

# ‘Haifa is still Burning’: Italian, German and French Air Raids on Palestine during the Second World War

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Palestine was the scene of fierce fighting during the First World War and again during the war of 1948. In contrast, the years of the Second World War passed without a single land-battle taking place in the country. The war even brought with it relative economic prosperity. It is therefore not surprising that the study of Palestine during the Second World War has not been investigated as thoroughly as the tumultuous events that happened before and after. One of the relatively unexplored issues from this period was the air raids on civilian and military targets in Palestine by the air forces of Italy, Germany and Vichy France. The strategic rationale behind the raids, the manner in which they were executed and their impact on the country have yet to be fully analyzed. The few studies that have dealt with this episode made no use of Italian sources.<sup>1</sup> Works on the German participation in the Mediterranean theatre have tended to focus on the central Mediterranean and dedicated less attention to its eastern basin.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Israeli historians have only recently begun to uncover the various responses of the population in Palestine to the air raids.<sup>3</sup>

This article seeks to fill in at least some of the gaps left by previous studies. It examines the circumstances that led first the Italian air force and later also the air forces of Germany and Vichy France to launch attacks against Palestine. It surveys the damage these raids caused and analyzes their effect on the country’s population. The article raises three central arguments. First of all, although the attacks caused considerable damage in Haifa and in Tel Aviv, they failed to alter the course of the war in the Middle East. Second, despite the hostility between Arabs and Jews before the Second World War and in the years that followed, the period of the air raids saw displays of solidarity between the two communities. Finally, the experiences of the Second World War, including the air raids, played a part in the state-building process of the *Yishuv* (Jewish community).

During the First World War Italy and Great Britain were allies and relations between the two countries remained relatively cordial until the mid-1930s. This changed in the summer of 1935 owing to Benito Mussolini’s determination to capture Ethiopia by force, despite international disapproval. The British government wanted Italy to reach a compromise with the Abyssinians through diplomatic means

and the Duce's insistence on continuing the military build-up in East Africa ahead of the planned invasion created considerable tension between London and Rome. The arrival of British Home Fleet units at Gibraltar in September and the Italian reinforcements which were sent during the same month to Cyrenaica (eastern Libya, close to the Egyptian frontier) brought the two sides close to military confrontation. Subsequently, the Italian Chiefs of Staff had to adapt to a new reality in which Britain was a potential foe.

During the Ethiopian War (October 1935–May 1936) the Italian air force found itself examining for the first time potential targets for bombardment in Egypt, Palestine, Cyprus and other parts of the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>4</sup> To tackle this contingency the Italians had to upgrade their military preparedness in the Dodecanese Islands in the eastern Aegean – the only Italian territories within aerial striking range of the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. In April 1936 the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Italian air force, General Pietro Pinna, inspected the Dodecanese Islands and submitted a detailed plan for transforming their airfields into bases capable of supporting offensive operations in the eastern Mediterranean. Many of his recommendations were implemented and on 1 March 1937 the *Comando Aeronautica dell'Egeo* (Aegean Air Force Command) was established.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time Italian military intelligence began to take an interest in Haifa with its oil refineries and British naval base while the Italian Vice-Consul in the city kept a close watch on the number of troops and the shipments of arms that passed through its port.<sup>6</sup> Domenico Cavagnari, the Chief of Staff of the Italian navy, noted in April 1937 that both the British and French navies were dependent on oil that reached Haifa and Tripoli in Lebanon through the two branches of the Iraq Petroleum Company pipeline.<sup>7</sup> In January 1938 the Italian military drew up their main plan for a war in which Italy would collaborate with Germany against Britain and France, code named PR 12. The planners designated Alexandria, Port Said, Haifa and Beirut as targets 'of major importance' in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>8</sup>

Paradoxically, as the actual war drew nearer, Italian preparedness for a confrontation with Britain in the eastern Mediterranean fell behind. In April 1938 the British and Italian governments reached an agreement, known as the Easter Accords, which temporarily decreased the tension between the two countries. During 1939 the Fascist leadership and the heads of the Italian armed forces moved away from their earlier plan to attack Egypt from Libya and focused instead on preparing an assault on the Balkans. Cesare Maria De Vecchi di Val Cismon, the bellicose Governor of the Dodecanese, asked Rome for resources to expand the airfield in Rhodes and to base a substantial bomber force there, but got virtually nothing in response.<sup>9</sup> When war broke out in September 1939 Mussolini opted not to join his German ally on account of poor military preparation and an ailing economy. Nine months later, though military and economic readiness had not progressed much, the Duce decided to throw in his lot with Hitler, assuming that the collapse of France was imminent and Britain's isolation fatal.

Italy had produced one of the best known air power theorists of the early twentieth century, Giulio Douhet, who stressed the importance of aerial bombardment of the enemy's cities and infrastructure in order to return war to the era of short, decisive conflicts. However, in 1940 the Italians were ill-equipped to carry out strategic bombings. Most of the aircraft of the Italian air force were outdated and inferior to

those of Britain and France. The Savoia Marchetti SM 81, which first flew in 1935, was shown to be obsolete once Italy joined the Second World War. As James S. Corum pointed out, 'Only in the Savoia Marchetti SM 79 – of which they had 594 available in June 1940 – did the *Regia Aeronautica* have an effective bomber'.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile in Palestine, British and municipal authorities in Haifa had begun to consider the need for defensive measures in September 1939, when war in Europe broke out. In spring 1940, as the likelihood of Italy joining the war increased, plans to evacuate children and elderly people from the city were drawn up. Bomb-shelters were set up at schools and by private individuals.<sup>11</sup> Preparations in Tel Aviv, which was considered an open city without military targets, were slower. In May 1940 officials from the municipality visited Haifa to study the way bomb-shelters were set up there. During the same month the civil guard in Tel Aviv, which had been established in 1938 to help defend the city in light of the Arab Uprising (1936–39), was re-branded as an 'Air Raid Precautions Organization'. On 11 June, after the Italian declaration of war, the municipal engineer was instructed to speed up plans for establishing bomb-shelters. The municipality raised the price of water as well as taxation on leisure establishments to cover the costs of defensive preparations.<sup>12</sup>

