The Patriotism of Adolph Eichmann
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Introduction -

Life Magazine had done a great service to the Jewish community and to the world at large by publishing the recent confession of Adolph Eichmann. The story that Eichmann tells is, of course, difficult to believe. How is it possible to believe that any group of human beings could conspire to build death factories in which five to six million people would be murdered systematically. ? This calculating inhumanity is incredible, yet Eichmann tells us we must believe it, for he was among those who conceived the plan, kept the statistics, and carried it out.

I. HE DID NOT LACK ADMIRATION FOR THE JEWS.

Eichmann's confession is amazingly frank. After giving us the brutal accounting, he says, "But to sum it all up, I must say that I regret nothing". In spite of his frankness, and lack of regret, Eichman admits to a very real admiration for the Jews. He writes, "Now, however, when through the malice of fate a large part of these Jews whom we fought against are alive, I must concede that fate must have wanted it so. I always claimed, he continued, that we were fighting against a foe who through thousands of years of learning and development had become superior to us." In his conclusion, he admits that he would do the same thing over again, yet he concedes that the Jews "must be a people of the first magnitude" and among the great "law-givers" of the world. He speaks of the attempt to rebuild Israel in complimentary terms , and he says, "If I were born a Jew, I would have been a fanatical Zionist, for I have always been an idealist". Thus we have in Eichmann a man who admired Jewish learning and the unconquerable Jewish will to live, and yet he was the master mind behind the deportation of six million Jews to the crematoriums. How could this fantastic contradiction have developed within one human being? To answer this question we have to study two things, first, the psychology of the German Storm Troopers, and secondly, the evaluation of the threat of the Jews to Hitler's Reich.

2. THE GERMAN STORM -TROOPER; What was He Like ?

It is difficult for a Jew or an American of any faith to understand the psychology and the mentality of the German Storm-trooper. The Germans have always been particularly susceptible to the Feuhrer principle, to the notion of serving a dictator with supreme powers. The best storm-trooper was one who followed orders unquestioningly . At the Nuremberg Trials following World War II, Officer after Officer from the German Elite Corps took the stand to plead innocence of war crimes on the grounds that he was merely following orders and what other choice did he possibly have. Similarly Eichman writes, "What is there to admit? I merely carried out my orders...I was merely a little cog in the machinery that carried out the directives... of the German Reich. I am neither a murderer nor a mass-murderer. I am a man of average character, with good qualities..." . ". Perhaps we would not agree with Eichmann's evaluation of himself, but the German staff would say that he was the perfect officer. He did his duty with scientific detachment. He could not bear to watch any person suffer, but he could casually sign a statement arranging for the death of 20,000 people in a murder-factory.

So it was a simple thing for this keeper of the books of the dead to do what he did and then say, " I am not an anti-semite". "Each of us," he said, "had no wish to harm the individual Jew personally....we were simply working towards a "political solution of the Jewish question". As a member of the German S.S., it never occurred to Adolph Eichmann to question his orders; on the contrary, he writes even today that he takes special pride in the fact that he performed his assigned task well. Had he been assigned the task of killing disease germs, he would have done that with equal intensity and dispatch. But now he writes, " I will gadly jump into my grave in the knowledge that five million enemies of the Reich have already died like animals". Then he adds the foot-note, " I write, enemies of the Reich, not Jews", for Eichmann arranged for the killing of these innocent people, not because they were Jews, but because he had been told by his superior officers that these people, whoever they were, were ememies of Germany "Had he been told to cremate Englishmen or Christians or Americans, he would have done the same thing with equal pride"

B. WHY THE JEWS WERE A THREAT TO GERMANY

In order to answer the question revolving around Eichman's admiration of the Jews and his willingness to dispatch them to death factories, we must try to understand why Hitler and his officers considered the Jews such a threat to them. When the allied armies closed in on the German staff, Eichmann writes that the Germans considered the allied victory a triumph for the Jews. The Germansthought this way because they identified the Jews with that terrible thing called "democracy", and with that crime called "capitalism," and with that sin called "internationalism." As the very rich German industrialists took over one small business after another with Hitler's help, the Jews in small business fought bitterly against them. Since the Jews were concentrated in the small businesses of Germany, they formed the heart of the capitalistic resistance to the growth of Fascism in that country. When the Germans sought to expand the rights of the Fascist party and to limit the rights of everybody else, they turned first against that group of people which fought hardest for civil rights , the Jews. As a minority group, the Jews have become aware down through the centuries, that when dictatorship sets in, their rights are immeidately threatened, but in fighting for their own rights in Germany, they slowed down the forward progress of the Hitler's government. The Jews in Russia today suffer for the same reason as the Jews in Germany. Jewry canot survive under an un-democratic dictatorship, and as they fight for their rights and the rights of all minorities, they become the loudest spokesmen for the enemies of the dictatorship. They are a natural first target, first because they are small in numbers and secondly because they are unusually vocal

Hitler was well aware of the fact that the Jews who escaped Germany became the sources of information against his government. Non-Jewish Germans did not flee Germany in anything but a trickle, but the Jews fled early in large numbers and they told the story of Hitler's treachery to the world. This was long before the Jews were herded to the concentration camps. Hitler knew that the Jews were serving to rally the democracies against him. He did not want the democratic goverments to suspect his grandiose plans for world conquest. Yet, precisely, because the story of his plans were broadcast wholesale around the world by Jews , the democracies were somewhat more prepared for Hitler's invasions, although if truth be known, the democracies did not wish to listen to the warnings that were

broadcast to them. At any rate, when the allies invaded Germany, the German officers considered this the triumph of the warnings, to the Germans, the Allied victory was a Jewish victory. Indeed, in many ways, it was just that.

