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A Killer is Caught: Some Reflections on the Capture of Adolph
Eichmann, 1960.

A KILLER IS CAUGHT

Some reflections on the capture of
Adolph Eichmann

THE TEMPLE

October 30, 1960

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

On May 11th last, Ricardo Klement boarded his usual bus to go home from his work at the Mercedes-Benz automobile factory in Buenos Aires. Ricardo Klement never reached his destination. Eight days later, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion arose in the Knesset and announced that the most notorious Nazi criminal still at large, Karl Adolph Eichmann, had been captured and was at that moment in Israeli hands. Later evidence identified Ricardo Klement as Adolph Eichmann.

The pursuit and the capture of Adolph Eichmann is a magnificent drama of dogged perseverance. Fifteen years ago a seat was reserved for Eichmann in the prisoner's dock at Nuremberg. There was a carefully prepared dossier of his crimes and brutalities, but there was no Eichmann. Where was Eichmann? In the one place where our central intelligence agency did not look for him across the whole length and breadth of Europe. Eichmann was hiding in one of our own prisoner-of-war camps. He had determined upon the successful ruse at the end of the war of dressing as a routine, regular, ordinary German army private. He had given himself up along with thousands of such men; indeed, surprisingly, he had given the Commandant of the camp his correct name. But no one had made the connection and, equally surprisingly, no one had made that simple physical search of the body of each of the prisoners which would have revealed the tell-tale tattoo worn by every Gestapo officer.

Eichmann escaped Nuremberg and the certain hangman's noose that awaited him at the end of that trial, and when he was released in quite routine fashion along with thousands of others of ordinary German military men, Eichmann made contact with that very efficient SSSD underground and he was spirited within a matter of hours outside of Germany to the safety of a Franciscan monastery near Rome. One of the untold stories of the last fifteen years, a story that needs to be told, is that of the group of Nazi officers and military men who banded together at the end of the war and who have maintained till this very day an efficient underground system which has snatched away their former comrades from the prisoner's dock and even from the prisoner's cell. Literally thousands of criminals have been enabled to escape from Germany by means of this neo-Nazi underground railway.

Eichmann found himself in Italy. Eichmann forged for himself or procured for himself in some fashion a Vatican passport and, like so many of the former Nazis, he found that the Near East would be a fertile field, a compatible field for his activity, and he went to Beirut in Syria, and in 1946 and 1947 he busied himself buying arms for the Arab League. Perhaps the Arab League could finish the work of Jewish genocide which he and Hitler and Himmler and Heydrich and the others had so auspiciously begun. But when the Arabs were unable and incapable of driving the Israeli into the sea, Eichmann thought better of the project and determined that he would have to seek safety elsewhere. And again, like so many fellow Nazis, he went to the happy haven of Franco Spain. From Franco's Spain he went to Peron's Argentina, and when Peron fell he fled for a while to Brazil and then to Paraguay, then made his way back to Argentina where a large German Nazi group has been established for many years, flourishing quite openly. There he found men and women of similar ideas and ideals. There was a Bund, there were people who spoke of the return of some neo-Nazi movement to

power, and there he settled. And to Argentina he brought his family, his wife and his sons, and there he lived the ordinary life of a factory workman until that day when he was precipitously taken from his routine trip home and taken to an Israeli jail.

This is Eichmann's saga of pursuit and of capture. Eichmann might have believed that after fifteen years the trail was cold, the ardor of the pursuers had cooled, that he was safe from pursuit and from capture. And if he looked about himself at the world there was much that might have built up his confidence. In the late 1940s we disbanded the Nuremberg trial courts. In the early 1950s the deNazification courts in Germany began that process of sentence reduction which has seen to it that by this day less than a dozen of the literally hundreds of Nazi butchers, ravishers and plunderers who were sentenced to stiff penal years of incarceration or even to life remain still behind bars. By the middle 1950s it was no longer a politically desirable fact that any further important Nazis should be tried. Our own Mr. Dulles determined that Germany was to be a bastion between Russia and the West, that Germany must be rearmed. Bonn and Washington conspired that the memories of the goose-stepping legions' murderous path across Europe would be swept under the rug and forgotten. The trial of a major Nazi criminal would have revived all of these terrifying, anxiety-ridden memories. They would have none of that. So one by one the various intelligence agencies closed their files and ceased the search for such men as Martin Borman and Karl Eichmann and others.