During the first few weeks of the war Italian forces in Libya and on the Dodecanese Islands were instructed by the supreme command in Rome to remain on the defensive. It was only after the collapse of France in late June that Mussolini began to push for an Italian offensive against the British in Egypt. However, Army Chief of Staff Rodolfo Graziani, who was appointed commander of Italy's forces in Libya at that time, was very dilatory in carrying out this attack. Before Graziani's assault on Egypt got under way in mid-September, the Italian air force had an opportunity to attack Britain's strategic positions in the Middle East as well as British shipping in the eastern Mediterranean. Unlike his counterpart in Libya, De Vecchi – the Italian Governor in Rhodes – was eager for his forces to see action. Moreover, he was fairly autonomous in selecting targets for his aerial units. During July and August Italian aircraft that took off from the Dodecanese Islands raided the port and the oil refineries of Haifa four times. The first raid took place on 15 July 1940. Five Italian aircraft commanded by Major Ettore Muti, who in addition to being an air force officer was also the General Secretary of the Fascist Party, took off at 5:00 am and reached Haifa just over two hours later. The aircraft approached Haifa from the south-west and, during two flights, dropped over 50 bombs on and near the Iraq Petroleum Company installation of which 25 fell in the target area. The attack scored six direct hits on the oil tanks, setting three on fire and a power station was hit, resulting in a temporary interruption of the city's electricity supply. The pilots returned to Rhodes with 'little fuel but a lot of joy', having suffered no losses. Two days later an Italian reconnaissance flight reported that Haifa was 'still burning'. Two Arab civilians were severely injured during the raid, one of whom later died. An American citizen, who worked as a foreman, was slightly injured.<sup>13</sup>

The second raid came on the morning of 24 July. It was conducted on the express wishes of the Supreme Command in Rome. SM 79 aircraft bombed the eastern part of Haifa, aiming for the oil refineries and storage facilities. Twenty-eight Arab and 15 Jewish civilians along with one British constable were killed. Most of the casualties worked at the Shell Company installation but some were hit on a street a few kilometres south-west of the refineries. As a result of the first two raids many

American citizens who worked in the oil refineries left Haifa.<sup>14</sup> The Zionist leadership was not pleased with the state of anti-aerial defences. Moshe Shertok (Sharett), the Political Secretary of the Jewish Agency, asked senior British officials to transfer aircraft to Haifa to help with the city's defence. He also complained that the sirens warning of approaching enemy aircraft were late to respond. However, the Palestine government's Chief Secretary explained that all the aircraft in Egypt were being used to the fullest and that the British simply could not afford the luxury of moving any of them to Haifa.<sup>15</sup> Two fairly ineffectual raids were carried out against Haifa on 6 and 27 August, neither of the attacks resulted in fatalities (for a full chronological list of the raids see Table 1).<sup>16</sup> Thus far the Italian air force's attacks on Palestine had not produced serious military results. The official British history for this theatre of the war dubbed the early raids as 'singularly ineffective'.<sup>17</sup>

In September Mussolini finally induced Graziani to launch the offensive from Libya against Egypt. Throughout that month the Italian air raid campaign in the Middle East was intensified. Marshal Pietro Badoglio, the Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, instructed De Vecchi to focus the attacks of his aerial units primarily on Alexandria. However in early September British aircraft began to carry out substantial raids against targets in the Dodecanese and the Italian Governor of the Islands wanted to be able to retaliate and to maintain the initiative.<sup>18</sup> As a result De Vecchi personally instigated at least some of the raids against Palestine during the weeks that followed.

One of these was the attack on Tel Aviv on 9 September 1940, the deadliest air raid that Palestine experienced during the Second World War. De Vecchi reported to Rome that his planes bombed installations and warehouses at the port of Jaffa. The attack, however, actually centred on a residential area at the heart of Tel Aviv. Six Cant Z 1007 aircraft reached the city at 15:15 and dropped nearly four tons of bombs. One aircraft was lost on the way back.<sup>19</sup> Unlike Haifa, Tel Aviv was an open city and thus did not have early warning stations or anti-aircraft guns. One hundred and seventeen Jews, seven Arabs and one Australian soldier were killed during the raid.<sup>20</sup> 'The huts on Bograshov Street are burnt' wrote Ruth Dayan to her husband, Moshe, who years later became Israel's Minister of Defence. 'One gets the impression that they want to annihilate Tel Aviv', she added.<sup>21</sup> Following the attack, Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent a message of condolence to the Mayor of Tel Aviv.<sup>22</sup>

At this stage British authorities recognized the urgent need to strengthen anti-aerial defences in Palestine. Unable to send anti-aircraft units from Britain and wishing to keep those in Egypt defending the port of Alexandria and the Suez Canal, the British military was forced to opt for a measure it had thus far hesitated to implement. On 13 September the government secretly informed the Jewish Agency of its intention to allow a few dozen Jews to join artillery units in order to help protect Palestine from aerial attacks. A month later some 87 men from the Jewish paramilitary organization Haganah were drafted and, after a few months of training, the new recruits (whose numbers had meanwhile grown) were deployed in batteries around Haifa, near the electricity plant at Naharaim and near the Dead Sea factories in the early months of 1941.<sup>23</sup>

The Italians did not wait for the British to improve their defences. In late September De Vecchi launched three more raids against Haifa. He described the first

**Table 1.** Documented raids against Palestine during the Second World War

<b>Date</b>	<b>Air Force</b>	<b>Main Target</b>	<b>Casualties and Damage</b>
15 July 1940	Italian	Haifa	A number of civilians injured (one later died) and oil refineries damaged
24 July 1940	Italian	Haifa	44 people died, oil refineries and civilian property damaged
6 August 1940	Italian	Haifa	
27 August 1940	Italian	Haifa	
6 September 1940	Italian	Haifa	
8 September 1940	Italian	Haifa	One person badly injured
9 September 1940	Italian	Tel Aviv	125 people died, extensive damage to civilian property
21 September 1940	Italian	Haifa	40 people died, extensive damage to the oil refineries and to civilian property
26 September 1940	Italian	Haifa	
29 September 1940	Italian	Haifa	
18 January 1941	German	Jaffa and Ramleh	
6 June 1941	French	Haifa, Jerusalem and other cities	The aircraft scattered leaflets without dropping bombs
9–10 June 1941	German	Haifa	
11 June 1941	French	Haifa	French aircraft shot down
11–12 June 1941	German	Haifa and Tel Aviv	13 civilians in Tel Aviv and one soldier in Haifa killed
13–14 June 1941	German	Haifa	
25 June 1941	German	Haifa and Acre	Slight damage to civilian property in Acre
3 July 1941 (two separate raids)	French	Haifa and other cities	2 prisoners died in a POW camp; one plane shot down during the second raid
8 July 1941	German	Haifa and Kiryat Motzkin	Civilian property damaged
9–10 July 1940	Italian	Haifa	
8–9 September 1941		Haifa	
11 September 1941	Italian [?]	Haifa	
7–8 October 1941	Italian	Haifa	Slight damage to property
10 October 1941	German	Haifa	
23–24 May 1942		Haifa	Bombs fell into the sea
3 September 1942		Haifa	Slight damage to civilian property

of them, on 21 September, as the most effective thus far. The raid was filmed from one of the Italian aircraft. The pilots reported hitting the oil refinery zone and military warehouses, despite lively anti-aircraft fire. An Admiralty oil tank containing 90,000 barrels of benzene was set on fire. A few bombs fell on an Arab neighbourhood in eastern Haifa, wrecking houses and shops as well as damaging a mosque and a Muslim cemetery. The attack killed 40 Arab civilians, wounded 78 and caused a temporary suspension in the work of the oil refinery.<sup>24</sup>

