



In the fury of the Nazi terror—Jews are rounded up by German troops on the streets of Warsaw. This picture was made by the German Army photographic and cinema service.

## The Eichmann Case as Seen by Ben-Gurion

The Premier of Israel states his country's position in claiming the right to try the man Hitler entrusted with 'the final solution of the Jewish question.'

The decision of Israel to try Adolf Eichmann, notorious colonel of the Nazi Gestapo, has brought about an extensive debate. In what follows, David Ben-Gurion, Premier of Israel, answers six of the most important questions raised about the trial.

Eichmann, according to testimony at the Nuremberg war trials, was entrusted by the Nazis with "the final solution of the Jewish question." That solution was extermination in gas chamber and in crematory. Last May, fifteen years after the war, volunteers from Israel seized Eichmann in Argentina. Here is Mr. Ben-Gurion's brief in the Eichmann case.

By DAVID BEN-GURION

Why do you want to see Eichmann tried before an Israeli court rather than a German court or an international tribunal?

EICHMANN is accused of murdering millions of Jews, as Jews. I know that Hitler and his followers killed Poles, Russians and many other people. But Hitler in his plan to dominate the world wanted to subdue these people, not exterminate

them. He never intended to murder an entire people, except the Jews. It is a unique case. Eichmann is accused of being Hitler's main instrument in this. Therefore, it is historic justice that he be tried by a Jewish state. Only a Jewish state can try him, from a moral point of view.

**N**OW I see it argued, by Jews among others, that Israel is legally entitled to try Eichmann but ethically should not do so because Eichmann's crime, in its enormity, was against humanity and the conscience of humanity rather than against Jews as such. Only a Jew with an inferiority complex could say that; only one who does not realize that a Jew is a human being.

The Jews in Hitler's Germany were murdered not because they were human beings but because they were Jews. It is foolish to claim, as some do, that these Jews were not part of our people but merely shared the same religious beliefs. In Eastern Europe, where many of Hitler's victims lived, Jews in the ghettos of Russia, Poland or Lithuania, for example, never con-

sidered themselves Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, but Jews.

Israel is the only inheritor of these Jews for two reasons. First, it is the only Jewish state. Second, if these Jews were alive, they would be here because most if not all of them wanted to come to live in a Jewish state.

Why should Eichmann not be tried in Germany? The Germans do not ask this question. They can speak for themselves. They have never asked either that Eichmann not be tried here or that he be handed over to them.

There was a special meeting of the Security Council, requested by Argentina, to discuss this question. Not a single member of the Security Council, aside from the Argentinian, suggested that Eichmann be returned to Argentina or sent to Germany for trial. None of the members (and not all of them are friends of Israel)—neither the American, British, French, Russian, Pole, Ceylonese nor the Tunisian—called into doubt Israel's right to judge Eichmann.

Why should he not be tried before

an international court? Because Israel does not need the moral protection of an international court. Only anti-Semites or Jews with an inferiority complex could suggest that it does. America does not need that kind of protection, nor does England or any other country. I feel very strongly about that. In any case, Eichmann's victims were not murdered because they were international people but only because they were Jews.

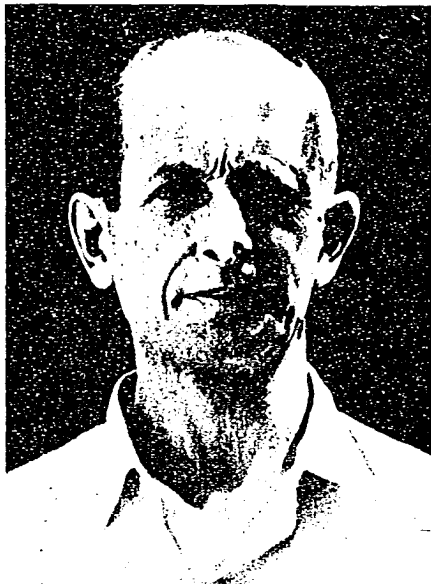
Some who think Eichmann should not be tried here liken his trial to the Nuremberg trials. I am not interested in such comparisons. The Nuremberg trials were different. There, conquerors tried war criminals. I would not say it was unjust, although there was no precedent for it as far as I know.