Eichmann might have been safe if politics, governmental decision had determined the nature of his pursuit. But the anger, the vengeance, the determination of the victims was not taken into account. At the end of the Second World War that tiny remnant of young men and women who had survived the extermination camps and the uprising in the ghettos of Warsaw and Bialystok and

Lublin banded together, and they pledged to themselves that those who had determined to eradicate and efface the Jew from the face of the European continent would be brought to justice, and justice would be done. And though the path was long, and though they were given at times little support, they pursued. Here they found evidence of an early skull fracture which Eichmann had suffered in a motorcycle accident. In the home of a mistress -- one of his many mistresses -- they found a rare picture of Eichmann, a man who had shunned all publicity, perhaps fearful of the day of German overthrow. They watched movements of Eichmann's wife and of his children. Bit by bit, relentlessly, persistently and without pause they followed his trail until, by a chain of events which is not yet clear, they found Ricardo Klement and they were able to identify Klement as Eichmann.

I find a great deal of poetic justice in the capture of Eichmann by this group of persistent victims, Jews who had suffered, whose families were no longer upon this earth, because the Nazis are guilty of many crimes, crimes against every country and every people on the face of this globe and especially on the European continent. There is Lidice and Rotterdam, there were hostages sought from the Pyrenees to the Alps, from the Urals to Greece, from Norway to the Mediterranean. Adolph Eichmann's crimes were solely directed against one people -- our people. Adolph Eichmann was a bureaucrat of murder. He was head of the Gestapo bureau of B-4-B, the Gestapo's bureau of Jewish affairs. Its mission, the final solution of the Jewish problem. Its method, extermination, annihilation. Eichmann was the man who organized those human abattoirs, Auschwitz, Treblinka, Maidenlich, Sibidor, places where thousands upon thousands and millions upon millions of Jews were gassed and cremated. It was he who organized the transport and the collection of the Jews. It was he who organized the death of the Jew. It was he who organized the tortures, the experiments,

the murders, the butchery which destroyed six million Jews in four or five years.

What are his crimes? His crime is genocide. But genocide is too kind and too nice a word, for though it implies mass murder genocide cannot convey to us the wail of millions upon millions of victims, those ghastly pictures which we have driven from our mind of corpses stacked up as if they are some pieces of metal without flesh, without life, without family, without emotion, without relation. Eichmann boasted, "The only way a Jew leaves my camp is up the chimney, as smoke." And Eichmann made good in six million cases his boast.

This is the man who was captured, captured by the Israeli Jews. Eichmann is the first criminal in all of history who had to engage auditors to sum up the number of his crimes. Early in 1944 Himmler requested of Eichmann a progress report on his success in solving the Jewish problem, and in Nuremberg evidence was introduced to the effect that Eichmann ordered a group of C.P.A.'s into his office, gave them those famous, infamous, notorious Totenbuchs, those death ledgers, as kept by every Nazi death camp as only the Teutonic brutal efficiency and love of order might have kept, and put them to work with adding machines to sum up -- sum up -- the number of his murders.

This is Eichmann. This is the man who now languishes in an Israeli jail. This is the man whose capture I find to be poetic justice.

Now, strangely, strangely once Eichmann was captured, a series of voices began to be heard questioning the method of his capture, questioning the means by which he was brought to Israel, questioning the competency of the Israeli courts in dealing with this case. The first voice raised was that of the Argentine. The Argentine claimed that its sovereignty had been violated by the Jewish men and women who had abducted Eichmann and who had transported him by jet plane from the Argentine to Israel. Why didn't Israel ask the Argentine government to make the arrest? Why did not Israel engage in a normal, inter-

governmental extradition procedure which might be considered customary in these cases? Why not? Have you heard the name of Dr. Josef Mengula? Dr. Josef Mengula was one of that nefarious group of Nazi physicians who infested the laboratories of the death camps. He was at Auschwitz, at Auschwitz where six thousand lives were taken every day for two years, at Auschwitz where in forty-two days in the Summer of 1944 a quarter of a million of Hungarian Jewish lives were exterminated, done away with. Dr. Mengula's job was to conduct medical experiments on these victims. And what were his experiments? He fed them salt water, to see the nature of their suffering, how long they might survive, to see if a gypsy would survive longer than a Jew, a Roumanian than a Hungarian. Who is Dr. Mengula? He is the man who fired lethal pellets into the bodies of Jewish inmates of Auschwitz to chart the path of pain through the body and describe medically the onset of death. Well, in 1959 Dr. Mengula was found in the Argentine by the West German Government. The extradition and the arrest of Mengula was requested of the Argentine. The Argentine arrested Mengula and gave him bail. The Argentine then said to the Bonn government, "Fill out the following papers and we will consider extradition." Bonn filled out the papers. They were transmitted to Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires responded that the papers were in German, not in Spanish and demanded that they be filled out properly. They were filled out properly. They were again transmitted. The Argentine government announced that only four copies of the papers were received; five were necessary for processing. Five were sent. Buenos Aires announced that Dr. Mengula had jumped his bond and was no longer to be found in the Argentine. Why was not extradition and the capture of Eichmann requested through normal diplomatic channels? Because the Argentine could not be trusted to capture Eichmann and to keep him in prison. In 1944 the Argentine government signed with the Allies a series of agreements which included one to the effect (and I quote)