On the morning of 26 September ten Cant Z 1007 planes bombed the refineries and the port of Haifa once again. They launched 120 bombs of 50 kg, though many of these fell into the sea. One Italian aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire but managed to return to its base. From the photographs that were taken during the raid the Italians concluded, correctly, that the lack of fires indicated that the oil tanks were empty and that work in the refinery had been suspended.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, De Vecchi launched yet another attack against Haifa at noon on 29 September. Seven Cant Z 1007 planes bombed the city's port area and railway workshops. The Italian pilots reported hitting one British plane in the air while one of their own aircraft was hit and forced to land in Lebanon on the way back. Ten Arab civilians were injured.<sup>26</sup>

In October the Italians carried their effort to cripple Britain's ability to draw on Middle Eastern oil reserves one step further. Taking off from Rhodes, four Italian SM 82 aircraft flew some 2,500 kilometres to carry out a spectacular if largely ineffectual air raid on the Island of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. After dropping approximately 40 bombs, they proceeded to fly a further 1,600 kilometres in order to land in Italian East Africa. Similar to what had happened in Haifa, many Americans working in the Persian Gulf left for India following the Italian attack.<sup>27</sup>

After this Italian raids on Palestine were suspended for several months. In late October 1940 Italian troops invaded Greece from Albania and the efforts of the air units on the Dodecanese Islands were diverted to bombing the Island of Crete as well as Greek and British naval targets in the Aegean.<sup>28</sup> This campaign proved disastrous for the Fascist regime as Greek forces were soon able to push the Italians back into Albania. De Vecchi, who had long lobbied for an attack on Greece and who had done much to precipitate it, resigned from his post. His replacement – General Ettore Bastico – seems to have been far less keen on attacking Haifa and other targets in Palestine. Italian aircraft from Rhodes resumed their raids against Haifa in the summer and autumn of 1941, most of them taking place after command over the Dodecanese had passed into the hands of Admiral Inigo Campioni.<sup>29</sup>

Italian propaganda had tried to muster support in the Arab world for the Fascist regime and its policies since the mid-1930s. The station 'Radio Bari', which ran a daily programme in Arabic, often encouraged the Middle Eastern Arabs to intensify their struggle for independence from British and French domination. At times Italian propaganda in Arabic also criticised the Jews in Palestine. Following the Easter Accords of 1938 the Italians temporarily moderated their propaganda; however, once Italy joined the war, Radio Bari's tone became decidedly anti-British.

After the first raid on Haifa in July, Radio Bari proudly told its Arab listeners that now 'the heroic Arabs of Palestine could for the first time have proof of the strength of their great friend Italy which has started to show the British that their undoing

also in Palestine will not be late in coming'.<sup>30</sup> Italian propaganda was not restricted to the airwaves. During the raids on Tel Aviv on 9 September and on Haifa on 21 September, Italian aircraft scattered leaflets in Arabic. These boasted of the recent Italian conquest of British Somaliland and claimed that Italy enjoyed mastery over the skies of Gibraltar and Malta and that Italian troops were advancing on Egypt and Kenya. They went on to say that the petrol stores 'stolen from the Arabs' by the British have been destroyed and that the British in Palestine would soon be defeated. 'You will recover ownership and freedom of your land with Italian assistance', they promised.<sup>31</sup>

Mussolini was hoping to encourage anti-British feelings among the Palestinian Arabs but refused to declare openly that Italy would support full Arab independence after the war. The principal Palestinian Arab leader with whom the Fascist regime was negotiating the fate of Palestine was Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who had had extensive covert contacts with Italy's Foreign Ministry and Military Intelligence Service during the 1930s.<sup>32</sup> From his exile in Baghdad the Mufti congratulated the Italians for bombing Tel Aviv. He told the Italian Consul-General Luigi Gabbrielli that, should Italy provide him with money and arms and promise to support Arab independence, he would spark disturbances in Palestine, forcing the British to take troops away from Egypt. Furthermore, he advised the Italians to bombard the Rutenberg electricity plant near the River Jordan as well as the factories near the Dead Sea.<sup>33</sup>

However, despite the intentions of Italian propaganda and despite the tensions which existed between Jews and Arabs following the Arab Uprising of 1936–1939, the population in Palestine exhibited remarkable solidarity when the air raids began. In July 1940 the *Palestine Post* launched a fundraising campaign to finance the construction of fighter aircraft for the RAF and called upon the people of Palestine and Transjordan to 'show their loyalty to the Crown and their devotion to the cause for which the Empire is now fighting alone'. Both Arabs and Jews heeded the call and made donations.<sup>34</sup> After the raid of 21 September killed and wounded dozens of Arab civilians the Jewish Mayor of Haifa, Shabtai Levy, visited the families of the deceased. As some of the bombs that were dropped during this attack damaged the central al-Istiklal mosque and a nearby Muslim graveyard, the Mayor also visited the city's Muslim Association and allocated money to repair the damage which had been caused. Itzhak Ben-Zvi of the Zionist National Committee (*Va'ad Leumi*), the Chief Rabbinate of Palestine, Pinhas Rutenberg (the director of the Palestine Electricity Corporation) and other Jewish individuals and institutions also sent donations and letters of condolence to the Muslim community in Haifa. A few weeks later Shabtai Levy addressed a municipal council meeting and said that 'I cannot help observing that despite the enemy's wishes his attack has brought the peoples of Palestine, Jews and Arabs, closer together'.<sup>35</sup>

When the Jewish victims of the attack on Tel Aviv were buried, the Arab Mayor of Jaffa along with several Arab dignitaries attended the funeral.<sup>36</sup> The popular Jaffa daily *Filastin* – a longstanding opponent of Zionism – criticized the 'criminal Italian bombardment of Tel Aviv and its surroundings', pointing out that the bombs fell far from any military targets and that many of the victims were women and children.<sup>37</sup> British authorities estimated that 'responsible Arab opinion appears completely unaffected' by the leaflets the Italian aircraft dropped.<sup>38</sup> Both Jewish and Arab newspapers pointed out that Mussolini's attempts to present himself as a friend of

the Arabs and as the protector of Islam contrasted sharply with the bombing of Arab civilians and Muslim religious institutions in Haifa.<sup>39</sup>

Neither the air raids nor Italian propaganda succeeded in re-igniting anti-British agitation in Palestine. People in Haifa and Tel Aviv tried to go on with their lives. The local press announced with pride (and perhaps with slight exaggeration) that the population remained 'unruffled' by the bombings and that 'Haifa carries on' with a spirit of 'Business as usual'. It emphasized the shared fate between the people of Palestine and the population of Britain who were suffering from the main brunt of the blitz at the time.<sup>40</sup>

