz decided in a high-handed manner to upgrade the local support points to local groups, a decision later confirmed in 1934 by the Auslands-Organisation (AO).⁴⁴ Subsequently, the NS units in the German settlements in Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Sarona were officially given the rank of local Nazi groups (Ortsgruppen). Support points (Stützpunkte) were named in Wilhelma and Bethlehem-Waldheim in the Galilee.⁴⁵ In October 1934 the NS groups Sarona and Jaffa were united to one local group and subsequently became the largest and most substantial NS group in Palestine.⁴⁶

According to the monthly report of the NS group in Jerusalem, it had started in June 1933. As a result of Karl Ruff's encouragement and recruitment, Ludwig Buchhalter, H. Kirchner, and E. Herrmann of the German Colony in Jerusalem decided to join the NSDAP. In their twenties at the time, they were members of the Temple Society who had been born in Egypt or Palestine. Only a few days afterward, a *Mitgliedersperre* (ban on new members) was ordered in Germany and abroad, blocking the new, small NS group in Jerusalem from growing, but the ban was lifted in October or November 1933.⁴⁷ Following Dr. Iven's November propaganda mission, several new members joined the group. On December 4, 1933 the first *Pflichtabend* (compulsory evening) for NSDAP members took place in Jerusalem, attended by more than forty members and four friends. Party member Nikolai Schmidt gave a speech on the latest developments in Germany.⁴⁸

Thus, by the end of 1933, Jerusalem had forty-two party members and four members of the Hitler Youth; at least 114 German Nazis could be found in the

⁴² Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 51.

⁴³ Ibid., 51–52.

⁴⁴ Correspondence, AO, 28 Feb. 1934, ISTA, 822/15-5.

⁴⁵ Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 51–53; Roland Löffler, "Die Gemeinden des Jerusalemvereins in Palästina im Kontext des kirchlichen und politischen Zeitgeschehens in der Mandatszeit," in *Seht, wir gehen hinauf nach Jerusalem. Festschrift zum 150jährigen Jubiläum von Talitha Kumi und des Jerusalemvereins*, edited by Almut Nothnagle, Hans-Jürgen Abromeit, and Frank Foerster (Leipzig, 2000), 185–212, 207.

⁴⁶ Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 53, 59.

⁴⁷ Karl Ruff, circular, 4 Nov. 1933, YVA, R 3/25; Monthly Report, local NS group Jerusalem, n.d., ISTA, 821/5-5; Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 48, 53.

⁴⁸ Monthly Report, local NS group in Jerusalem, Dec. 1933, ISTA, 821/5-5.

whole of Palestine.⁴⁹ Membership lists at the Archives of Yad Vashem show the following figures⁵⁰:

By the end of 1933:

| | |
|------------|----------------------|
| Jerusalem: | 42 + 4 Hitler Youth |
| Jaffa: | 24 + 3 Hitler Youth |
| Sarona: | 29 |
| Haifa: | 19 |
| Total: | 114 + 7 Hitler Youth |

After a morning gathering of the Sarona and Jaffa NS groups on *Heldengedenktage* (memorial day for heroes, February 25, 1934), the party members met again in the afternoon at the German consulate in Jaffa. The swearing-in ceremony saw the installation of Theodor Samuel Hoffmann as leader of the NS group in Sarona, Ewald Glenk as treasurer (*Kassenwart*), Oswald Knoll as secretary, Cornelius Schwarz as head of the NS group in Jaffa, Eugen Faber as his vice-leader and head of the Hitler Youth, Friedrich Bulach as treasurer in Jaffa, and Bruno Wieland as secretary and *Propaganda-Pressewart* (officer for press and propaganda).⁵¹ The following month, the Nazi organization in Palestine recognized an additional thirty new party members, including fourteen people in Sarona, ten in Haifa, and six in Jerusalem.⁵²

By the end of 1934, almost two hundred Germans in Palestine had received their party membership books, including employees of the German consulates like Martha Eppinger and Marie-Luise Hess, who had applied for party membership in 1933.⁵³ Templers, Kirchlers, and a few Protestants and Catholics belonged as well.⁵⁴ The entire NS leadership in Palestine was recruited from the Temple Society except for Eugen Faber, leader of the Hitler Youth, and Dr. Kurt Hegele, the

⁴⁹ Membership lists, containing the names of party members and applicants, YVA, R3/25.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Report by the local NS groups Sarona and Jaffa on the events of Feb. 1934, ISTA, 822/15-5; Karl Ruff to the local NS groups in Palestine, 21 and 22 Feb. 1934, ISTA, 822/15-5.

⁵² Karl Ruff, correspondence, 7 Mar. 1934, ISTA, 822/15-5.

⁵³ ISTA, 822/15-5; YVA, R 3/25.