"that no accused Nazi criminal will be granted haven or refuge or naturalization in the Argentine", and the Argentine has day in and day out violated the letter and the spirit of that law. Thousands of Nazi criminals are in the Argentine. They remain there in complete safety from capture, from pursuit, and from annihilation. The Argentine went to the United Nations, ^{to} ~~who~~ refused to accept the explanations of Mr. Ben Gurion, and demanded a public pronouncement of censure by that world body against Israel. Who was the Argentine ambassador at that moment to the United Nations? Dr. Mario Amadeo. Who is Dr. Mario Amadeo? One of the ten leading Nazi collaborators in the western hemisphere in the last twenty years, according to the listings of our own government. If you ask for equity your hands must be clean. And the world body knew this of the Argentine, and you will remember that though the Argentine resolution was perfunctorily passed it was gutted by certain American insertions which spoke of the dealing and the sensitivity which the nations understood as that of the Jews, which spoke of the crimes of Eichmann and the reasons that they felt had impelled Israel to go beyond its normal diplomatic channels in effecting his seizure. Does the seizure of Eichmann by these so-called illegal means preclude his being given a just trial in Israel? By no means. Indeed, our own Supreme Court has time and again upheld the fact that whatever be the way a man has been captured and brought to trial in one of our several states, if the trial itself is legal the conviction will be upheld.

Other voices were raised. It was argued that Eichmann ought to be tried by an international tribunal, not by Israel. Well, perhaps. But Nuremberg is no longer, and the international court at The Hague deals only with disputes between nations. It is not competent to deal with individual crime. And one of the facts which so many have forgotten is that for ten years now the Israeli representatives to the United Nations have pled with that body to establish an international court to deal precisely with crimes against humanity, individual

criminal crimes. But no action has been taken. Eichmann cannot be tried by an international body because there is no such body with jurisdiction over his crime.

Others have said that Eichmann be tried in West Germany, in the country of his crimes. West Germany has not requested the extradition of Eichmann. West Germany does not want Eichmann; indeed, the very week of his capture the Bonn government suddenly announced that Eichmann was not a German at all. He was an Austrian; this is not true, but they did not want Eichmann because the trial of Eichmann would be "inconvenient" for the Bonn government. The German courts have been notoriously lax in their sentencing of Nazi criminals. If a lax sentence or acquittal were granted to Eichmann, world opinion would be incensed against the German court system and the whole question of the handling of these Nazi cases would be revived. And if Eichmann were sentenced to life or were sentenced to be killed, the hundreds upon hundreds of Nazis who honeycomb today the German government would cause an internal unrest, political upheaval, which none of the parties in Germany want now, just a year before their national elections.

Germany does not want Eichmann. There is no international court to try Eichmann. The only place where he can be tried, where justice can be done, is in Israel, the only country which continued his pursuit, which was determined to bring him to justice. It is in Israel that there are three hundred thousand potential witnesses who can testify to his activities. It is in Israel that the documentation sessions like the Yad V'shem have been assiduously garnering and gathering together since the end of the war the documentation which proves the Nazi guilt.

Now, if Israel's sole purpose were vengeance, vengeance could have been done to Eichmann in that little room in the Argentine where he was first brought.

He could have been tortured there and murdered there, and the world would not have known, and vengeance would have been done. But these young Israelis were determined that he would stand before a bar of justice, and Israel's justice is as humane and as sophisticated and as advanced as that of any legal system in the world. He will have the right to defense and the right of counsel and trial by competent men. He must be tried in Israel because there is the only place and the only country in which a trial can be carried out.