The willingness of the population in Palestine, and particularly of the Jewish *Yishuv*, to collaborate with British authorities and to contribute to the war effort would have long-term consequences. This cooperation did not manifest itself only in the formation of the Palmach in 1941 with the intent of fighting the Nazis and their allies in the Middle East or in the recruitment of the Jewish brigade that fought in Italy towards the end of the war. It included also the mobilization of the home front for the purpose of enabling civil institutions and society in general to cope with the air raids and to continue to function normally. After the raid on Tel Aviv, for instance, British military authorities observed that 'Public morale [is] surprisingly high and A.R.P. services did fine work'. Consequently, the *Yishuv* was able to gain valuable military and organizational experience from the Second World War as well as a taste of the characteristics of total war, an experience which would prove useful during the war of 1948.<sup>41</sup>

The German armed forces had been considering the possibility of intervening in the Mediterranean since the summer of 1940. On 30 June Major General Alfred Jodl, Chief of the *Wehrmacht* Operations Staff, submitted a memorandum to Hitler that first included the Mediterranean area as a potential theatre of operations.<sup>42</sup> At the end of July the heads of the German army were considering possibilities of weakening Britain's overseas position through attacks on Gibraltar, Haifa, and Suez, and actively supporting the Italians in Egypt. General Franz Halder, the *Wehrmacht's* Chief of the General Staff, noted in his diary that 'The offensive in Egypt will accomplish no decisive results if executed by the Italians alone. Handicapped by their economic straits and their ineffectualness, the Italians are in no position to achieve anything on a decisive scale'.<sup>43</sup> Admiral Erich Raeder, Commander-in-Chief of the German navy, was also trying to persuade Hitler to adopt a strategy directed at destroying Britain's strength in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. In September Raeder pushed for a German seizure of Gibraltar (with Spanish assistance) and the Suez Canal, followed by a move on Palestine and Syria.<sup>44</sup> Throughout that summer Hitler wavered between a direct assault on the British Isles and a peripheral strategy which would include action in the Mediterranean (with the attack on the Soviet Union looming in the background). However, for the time being, the Fuehrer opted not to pursue a Mediterranean strategy and restricted himself to supporting Mussolini's effort to defeat the British.<sup>45</sup> In July 1940 the Germans offered to send long-range bombers to Rhodes and in September they suggested dispatching two armoured divisions to Libya. Mussolini and the heads of his armed forces turned these offers down for reasons of prestige.<sup>46</sup>



In November and December the Italian war effort suffered a series of disasters. The offensive they launched against Greece in late October was repelled, while British *Swordfish* torpedo bombers, flying from the carrier *Illustrious*, sank four Italian battleships in the harbour of Taranto. On 5 December 1940 Hitler announced his intention to transfer two *Gruppen* of Ju 87 and two of Ju 88 bombers to Sicily and southern Italy to attack the British fleet in the Mediterranean. A few days later a British counter-offensive in North Africa was launched and soon Italy's position in Libya seemed precarious. The Germans began to transport 14,385 men and 307 aircraft of X *Fliegerkorps*, mostly drawn from units operating in Norway, to Sicily. By 9 January 1941, one day before they were put into action, 156 German aircraft had arrived in Italy. For the next five months most of their activity was focused on the central Mediterranean, though occasional attacks were launched against the Suez Canal zone. The only air raid against Palestine during that winter took place on the night of 17–18 January 1941, when a single German aircraft dropped a few bombs on the area between Jaffa and Ramleh, causing very little damage and no casualties.<sup>47</sup>

In May the Germans shifted their aerial war effort in this theatre to the eastern Mediterranean. The ground troops of X Air Corps were transported by sea from Sicily to Greece in May, and on 5 June German aircraft took charge of the war against the British in the eastern Mediterranean, concentrating their attacks on the Nile Delta and the Suez Canal.<sup>48</sup> Following this redeployment, Admiral Raeder implored Hitler to maintain the initiative in the Mediterranean at all costs by intensifying German and Italian aerial activity, not only against targets in Egypt but also in Haifa with its naval base and oil refineries.<sup>49</sup> The first major German air raid against Palestine took place on the night between 9 and 10 June. Some 20 German aircraft took off from Rhodes and reached Haifa at around 1 am. Most of the bombs they dropped fell on the harbour area, causing little damage, but residential areas were also hit and a number of Arab civilians were injured. The local recruits who had joined the Palestine Light AA Battery several months earlier got to fire their Breda guns on the enemy for the first time, reportedly hitting three aircraft. While the local press defiantly stated that 'the Luftwaffe's debut appearance in the skies of Palestine was not a great success', the night raid resulted in a temporary exodus of a large number of Haifa's Arab population to Nazareth, Tulkarim and Jenin.<sup>50</sup>

The Allied invasion of Syria on 8 June gave the Luftwaffe a further reason to bombard Palestine. Two days later political and military officials of the Vichy government met with their German counterparts in Paris. The French representatives requested 'military relief for Syria through German air attacks on Haifa' and a bombing of British naval ships off the Syrian coast. The Germans were willing to lend a hand.<sup>51</sup> On the night of 11/12 June German aircraft raided both Haifa and Tel Aviv. In Haifa one soldier was killed and a woman died of a heart-attack. In Tel Aviv a bomb hit a nursing home on Marmorek Street, killing 13 and injuring 14.<sup>52</sup> Following the attack Moshe Shertok asked British authorities to deploy anti-aircraft guns in Tel Aviv. However, General Henry Maitland Wilson explained that the British lacked such guns after the fall of Crete and those that remained were necessary for the defence of Alexandria which was being subjected to intensive raids. Furthermore he argued that many cities in Britain also did not have anti-aircraft guns.<sup>53</sup>

German aircraft raided Palestine at least three more times in summer 1941. In one of these attacks, on 25 June, some 42 aircraft attacked Haifa as well as the town of

Acre where one civilian was slightly injured. On 8 July, 21 Ju 88 aircraft dropped approximately 300 bombs on Haifa, one of which nearly hit the building that served the Italian Vice-Counsel before the war and a further three bombs fell on civilian houses in nearby Kiryat Motzkin. One of the aircraft also dropped mines in Haifa's harbour.<sup>54</sup> In late July 1941 RAF intelligence noticed that the Germans had begun to withdraw some of their heavy bombers from Rhodes. In the Mediterranean the Germans focused on consolidating their position in Crete while the Führer's attention was firmly fixed on the war against the Soviet Union.<sup>55</sup> Although the *Luftwaffe* still carried out sporadic raids on Haifa in the second half of 1941 and in 1942, the main thrust of their attack had shifted elsewhere.