⁵⁴ Kirchler were former members of the Temple Society who had rejoined the German Protestant denomination in 1885–86; see E. Jakob Eisler, “‘Kirchler’ im Heiligen Land. Die evangelischen Gemeinden in den württembergischen Siedlungen Palästinas,” in *Dem Erlöser der Welt zur Ehre. Festschrift zum hundertjährigen Jubiläum der Einweihung der evangelischen Erlöserkirche in Jerusalem*, edited by Karl-Heinz Ronecker (Leipzig, 1998), 81–100.

representative of the *Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund* (NSLB, National Socialist Teachers' Alliance).⁵⁵

In 1935, Temple Society member Cornelius Schwarz replaced Karl Ruff. Under his leadership, the Nazi branch in Palestine underwent political and organizational changes. Ambitious and very loyal to Hitler's policies, the new leader used his position and power to turn the German settlements into an outpost of the Third Reich in Palestine. He set the rules and goals for his *Landeskreis* (regional group) and dominated its activities, marking a turning point in the history of Palestine's NS organization.⁵⁶ In the same year (1935), the German Consul General, Heinrich Wolff, was obliged to give up his position because he was married to a Jew. He was replaced by Walter Doehle, a loyal Nazi who cooperated with Cornelius Schwarz and gave more attention to the NS groups than to the German Christian groups in Palestine.⁵⁷

Under Schwarz's aegis, organizational improvements were made. His recommendations of Alfred Hoenig as support point leader (*Stützpunktleiter*) of Wilhelma and Hans Sus as political leader of the united settlements of Bethlehem and Waldheim were accepted by the AO in Germany. By the end of 1936, the NS group in Wilhelma counted twenty-two party members, with eighteen in Bethlehem-Waldheim.⁵⁸ Schwarz's engagement for the NSDAP was so successful that the regional NS group Palestine (*Landeskreis Palästina*) was upgraded to the rank of a NS country group (*Landesgruppe*) on Hitler's birthday in 1937, and the support points Wilhelma and Bethlehem-Waldheim officially became *Ortsgruppen* with Sus and Hoenig as their leaders (*Ortsgruppenleiter*).⁵⁹ In summer 1937, Schwarz even went to Germany to participate in the NSDAP Reichsparteitag. His participation was negatively perceived by the Jewish press in Palestine.⁶⁰

In summary, the NS country group in Palestine showed the same organizational system as the home NSDAP in Germany: Each local NS group and support point had its own leader. Celebrations for new members were held and German national holidays were observed. Swastika flags and Nazi-style uniforms could be seen at such occasions. Camps and hiking tours were organized for the Hitler Youth program. German teachers joined the *Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund*, women became members of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Deutschen Frau im*

⁵⁵ Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 66–67.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 67–68.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵⁹ Correspondence, 29 Apr. 1937, ISTA 18/19-הח; A. Dyck to C. Schwarz, 25 June 1937, ISTA, 821/11-ב; Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 69.

⁶⁰ Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 68.

Ausland (AGdFA, Work Group of the German Woman Abroad), and employed persons participated in the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF, German Labor Front). Winter Relief collections (Winterhilfe) were organized to support needy Germans. National Socialist books, brochures, and pamphlets were distributed throughout Palestine. Nazi films and shortwave radio sets that could receive broadcasts from Germany were sent out by the AO.⁶¹

It is clear that Palestine-Germans were being offered many avenues to participation in the goals of the Third Reich.

⁶¹ McKale, *Swastika Outside Germany*, 122f; Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 56–58, see also YVA: R3/11, R3/18, R3/26; *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt* (May 1933): 38; *Palestine Post*, 2 May 1934, 7; 2 May 1935, 1; 23 Sept. 1935, 5; 3 May 3, 1936, 12; *Die Warte des Tempels*, 15 Oct. 1935, 149; 31 May 1938, 76.

2 Propaganda Activities

Speeches, lectures, and propaganda agents

As the number of party members was still very low at the end of 1932, Ruff decided to hold lectures in order to attract Germans to the NSDAP.⁶² Numerous informational talks and publicity campaigns were conducted in Wilhelma, Jaffa, and Sarona in spring 1934.⁶³ The German Society (Deutscher Verein) in Jaffa and the Schwarz family often hosted such publicity evenings.⁶⁴ Erwin Schwarz, son of Cornelius Schwarz and a leading NSDAP figure in Cairo, spoke on “Hitler’s German Mission” at the Templar community hall in Jaffa, attended by Templers from Haifa, Jaffa, Sarona, Wilhelma, and Jerusalem.⁶⁵ On January 9, 1936, Dr. Richard Hoffmann lectured on the Nuremberg Laws in Sarona, pointing out the hostility and wrong interpretation with which the legislation had been received.⁶⁶ Recruitment meetings were held not only for the NSDAP but also for its related groups and organizations. The German Labor Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront [DAF]) invited Wilhelm Baumert of the NS group in Jaffa to speak in order to encourage all party members in Haifa to join the DAF.⁶⁷