Indeed, I question the sincerity of these legal gymnastics, these legal hair-splittings which have been raised as to this whole case. I wonder why there is so much concern that theoretical justice be done to this man, who never once in his life worried about the just rights of any whom he ground under his boot and ordered murdered for no crime or actions of their own. I wonder if we have not here evidence again of the reaction of a world which sees its favorite punching bag suddenly removed, suddenly hitting back. For a thousand years now the European world has been able to hit at this inert Jewish punching bag at its will, whenever it was filled with aggressions, pent-up frustrations which needed to be unleashed. But now -- now he who would hit, he who would pillage and plunder and punish does so at the penalty of his own life, does so knowing that he must pay for his crimes. And I wonder if there is not fear and dismay at this change of the punching bag into a strong, vital boxer, a man able to take care of himself in the modern world.

But I find in the Eichmann trial, the Eichmann capture and the Eichmann ^{even} saga something much more universal/than a saga of justice delayed and justice done. I understand the desire to capture Eichmann. I sympathize -- I would have been one if I could -- with those who pursued and those who caught.

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David in our Bible, "I will pursue mine enemies and I will capture them and I

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said David in our Bible, "I will pursue mine enemies and I will capture them and I will not come back until I have consumed them." One needs to stand up for

his rights in this world.

But I find something quite universal in this capture of Eichmann. I find that he will place before us, rub our noses in a truth which we have been trying to escape. What is that truth? Sane men can murder millions, and sane men can commit mass murder. Eichmann is many things, most of which I would never speak of in public. But Eichmann is not crazed, nor is he pathologically demented. He is simply a man who is willing to put party above principle, who allowed all of his common human sensitivities and his conscience to be withered away by his self-seeking allegiance to some party. And I submit to you that there are thousands upon thousands of potential Eichmanns in every bureaucracy, in every political and military caste system that our world knows. And why must we be aware of this fact? Because you and I have comforted ourselves with an illusion, the illusion that no one will press the button of atomic annihilation, that no one would have on his conscience the millions upon millions of lives, maimed bodies, destroyed lives, snuffed out by atomization. But this is false. It is an unwise, untrue fact. There are men, many men who would press that button if they felt that their party or their fuehrer or their leader demanded it of them. And as long as they, their families and their intimates were safe in some shelter, the statistics of how many casualties would take place in the holocaust outside would be only a series of further data fed them by some processing machine and nothing more. Sane men will and can murder millions. And I hope that this trial of Eichmann will shake us out of our complacency. We build arms; we ought to be working for disarmament, ^{to} /Do away with the potentialities of mass destruction, to take from any one man and from any one party the potential for the extermination, not of one people, one religion, but of mankind itself.

Eichmann frightens me. I am chilled by ^{re-}reading of his experiences because Eichmann makes me recognize the total depravity of which a human being is possible. Not a crazed human being. An emotionally disturbed man perhaps, but

otherwise quite an ordinary man, such a man as, unfortunately, there are many.

I hope that as the world follows the detailing of Eichmann's crimes, everyone who reads of them will be moved to bestir himself in the cause of peace.

But I find more than a chilling, frightening experience in rereading the saga of Eichmann. I find hope -- a slight, but ever-present ray of hope. The few pursuers never gave up. For fifteen frustrating years they continued day by day their painstaking, often seemingly hopeless work. Bit by bit they put together the pieces of this jigsaw puzzle of evidence, and they triumphed. They captured the man they sought.

If we are persistent, if bit by bit we fit together the machinery of peace, if we have a determination within ourselves beyond the ordinary, if we are willing to forget political changes, the cooling of the passions of the many, but if we single-mindedly, persistently persevere in building the machinery of peace that machinery can be built. Man can win through to the great age of which we are at the threshold. Eichmann's history reveals to us the depth of human evil. ~~If~~ We allow ourselves to forget this evidence only at our peril. And Eichmann's capture reveals to us the possibilities of human achievement. We participate in such achievement to our glory.

Amen.