When comparing the raids of 1941 with those of 1940, it becomes apparent that the Germans were able to deploy much larger groups of bombers than the Italians. Furthermore, unlike the Italian air force, the *Luftwaffe* was able to carry out most of its attacks during the night, to make use of dive-bombers and to drop several magnetic mines in the bay of Haifa.<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, in terms of swaying the British war effort in this theatre they too proved ineffective. Collaboration between the German and Italian air forces was restricted to a purely tactical level. For instance, a German reconnaissance plane that flew over Haifa on 10 July 1941 informed the Italians on Rhodes that he had observed the results of the raid which was conducted by three of their SM 79 aircraft the night before.<sup>57</sup> However it appears that the Germans and Italians made no attempt to jointly plan their attacks against Palestine. Cooperation between the two air forces was rather poor throughout the war due to both human (mutual mistrust) and technical (German and Italian radios were incompatible) reasons.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, Axis POWs told British Intelligence that there was an acute rivalry between German and Italian air staffs. The news that five out of the six German aircraft that set out from Sicily to bomb the Suez Canal on 17 January 1941 were lost 'caused great jubilation in Italian Air Force circles'. An Italian General reportedly commented that 'if the Germans, who had been sent to teach the Italian Air Force their business, could not do better than this they had better go home'.<sup>59</sup>

When France surrendered in late June 1940 the authorities in Syria remained loyal to the Vichy government. For a while, pro-Vichy Syria and British Palestine were able to exist side by side peacefully. This began to change in May 1941. First of all, the British were concerned about the concentration of German airborne forces in Greece. They worried lest the Germans would try to seize Crete, Cyprus or Syria. Secondly, in mid-May London learnt through decodes of Enigma messages that German planes had arrived in Syria.<sup>60</sup> These were part of the German and Italian aerial units that were sent to assist the forces loyal to Iraq's Prime Minister, Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, in their struggle against the British. At about the same time General Henri Dentz, the French High Commissioner in the Levant, told the British Consul-General in Damascus that 'at present his instructions did not provide for German occupation of Syria' though 'if those orders came he would obey them'.<sup>61</sup>

After the fall of Rashid Ali in Iraq, Admiral François Darlan, the *de facto* head of the Vichy government, told the German ambassador in France that he was worried

lest the British attack Syria. 'I would therefore urgently request you to intervene with the German high command with a view to ordering the evacuation of personnel and of German and Italian air force material sent to the Levant'.<sup>62</sup> By 5 June 1941 the German and Italian aircraft, which had been withdrawn from Iraq to Syria, were evacuated to Rhodes. Fearing that 'the French will probably not be able to hold Syria in any case, and that therefore the right thing to do is to withdraw the German personnel there in time', Hitler wanted all his units in Syria to leave.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile Dentz took one more step to try to prevent the Allies from having a pretext to invade Syria. On 6 June Vichy aircraft dropped leaflets written in French over various cities in Palestine. These denied allegations made by the British and by General Catroux, the commander of Free French forces in the Levant, that Syria was controlled by the German air force. The Vichy leaflets insisted that only a few Axis aircraft were allowed to pass through Syria en route to Iraq and that within a few days none of them would remain.<sup>64</sup> However, despite Dentz's attempts, Allied forces launched their invasion of Syria, codenamed Operation Exporter, on 8 June.

On 11 June British authorities published a war communiqué claiming that the attack against Haifa on the night of 9–10 June was carried out by aircraft coming from the 'German-controlled base at Aleppo' in Syria. It went on to say that the RAF and Australian Air Force's 'retaliation was prompt', bombing Aleppo before the last enemy aircraft had time to return there.<sup>65</sup> This announcement was probably part of the British effort to legitimize the conquest of Syria. In any case, the claim was unfounded. First of all, RAF intelligence initially believed that the night raid had been carried out by French aircraft and only revised their assessment, shifting responsibility to the Germans, several days later. Moreover, during the same week RAF intelligence had reported that 'there has been an apparent withdrawal of German units from Syria and it is probable that for political reasons the Germans will at present refrain from taking an active part in the Syrian operations'.<sup>66</sup> This analysis was correct. French authorities adamantly refused to allow the Germans to use airfields in Syria for attacks against Palestine and consequently the *Luftwaffe* used Rhodes and bases in Greece for this purpose.

The first French attempt to bomb Palestine took place on 11 June. A single Glenn Martin 167F was sent to attack Haifa. However, it was soon detected by two RAAF Tomahawks which tried to chase it until eventually the invading aircraft was hit from the ground by anti-air fire. The plane was seen losing height and it came down near Tiberias.<sup>67</sup> As the days went by French resistance in Syria seemed precarious. On 27 June a battalion was sent from France to reinforce General Dentz. These troops reached Greece and then boarded transports that set sail down the Turkish coast. In order to facilitate their arrival destroyers from Beirut harbour sortied out on 1 July. To cover their departure, three Glenn Martin 167F flew from the Baqa of Lebanon and attempted to bomb targets in Palestine early in the morning of 2 July. However, the bombs they dropped only hit a German officers' enclosure and an enclosure for Italian NCOs inside a prisoner of war camp. Two prisoners died and 35 were injured.<sup>68</sup> A few hours later four Glenn Martins left Rayak to bomb Haifa. At 23:30, when one of the aircraft carried out its third fly-over at a height of 2,500 metres, the aircraft was shot down by ground defences and only one air-crew member parachuted safely and became a prisoner.<sup>69</sup>

Once Vichy France forces in Syria and Lebanon surrendered on the night of 11/12 July the Allies enjoyed complete air mastery in the eastern Mediterranean. Occasionally German and Italian aircraft still appeared in the skies over Palestine. On 14 July 1941 an Italian Cant Z 1007 that was on a reconnaissance mission between Haifa and Alexandria was shot down by a British aircraft.<sup>70</sup> Axis aircraft carried out a number of mainly ineffectual raids against Haifa in autumn 1941 and in the summer of 1942 (see Table 1). Following these attacks British authorities in Palestine decided to employ smoke screens and decoy fires to prevent precision bombings on the refineries in Haifa. This method was experimented on the evenings of 18 and 20 February 1943 with a Blenheim aircraft flying over the area to estimate its efficiency.<sup>71</sup> However, to the best of our knowledge, smoke screens were not employed during a real air raid, the method having been devised too late. The German air force continued to fly over Palestine until the late stages of the war. Between October 1942 and June 1944 air raid sirens were sounded in Haifa and elsewhere in Palestine on several occasions, whenever approaching enemy aircraft were identified.<sup>72</sup> In one of the more peculiar episodes of the war, a number of saboteurs parachuted from a German aircraft and landed near Jericho in 1944 only to be arrested shortly afterwards.<sup>73</sup> Yet the bombing raids had stopped.