What do you hope to achieve by bringing Eichmann to trial?

**W**E want to establish before the nations of the world how millions of people, because they happened to be Jews, and one million babies, because they happened to be Jewish babies, were (Continued on Page 62)



PREMIER—David Ben-Gurion.



PRISONER—Adolf Eichmann.

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murdered by the Nazis. We ask the nations not to forget it.

We want the nations of the world to know that there was an intention to exterminate a people. That intention had its roots in anti-Semitism. They should know that anti-Semitism is dangerous, and they should be ashamed of it. I believe that through this trial all thinking people will come to realize that in our day the gas chamber and the soap factory are what anti-Semitism may lead to. And they will do what they can about it. Morally, I mean; I don't think anti-Semites should be exterminated.

**WE** are not out to punish Eichmann; there is no fit punishment. Indeed, it is ridiculous to see in this trial, as some do, any motive of revenge. How can 6,000,000 people be avenged? The best evidence of the foolishness of this charge is our attitude toward Germany. Because Nazis committed horrible crimes against our people, we cannot regard all Germans as guilty. For us, a decent German, although he belongs to the same nation that twenty years ago helped to murder millions of Jews, is a decent human being.

We do not hold Adenauer responsible for Hitler, any more than we hold Macmillan responsible for Ernest Bevin. I believe that Bevin's policies toward the refugees who sought asylum in Israel cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews. I am sure that many people in England were ashamed of those policies. But even at the time, I did not have feelings against England.

It may be that Eichmann's trial will help to ferret out other Nazis—for example, the connection between Nazis and some Arab rulers. From what we hear on the Egyptian radio, some Egyptian propa-

ganda is conducted on purely Nazi lines. The Egyptians charge that Jews—they usually say "Zionists" but they mean Jews—dominate the United States, Jews dominate England, Jews dominate France, and they must be fought. I have no doubt that the Egyptian dictatorship is being instructed by the large number of Nazis who are there.

Finally, one of our motives in bringing Eichmann to trial is to make the details of his case known to the generation of Israelis who have grown up since the holocaust. It is necessary that our youth remember what happened to the Jewish people. We want them to know the most tragic facts in our history, the most tragic facts in world history.

I don't care whether they want to know them; they ought to know them. They should be taught the lesson that Jews are not sheep to be slaughtered but a people who can hit back—as Jews did in the War of Independence.

*Can Eichmann have a fair trial, considering the emotional atmosphere in Israel?*

**WHY** should anyone question our fairness? We are as fair as any people in the world, and if one cannot get a fair trial here, there are no fair trials in the world.

*Are you concerned about the effect the horrors of the Eichmann case may have on survivors of the concentration camps?*

**BUT** they already know these horrors. I know that my niece and her two babies were burned to death. I know that. The people know the truth—that tens of thousands of Jewish babies were exterminated.

They may not be happy to hear these events recounted,

but they must rejoice that one of the main perpetrators of crimes against Jews has been brought to justice by Jews and is to be tried in a Jewish court. I do not believe that there was a single Jew in Israel who was not glad when he heard that Eichmann had been brought here.

*Was Eichmann illegally abducted by Israel?*

**EICHMANN** went to Argentina illegally. Legally, there was no Eichmann in Argentina; at least officially nothing was known of him. Those whose brothers and sisters were murdered by Eichmann and who undertook to search him out were right morally although perhaps not formally. I know they committed a breach of law, but sometimes there are moral obligations higher than formal law.

As far as we know, Eichmann agreed to come to Israel. But whether he agreed to come or not, he ought to be charged here.

*Do you believe in capital punishment?*

**ON** the whole, I am against capital punishment. Like every Jew, I believe in the sanctity of human life. And I am aware that when the death penalty is employed there can always be a terrible miscarriage of justice.

However, I think capital punishment is necessary in countries where there are large numbers of murders so that criminals will be cautioned and the innocent defended. Also, there must be capital punishment for treason in time of war.

But, really, I don't care what verdict is delivered against Eichmann. Only the fact that he will be judged in a Jewish state is important.