4. Eichmann's sin- a sin of an entire generation

To the credit of Life magazine, it followed up its publication of Eichmann's confession with an editorial. In this editorial, Life claims that the sin of Eichman is unfortunately not the sin of one man or one group of men; it is the sin of an entire generation of men, including Americans. Eichmann's sin was that of believing that if a man does his duty by his country and follows orders, he is doing what he has to do. Eichmann's sin was in believing in his country, "right or wrong". His sin was in his 100%, unquestioning patriotism . Life makes the point that each of us has the responsibility to check his behavior regularly in order to determine if what we are doing along the line of duty is consistent with what is truly right.

The sin of our generation is that too many of us believe with perfect faith in everything that our country or our religion teaches us, without comparing these teachings with standards of right and wrong. In the name of country and sometimes in the name of God, we learn to hate and discriminate, and ultimately to harm others.

Recently, I was sitting behind a mother and son in the movies when the boy leaned over to his mother and asked, "Mother, all Jews are bad aren't they?". The mother did not answer. She had lost this opportunity to correct an impression her child had gained, perhaps in the his own back-yard. By her silence she was supporting his ignorance and his hate, and how many innocent human beings will suffer from her silence, we will never know.

Eichmann himself speaks of the time when he was ready to trade 1 million Jews for 10,000 trucks for the German army. He writes that he wondered who would accept the Jews if the Germans were to release them from the camps of death . His own words are, "The plain fact was that there was no place on earth that would have been ready to accept the Jews." He was right, even America held its door shut except for the tiniest trickle of refugees. Ours was the sin of silence, of unconcern, of neglect.

5. ~~Someone once wrote~~ it has been held that the Jews are the barometer of democracy in a nation. If the Jews , as a minority, are well-treated, then you know that the democracy is healthy. If the Jews are molested, then you know that the democracy is weakening. History now records for Germany that Hitler was not really after the Jews. He was after democracy. He not only wanted to extinguish the Jews; he wanted to extinguish the concepts of love and justice that are a cardinal part of Judaism, and of Christianity. ~~As~~ The Fascists felt with the poet Ezra Pound ~~who~~ said, " It isn't that I don't like Jews, but I can never forgive them for giving Christianity to the world". It is a tragedy that Christians have not begun to learn that whether by accident of history or by divine ordination, the ~~Jew's~~ fate of the Jews is inter-locked with the fate of democracy and with Christianity. ~~When the Jew is endangered the~~ In a real sense, the Jews are merely the front-line troops for Christians. We are in an over-exposed position, because of our minority status, and because we are bold enough to ~~cling to our difference~~ assert our differences, but when the Jews start to fall, the rights of man are threatened.

Eichmann himself wrote, " Now, however, when through the malice of fate a large part of these Jews whom we fought against are alive, I must concede that fate must have wanted it so. I always claimed", he added, that we were fighting against a foe who through thousands of years of learning and development had become superior to us". Perhaps we might say that not fate but God willed this victory of the Jews, this triumph ~~and~~ of democracy over militarism and fascism, ~~and~~ We might also add that the Jew is superior to most of his tormentors precisely because he does not blindly follow the majority, nor passively accept the dictation of the leader. We dare to be different and to follow the right as our experience and our learning and our faith give us to see the right, ~~and~~ Because of this unwillingness to follow orders blindly, we are able to ~~stand now over the gr~~ witness the trial of the hangman and the German ~~patriot~~ super-patriot, Adolph Eichmann.

~~We have stood at the grave of many tyrants. And while their death can bring us little joy or comfort, we are at least able to salve our wounds by saying, "Thank God we were not among the persecutors"~~

P) It is ~~part~~ perhaps also part of the "malice of fate" that Eichmann will be tried in a country newly-created by those few who were able to avoid his intricate ~~vast~~ and widely-strewn web. Because of men like E., the Israeli desert has bloomed forth into a ~~desert~~ garden. It would be most fitting if at the spot of E.'s grave, the Israelis would plant a tree that gives fruit or shade to mankind. On the base of the tree, we might put these words from the prophet Isaiah — 55:13 "Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress
" " " briar " " " myrtle
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial

over →

... and the mountains & the hills before you
shall sing & break forth into singing
and all the trees of the field
shall clap their hands."