The raids carried out by Italian, German and French aircraft against targets in Palestine between July 1940 and September 1942 killed over 200 civilians, damaged infrastructure and property and even temporarily disrupted the work of the oil refineries in Haifa. However, militarily and politically the attacks failed to achieve substantial gains. First of all they had a limited effect on the way in which the war was conducted in the Middle Eastern theatre. They were not intensive enough to force the British to divert aerial units from Egypt to assist in the defence of Palestine. Instead, the raids persuaded the British to increase the recruitment of Palestinian Jews who were now given the opportunity to join artillery units and to man anti-aircraft batteries. If anything, Axis aerial activity in the Middle East served to hinder their own war effort in the region. The presence of German aircraft in Syria in spring 1941 and the assistance they afforded to Rashid Ali al-Gaylani in Iraq were among the factors that provoked the British to launch Operation Exporter. It was only the need to support the conquest of Syria that prompted the Allies to increase the number of aircraft stationed in Palestine from just under 50 on 8 June to well over 80 on 3 July 1941. Once the situation in Syria permitted their number was reduced once again.<sup>74</sup>

It is worth noting that neither the Italian nor the German and French raids were the result of a carefully planned campaign. The Axis powers were primarily concerned with crippling the British war effort in the region and focused their attacks in Palestine on the enemy's oil and navy. However, while Haifa was seen as a significant strategic target, its importance was always inferior to that of the principal targets in Egypt. The attacks against Palestine were determined and punctuated by changing circumstances. The Italians had a limited number of planes on the Dodecanese which they used to search for British ships in the eastern Mediterranean as well as to bomb Alexandria, Haifa, Cyprus and other targets. In 1940 De Vecchi wanted to use the limited resources at his disposal to keep the British on their toes, alternating between different target areas. When the German air force arrived in the

eastern Mediterranean it preferred to focus on Alexandria and the Suez Canal. Their attacks against targets in Palestine sought to harass the British and to obstruct the invasion of Syria and Lebanon – fairly minor objectives. Cooperation between the aerial units of the Axis powers was never more than minimal. As for the raids carried out by French aircraft, these were a direct by-product of the battle over Syria. After the defeat of the pro-Axis forces of Rashid Ali al-Gaylani in Iraq and the Allied conquest of Syria, British air superiority in the eastern Mediterranean was secure, though the Italians and Germans carried out a few periodic attacks, mainly against Haifa, in the year that followed.

The political implications of the attacks on Palestine were of secondary importance to the Axis. Though both the Italians and the Germans discussed the renewal of the anti-British Arab uprising with Hajj Amin al-Husayni and other Arab leaders, they failed to formulate a joint and coherent political approach towards the countries of the Middle East to complement their military strategy.<sup>75</sup> Neither the leaflets scattered by Italian planes nor the broadcasts from Radio Bari succeeded in re-igniting the revolt in Palestine. On the contrary, the attacks provided opportunities for displays of solidarity between the peoples of the country and for shows of support toward the mandatory power. 'We can take it', a Muslim notable in Acre told the *Palestine Post* in June 1941, adding that 'Our hearts go out to the people of England who are under constant attack and are undergoing such a terrible strain'.<sup>76</sup> Before the war Douhet had argued that bombing civilian targets could destroy the morale of the target population, causing the government of the defender to be blamed for air strikes by the attacker. However, an examination of the results of the air raids against Palestine seems to confirm Horowitz and Reiter's assertion that

civilian morale is quite unlikely to crack under aerial bombing. Punishment attacks are more likely to provoke resentment against the attacker than blame on the government in power, even when the government in power was previously unpopular. There is likely to be a rally-round-the-flag mentality because the civilian population blames the attacking nation for hardship.<sup>77</sup>

Unfortunately, once the external enemy disappeared the old rivalries resurfaced. In the decades that followed, few traces, if any, remained of the common plight and wartime solidarity. In Israeli historiography the Second World War is often seen as contributing to a state-building process, both civil and military.<sup>78</sup> The experience the *Yishuv* gained from individuals who served in the British armed forces and in the civil guard was to prove useful in the confrontations that followed. An account of the long-term impacts of the air raids and the Second World War in general on the Palestinian Arabs still waits to be written.

## Notes

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1. See for instance I. Amber, E. Eyal and A. Cohen, *Roots of the Israeli Air Force 1913–1948* (Tel Aviv: Defence Ministry, 1997), pp.52–5 (in Hebrew).

2. See for example W. Ansel, *Hitler and the Middle Sea* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1972).
3. M. Naor, 'The Home Front at War: The Civil Guard in Tel Aviv, 1938–1945', *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel*, Vol.12 (2002), pp.305–40 (in Hebrew); T. Goren, 'Jewish Money for Arabs in Need', *Et-Mol*, Vol.184 (2005), pp.28–9 (in Hebrew); A. Kidron, 'The Emergency Plan for Evacuating Children and the Bomb-Shelter Dilemma in Haifa, 1940', *Et-Mol*, Vol.192 (2007), pp.24–7 (in Hebrew).
4. F. Minniti, 'Il nemico vero: Gli obiettivi dei piani di operazione contro la Gran Bretagna nel contesto etiopico', *Storia Contemporanea*, Vol.26, No.4 (1995), pp.597–8; J. Gooch, *Mussolini and his Generals: The Armed Forces and Fascist Foreign Policy, 1922–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.345.
5. L. Alberghini Maltoni, 'Gli aeroporti del Dodecaneso', *Rivista Aeronautica*, Vol.1 (2002), pp.100–111.
6. See for example Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (hereafter: ASMAE), Affari Politici 1931–1945 (AP), Palestina, b. 15, Mazzolini to Rome, 8 June 1937; b. 22, Mazzolini to Rome, 20 Dec. 1937.
7. ASMAE, Gabinetto 1923–1943, b. 743, f. 'Oleodotto di Kirkuk', Cavagnari to Ciano, 27 April 1937.
8. Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, H6, Racc. 14, f. 'P.R. 12: Appendice "Egeo" al teatro d'operazioni del Mediterraneo', 1 Jan. 1938.
9. R. Fanizza, *De Vecchi, Bastico, Campioni. Ultimi governatori dell'Egeo* (Forlì: S.A.C.-Valbonesi, n.d.), pp.17–23; C.M. de Vecchi di Val Cismon, *I quadrumviro scomodo*, ed. L. Romersa (Milano: Mursia, 1983), pp.233–42; D. Carafoli and G. Bocchini Padiglione, *Ettore Muti. Il gerarca scomodo* (Milano: Mursia, 2002), pp.139–51.
10. W. Murray, *War in the Air 1914–1945* (London: Cassell, 1999), p.113; J.S. Corum, 'The *Luftwaffe* and its Allied Air Forces in World War II', *Air Power History*, Vol.51, No.2 (2004), p.9.
11. Haifa Municipal Archive (HMA), file 5603, Defence Situation – Committee of the Hebrew Community, 1940; Kidron, 'The Emergency Plan for Evacuating Children', pp.24–7.
12. Tel Aviv Municipal Archive (TAMA), 19/06/6, box 3, Protocol of Meeting No. 27 of the Situation Committee, 19 May 1940; Protocol of Meeting No. 36 of the Situation Committee, 11 June 1940; Naor, 'The Home Front at War', p.325.
13. Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Segreteria Particolare del Duce, 'Carteggio Riservato – Bollettini e informazioni' (SPD-CR), b. 215, De Vecchi to Rome, 15 July 1940 and 18 July 1940; UK National Archives (NA), WO 208/3082, GOC Palestine and Transjordan to C. in C. Middle East, 15 July 1940.
14. ACS, SPD-CR, b. 215, De Vecchi to Rome, 24 July 1940; HMA, Va'adat Matzav, file 1838, Levkovitz to the Social Aid Department of the Va'ad Leumi in Jerusalem, 20 August 1940; NA, CO 323/1787/54, Telegram No. 706 from the High Commissioner, 25 July 1940; Telegram for C. in C. Mediterranean, 26 July 1940.
15. Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Protocol of a Meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive, 4 Aug. 1940.
16. Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dell'Aeronautica Militare (AUSAM), EG2, f. 14 'Relazioni Egeo', Cappa to Stato Maggiore Aeronautica, 27 Aug. 1940.
17. I.S.O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Vol.I (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954), p.164.
18. ACS, SPD-CR, b. 220, De Vecchi to Badoglio, 21 Sept. 1940; AUSAM, EG2, f. 14 'Relazioni Egeo', De Vecchi to Comando Supremo, 6 Sept. 1940; NA, AIR 23/6768, 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 14', 16–23 Sept. 1940. The British attacks were usually carried out by Wellingtons based in Egypt.
19. ACS, SPD-CR, b. 220, De Vecchi to Comando Supremo, 9 Sept. 1940; AUSAM, EG2, f. 14 'Relazioni Egeo', Cappa to Stato Maggiore Aeronautica, 9 Sept. 1940.
20. TAMA, 'Victims of the Aerial Bombardment of Tel Aviv', *Yedioth Iriyat Tel Aviv*, Vol.6, No.11–12 (1940), pp.186–8 (in Hebrew).
21. R. Dayan, *Veolai* (Tel Aviv: Maariv, 1973), pp.96–8 (in Hebrew). Her daughter, Yael, who later became a Member of the Israeli Knesset, emerged nearly unscathed from their house which was severely damaged during the raid.
22. NA, WO 208/3082, telegram No. 835 to High Commissioner, Palestine, 15 Sept. 1940.
23. Y. Gelber, *Jewish Palestinian Volunteering in the British Army during the Second World War*, Vol.I (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1979), pp.277–80 (in Hebrew). The plan was kept secret since the British did not intend to recruit an Arab platoon alongside the Jewish one.