Kaddish

Friday OCT. 28

Sunday " 30

Those who passed away this week

AMELIA KLEIN	CLARA SCHWARTZ
SAMUEL MARKLEY	ROSE UNGER
HENRY A. MARKS	BERT M. WISE

60

55

Gahrzeits

JACOB REDER
HELEN GOODMAN ALTMAN
WALTER P. DEUTSCH
MAX M. ROTHSCHILD
EMANUEL M. MANDEL
L. A. BRAHAM
ADOLPH RITTER
HERMAN OPPER
HELENE R. HIMMEL
SAMUEL STERN
SOL DORSEY
HILDA W. KROHNGOLD
DR. JACOB SIEBERT
COLEMAN SPITZ

HEDWIG HENRY
BECKY ROSENTHAL
SIMON FOX
EDWIN H. WEIL
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
MARY O. SHAPERO
JEAN YOELSON LEVIN
PAULINE WEINSTEIN LOCKWOOD

On May 11th last Ricardo Klement took his usual bus home from work at the Mercedes Benz plant in Buenos Aires. He never reached his destination & 3 days later Puerto Montt D.B.C. announced to the General that the most notorious Nazi criminal still at large R.A.F. had been captured and was now in Israeli custody. Later information confirmed the identity of R.K. & A.E.

A.E. - capture depicted a rare example of dogged persistence. In 1945 A.E. must have been honored with a medal ~~at~~ in the United States at the ~~Memorial~~ War Trial - There was in 1945 a well documented conviction E., but no one ^{was} to be told, on C.I.A. records ~~even~~ ^{later} ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~but~~ E. was not recorded - where was he? In one of our own P.W. Camps. E. surrendered to American troops in the uniform of a ordinary German and private. ~~Strange~~, we even gave his captor his right name - but no one questioned his word - no one ordered a physical search of all prisoners for the last 20 years of all contact officers - E. occupied ^{other names} ~~himself~~ ^{by} ~~being~~ ^{being} ~~always~~ ^{always} in our custody.

Shortly he was released from the prison compound and installed a buy-burn
was never engaged & high official SS, underground had operated him out of
coming to the compound & after a French woman lay near home. Being
the state of that part 1541 of ^{German} Occupation has been the situation of
a well interested band of former Gestapo & SS & SD officers & men who have in
many hands & years spread some fellow Nazi out of the prison do it, and
of the prison cell & out of the country. - 1947

in 1987
Lined notes & Valentin passport, etc. sets as many Nazis headed further
into world - he called in Beirut, Syria and took up ^{the} previous, years
for the Arab troops who were seen to head themselves against a wall - perhaps
the Egyptian - Syrian night find the words so Fulham had been previously
before. To-day Cairo, Beirut & Damascus are full of common officers & officials
stopping the UAR's army & service still hoping to fulfill ~~their~~ wishes.
Among some ^{first} extremists.

[illegible]

4. trial given held in 1950s. Passaic cond. Police charge. By 1960 E.
might have expected to be free of pursuit. In the late 1940's the membership
interests, Cond. were checked. By the early 50's most of the staff position centers
had been sharply reduced, noted to be by the hands of the hundreds of
members & plan less carbonated to life imprisonment after the even number behind
bars. By the mid '50's after 3 years of occupation & from began to find of
further capture & trial of major ^{stalled sup.} involvement. Mr. Puller directed of bar as a
mil. border of Soviet Russia. The army & office corps that had gone through these
members behind way a man always had to be reluctant: warned - E's
lighter - on many occasions would have been numbered the world
of the beaded element within the same circle - remembered all
few - few noted Mr. Puller & Mr. Adelman both needed to have solid
& further. The German made mistakes must not be repeated & revised
the by one on C.I.P., do not seem entirely so, the investigation of the
Demographic Cond. closed the files and lost interest.

Palatka my change, but a certain person does not always work. Just
a just continued to meet. Paratka says through the log you say and have
checked. any suggestion or surprise to be. An old X-ray photograph of a
a little says as an element - a friend produced the only known photograph of
the subject - all other had been systematically burned by the same criminal who
had always burned publishing - E's wife's movements were watched other - the
finally by a line of evidence not as yet fully clear - R.K. was caught & A.E.
identified.

That person should capture ^{guiltless} E. at a time of low police justice. Hitler's
becoming state council of my case - Little & Puller - insisted
hottest murder from marriage break - 10 million circulation was not
produced from German gun and boat - but E.'s wife was denied
solid at one point - one year - at the year. As noted by the tape Parit. 484
the experienced & organized & effort the change in the history of 6 million
just.

As long as taken 484 seen to Dept. of Justice office
to move - The Final Solution of the Jewish Problem
the military - Extermination
the Chief Executive Office - R.E.

may and should make self interest good above to our dearest - under
could not have easily given - probability of developing every modern -
not a real friend & school people -

W. told us to remove complexity - this was committed - Olan Cohen
& Magdalen & Hester have in every part of the world to avoid the
discontinuation of the same - same of men - see and live -

David's copy of E. proof and need not think - let us all see
now after allowed to read had.