Campaign efforts were supported by the Reichsminister for Propaganda, who sent specially trained agents to Palestine to recruit new members. Over the next few years, the following agents were authorized to conduct NS propaganda among the Germans in Palestine: Fritz Wegebauer, Ernst Riehl, Rolf Jordau, Peter Wuest, Kurt Daumer, Georg von Kolst in Haifa; Hans Dunkel, Erich Arens, Walter Mehrer, Richard Groehl, and Paul Gregor in Jerusalem; Willy Menzel, Hans Menger, Kurt Gruner, Ernst Obertuer, Bernt Frieder, and Karl Dreher in Jaffa.⁶⁸

Dr. Iven, mentioned earlier, arrived in Palestine from Kabul, and gave talks in Jerusalem, Sarona, and other places. One of his speeches was titled “National Socialist Germany” (Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland).⁶⁹ Reverend Krause was also sent from Germany; on April 23, 1934, he spoke at the sports club in Jerusalem on “The Ideological Basis of National Socialism” (Die weltanschaulichen

⁶² Ernst Bohle to Karl Ruff, 21 Oct. 1932, ISTA, 821/1-5.

⁶³ Karl Ruff, correspondence, Mar.–Apr. 1934, YVA, R 3/25.

⁶⁴ Rolf Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land. Die NSDAP-Landesgruppe Palästina* (Erfurt, 2001), 51.

⁶⁵ *Die Warte des Tempels*, 31 Aug. 1934, 127.

⁶⁶ *Die Warte des Tempels*, 29 Feb. 1936, 31.

⁶⁷ Wilhelm Baumert to Oskar Beck, 7 Jan. 1937, ISTA, 821/11-5.

⁶⁸ British Public Record Office London, Foreign Office (henceforth, BPRO, FO) 371/21887.

⁶⁹ *Die Warte des Tempels*, 15 Dec. 1933: 180; Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 51.

Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus). Two days later, he lectured before the local NS group in Sarona, considered a well-attended and succesful evening.⁷⁰

Guest speakers from Germany were invited to Palestine on German holidays. In December 1935, a circular sent to German missionary organizations and consulates informed them that the travel costs of guest speakers would be covered by the AO, while further expenses for accommodation, meals, and other things were to be covered by the local NS group.⁷¹

NS pamphlets and books

NS literature and German newspapers were also distributed among Palestine-Germans in order to spread the ideology of the Third Reich. Such propaganda material was usually shipped by the AO to a port in Palestine, although it was often met with obstruction by British custom officers and Jewish dock-workers.⁷² Once the NS literature had reached the German settlers, it was widely circulated. Hans Frank, assisted by his daughter Hulda, for example, passed NS literature to his friends and neighbors in an attempt to convince them of the virtues of National Socialism and persuade them to join the new movement, yet in October 1933, he noted that there were only a few Germans in Palestine who felt close to the Nazi movement, the rest being hostile or indifferent.⁷³ Cornelius Schwarz circulated his newspapers, and copied articles to send to various people.⁷⁴ Hermann Schneller, the director of the Syrian Orphanage, was very active in distributing letters, bills, and delivery notes throughout Palestine. Nazi party members received a ten percent reduction if they ordered their books and pamphlets at the Syrian Orphanage bookstore on Mamilla Road in Jerusalem.⁷⁵ Sheets and letterhead of the local NSDAP were printed at Schneller's print shop.⁷⁶ Special material concerning official party issues and information for speakers was ordered from the Overseas Department of the NSDAP by Ludwig Buchhalter, the chairman of the NS group in Jerusalem, and by Karl W. Ehmann, the vice-chairman of the NS group in Sarona.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Monthly Report, local NS group in Jerusalem, April 1934, ISTA, 821/5-5; *Die Warte des Tempels*, 31 May 1934, 77–78.

⁷¹ Correspondence, 23 Dec. 1935, ISTA, 497/1049-5.

⁷² Correspondence, 23 Feb. 1934, ISTA, 822/15-5; Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 50.

⁷³ Hans Frank to Mr. Seiz, Mergentheim, 25 Oct. 1933, ISTA, 3160/9-5.

⁷⁴ Balke, *Hakenkreuz im Heiligen Land*, 50.

⁷⁵ YVA, R3/26.

⁷⁶ YVA, R3/18, R3/25, R3/26.

⁷⁷ Letter of the Overseas Department, 28 Feb. 1934 and order (*Bestellung*) of 18 Feb. 1934, ISTA, 822/15-5.