24. ACS, SPD-CR, b. 220, De Vecchi to Comando Supremo, 21 September 1940; De Vecchi to Badoglio, 22 Sept. 1940; *Davar*, 22 Sept. 1940; NA, WO 208/3082, GOC Palestine and Transjordan to War Office, 24 Sept. 1940; WO 106/2072, C. in C. Middle East to War Office, 2 Oct. 1940; *Palestine Post*, 23 and 24 Sept. 1940.
25. AUSAM, EG2, f. 14 'Relazioni Egeo', Egeomil to Stato Maggiore Aeronautica, 26 Sept. 1940; De Vecchi to Comando Supremo, 26 Sept. 1940; De Vecchi to Comando Supremo, 27 Sept. 1940; NA, WO 208/3082, GOC Palestine and Transjordan to War Office, 30 Sept. 1940.
26. ACS, SPD-CR, b. 220, De Vecchi to Comando Supremo, 29 Sept. 1940; AUSAM, EG2, f. 14 'Relazioni Egeo', Cappa to Stato Maggiore Aeronautica, 29 Sept. 1940; NA, WO 106/2072, C. in C. Middle East to War Office, 2 Oct. 1940; WO 208/3082, GOC Palestine and Transjordan to War Office, 7 Oct. 1940. British sources do not confirm that the Italians shot down one of their aircraft.
27. P. Moci, *Seguendo la bandiera* (Milano: Giorgio Apostolo, 2001), pp.113–23; NA, AIR 23/6768, 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 18', 14–21 Oct. 1940; ACS, MAI, Archivio Segreto, b. 20, f. 10, Foreign Ministry to Ministry for Italian Africa, 5 Dec. 1940.
28. ACS, SPD-CR, b. 222, De Vecchi to Stato Maggiore Generale, 29 Oct. 1940; 1 Nov. 1940; and 4 Nov. 1940.
29. See for example: ACS, SPD-CR, b. 248, Longo to Comando Supremo, 10 July 1941; b. 259, Campioni to Comando Supremo, 8 Oct. 1941, 09:34.
30. ASMAE, AP, Italia, b. 73, f. 4 'Propaganda araba da Radio Bari', 'Giornale radio arabo', 17 July 1940.
31. NA, WO 208/3082, Telegram no. 878 from High Commissioner, 10 Sept. 1940; Goren, 'Jewish Money for Arabs in Need', pp.28–9.
32. N. Arielli, 'Italian Involvement in the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–39', *British Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.35, No.2 (2008), pp.187–204.
33. Petrucci (Teheran) to Ciano, 30 Sept. 1940, *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, Ser. 9, Vol.V, pp.633–4.
34. *Palestine Post*, 17, 23, 24 and 25 July 1940.
35. *Palestine Post*, 24 Sept. 1940; Goren, 'Jewish Money for Arabs in Need', pp.28–9.
36. CZA, A107/839, Intelligence Bulletin of the Jewish Agency Executive, 19 Sept. 1940.
37. TAMA, 'The Arabs' Response', *Yedioth Iriyat Tel Aviv*, Vol.6, No.11–12 (1940), p.195 (in Hebrew).
38. Haganah Archives [HA], 47/114, Criminal Investigation Department, Intelligence Summary, 35/40, 14 Oct. 1940.
38. *Palestine Post*, 1 Aug. 1940 (citing the Jaffa-based *Al-Akhbar*) and 22 Sept. 1940.
40. *Palestine Post*, 26 July 1940 and 9 Sept. 1940.
41. NA, WO 106/2072, C. in C. Middle East to War Office, 11 Sept. 1940; Naor, 'The Home Front at War', p. 305.
42. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Germany and the Second World War*, Vol.III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp.198–9; Ansel, *Hitler and the Middle Sea*, pp.11–20.
43. 30 July 1940, F. Halder, *The Halder War Diary 1939–1942* (London: Greenhill Books, 1988), p.240.
44. I. Kershaw, *Hitler: Nemesis, 1936–1945* (London: Penguin, 2000), pp.306, 326.
45. In October 1940 the Fuehrer was examining the possibility of enlisting either Franco's Spain or Vichy France or both to a continental anti-British coalition, though he abandoned this plan by the end of that month. K. Hildebrand, *The Foreign Policy of the Third Reich* (London: Batsford, 1973), p.103; Kershaw, *Hitler: Nemesis*, pp.327–31.
46. A. Santoni and F. Mattesini, *La partecipazione tedesca all guerra aeronavale nel Mediterraneo* (Roma: Ateneo and Bizzarri, 1980), pp.26–7; Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Germany and the Second World War*, Vol.III, pp.185, 200, 210, 217, 224.
47. NA, AIR 23/6769, 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 31', 14–21 Jan. 1941; *Palestine Post*, 19 Jan. 1941.
48. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Germany and the Second World War*, Vol.III, pp.654–62, 709–15; W. Murray, *The Luftwaffe, 1933–45: Strategy for Defeat* (Washington and London: Brassey's, 1996), p.73. Responsibility for the central Mediterranean was left in the hands of the Italians.
49. M.L. Gruchmann, 'Les occasions stratégiques manquées des puissances de l'Axe dans le basin méditerranéen, 1940–41', in *La Guerre en Méditerranée 1939–1945: Actes du Colloque International tenu à Paris du 8 au 11 avril 1969* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971), p.177.

50. C.J. Ehrengardt and C.F. Shores, *L'aviation de Vichy au combat, Tome II: La campagne de Syrie, 8 juin–14 juillet 1941* (Paris: Lavauzelle, 1987), p.47; NA, WO 169/1646, 'War Diary of 1st Palestine Light A.A. Battery, R.A.', June 1941; *Palestine Post*, 11 June 1941; *Haaretz*, 11 June 1941; HA, 47/121, Criminal Investigation Department, Intelligence Summary 18/41, 24 June 1941.
51. Abetz (Paris) to Foreign Ministry, 11 June 1941, *Documents on German Foreign Policy* [DGFP], series D, Vol.XII, No.616; G. Warner, *Iraq and Syria 1941* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1974), p.143. According to Robert Melka, the Germans insisted that in order to operate effectively the Luftwaffe would have to use bases in Syria. However, the Vichy government refused, feeling that the presence of German planes in the Levant would do more damage to the morale of its troops than could be justified by the damage which might be done to the British ships. R.L. Melka, 'Darlan between Britain and Germany 1940–41', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.8, No.2 (1973), p.73.
52. TAMA, 'Victims of the Bombardment on the Invalid Home in Tel Aviv', *Yedioth Iriyat Tel Aviv*, Vol.11, No.10–11 (1941); Protocol of Meeting No. 106 of the Situation Committee, 12 June 1941.
53. Naor, 'The Home Front at War', pp.329–30.
54. HA, file 107/171, report for the members of the National Committee, 4 Aug. 1941; Naor, 'The Home Front at War', p.330; NA, AIR 23/6771, 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 55', 1–8 July 1941. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Krauss of the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (MGFA) in Potsdam for information about *Luftwaffe* aircraft that took part in these raids.
55. NA, AIR 23/6771, 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 58', 22–29 July 1941; 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 59', 30 July–6 Aug. 1941; Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Germany and the Second World War*, Vol.III, p.554.
56. Corum, 'The *Luftwaffe* and its Allied Air Forces', p.9; Santoni and Mattesini, *La partecipazione tedesca*, p.110; Gruchmann, 'Les occasions stratégiques manquées', p.177.
57. ACS, SPD-CR, b. 248, Longo to Rome, 10 July 1940; *Palestine Post*, 11 July 1941.
58. Corum, 'The *Luftwaffe* and its Allied Air Forces', p.10.
59. NA, AIR 23/6769, 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 33', 28 Jan.–4 Feb. 1941.
60. M. Kolinsky, *Britain's War in the Middle East: Strategy and Diplomacy, 1936–42* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), p.165.
61. Warner, *Iraq and Syria 1941*, p.130.
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63. ASMAE, AP, Iraq, b. 17, Puri Purini to Rome, 5 June 1941; Memorandum by Ambassador Ritter, 8 June 1941, *DGFP*, series D, Vol.XII, No.606.
64. C. Shores, *Dust Clouds in the Middle East: The Air War for East Africa, Iraq, Syria, Iran and Madagascar, 1940–42* (London: Grub Street, c.1996), pp.205–4; *Palestine Post*, 8 June 1941. For leaflets dropped by the Allies in Syria see: ASMAE, AP, Iraq, b. 17, f. 'Conflitto anglo-iracheno – ripercussioni estere', 'Français du Levant', n.d.; 'Officers, Sous-Officers, Soldats du Levant', 14 May 1941.
65. *Palestine Post*, 11 June 1941.
66. NA, AIR 23/6771, 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 51', 3–10 June 1941; 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 52', 10–17 June 1941.
67. Ehrengardt and Shores, *L'aviation de Vichy au combat*, Tome II, p.48; *Palestine Post*, 12 June 1941.
68. *Palestine Post*, 3 July 1941. There is some confusion in the sources regarding the location of this POW camp. Based on French sources, Ehrengardt and Shores claimed the raid focused on the Haifa area. However, according to the RAF, the aircraft bombed the POW camp at Latrun, dozens of miles south of Haifa. Ehrengardt and Shores, *L'aviation de Vichy au combat*, Tome II, pp.104–5; NA, AIR 23/6771, 'Royal Air Force Middle East Intelligence Summary no. 55', 1–8 July 1941.
69. Shores, *Dust Clouds in the Middle East*, p.247; Ehrengardt and Shores, *L'aviation de Vichy au combat*, Tome II, pp.104–5; *Palestine Post*, 4 July 1941.
70. ACS, SPD-CR, b. 248, Bastico to Rome, 14 July 1941.
71. NA, AIR 23/6842, Headquarters, 15 Area to RAF HQ, Haifa, 8 Feb. 1943; Air Headquarters, Levant to RAF station, Haifa, 16 Feb. 1943.
72. See for example: *Palestine Post*, 11 Oct. 1942, 5 Nov. 1942, 10 Feb. 1943, 21 Feb. 1943, 30 March 1943, 28 Sept. 1943, 8 May 1944 and 23 June 1944.
73. For more on this unsuccessful operation see: NA, KV 2/400.
74. Ehrengardt and Shores, *L'aviation de Vichy au combat*, Tome II, pp.43, 107; NA, AIR 23/6838, 'Number and Location of Effective Squadrons in Iraq, Palestine and Cyprus', 28 June 1941.



75. For more on the negotiations between the Axis and Arab leaders, see: D. Carpi, 'The Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin el-Husseini, and his Diplomatic Activity during World War II (October 1941–July 1943)', *Zionism*, Vol.IX (1984), pp.285–316 (in Hebrew); P. Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp.101–4; R. De Felice, *Il fascismo e l'Oriente: arabi, ebrei e indiani nella politica di Mussolini* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1988), pp.86–114.
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78. See for example: Y. Bauer, 'From Cooperation to Resistance: The Haganah 1938–1946', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.2, No.3 (1966), pp.182–210; Y. Gelber, *Growing a Fleur-de-Lis: The Intelligence Services of the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine* (Tel Aviv: Defence Ministry, 1992), pp. 456–96 (in Hebrew); Gelber, *Jewish Palestinian Volunteering in the British Army*, Vol.I–IV.