

May 15, 2013

It is history day. Tomorrow we'll continue with coverage of the creeps in DC.

Maybe after this travesty of an administration passes from the scene, a memorial to Winston Churchill will find its way to DC. Richard Jencks makes the case in a [WSJ OpEd](#).

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This spring marks the 50th anniversary of a White House ceremony when President Kennedy granted honorary U.S. citizenship to Winston Churchill, the son of an American mother. It is a propitious time to bestow another honor on him.

The other history lesson for today is offered by the May 11th anniversary of the Mossad capture of Adolf Eichmann, one of the most notorious of the German persecutors of Jews. We get the story from the [Jewish Virtual Library](#).

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In April 1953, the Capri firm declared bankruptcy and Eichmann moved his family to Buenos Aires, where he worked for a number a companies. He was hired by Mercedes Benz in March 1959, where he continued to use the alias Ricardo Klement.

No one had heard him for years. But in the autumn of 1957 Walter Eytan at the Israeli Foreign Ministry, got a call from Fritz Bauer, the public prosecutor of the province of Hesse, Germany. Hesse told Eytan that Eichmann was alive and living in Argentina.

Eytan immediately alerted Isser Harel, the head of the Mossad. Harel spent one autumn night reading Eichmann's dossier. At that point Harel didn't know much about him. As Harel writes in his book on the capture of Eichmann, *The House on Garibaldi Street*; "I didn't know what sort of man Eichmann was. I didn't know with what morbid zeal he pursued his murderous work or how he went into the fray to destroy one miserable Jew with the same ardor he devoted to the annihilation of an entire community. I didn't know that he was capable of ordering the slaughter of babies - and depicting himself as a disciplined soldier; of directing outrages on women - and priding himself on his loyalty to an oath; or of sending helpless old men to their deaths - and classifying himself as an 'idealist'...But I knew when I rose from my desk at dawn that in everything pertaining to the Jews he was the paramount authority and his were the hands that pulled the strings controlling manhunt and massacre. I knew that at all the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals this man was pointed to as the head butcher. I knew that he was a past master in police methods, and that on the strength of his professional skill and in the light of his total lack of conscience, he would be an exceedingly dangerous quarry. I knew that when the war was over he had succeeded in blotting out all trace of himself with supreme expertise."

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WSJ

Why Capitol Hill Needs a Churchill Reminder

by Richard W. Jencks

Winston Churchill was named prime minister of Great Britain on May 11, 1940, the day after the Germans, having conquered Eastern Europe, began their offensive in Western Europe. Holland fell on May 14, Belgium on the 26th.

As the month progresses the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, urges again and again that peace negotiations be opened with Hitler through the mediation of Mussolini. The Italian ambassador in London has made credible assurances that Hitler will offer reasonable peace terms to Britain.

President Roosevelt, on the other hand, shares Churchill's view that surrender is unthinkable. FDR is deviously using his powers to evade the U.S. Neutrality Act and make war material available to Britain. But it is an election year, and a May 1940 Gallup poll shows that only 36% of Americans are willing to help England if doing so means a risk of war.

Meanwhile, Charles Lindbergh, an American hero, an aviation expert, the sensitive son of a pacifist father, sets the theme for an isolationist America: "We are in danger of war today, not because European people have attempted to interfere in America, but because we American people have attempted to interfere in the internal affairs of Europe." Among the British population there is growing fear. In Sussex the novelist Virginia Woolf writes in her diary on May 15 after talking with her husband. "This morning we discussed suicide if Hitler lands. Jews beaten up. What point in waiting?" Leonard Woolf is a Jew.



Winston Churchill watching a Stirling bomber during a visit to a Bomber Command aerodrome in England, in June 1941.

The British philosopher Bertrand Russell, who had been jailed in World War I for his pacifism by a government of which Churchill was a minister, is considering whether he should abandon those pacifist beliefs if Britain faces imminent invasion. He does not think that passive resistance would work against Hitler. These considerations do not prevent Russell from confiding to his philosophy students at the University of California in Los Angeles (this writer among them) that world peace, in the long run, will probably be better served by Hitler's victory. World peace, Russell posits, cannot be had without world government. Over the long years ahead, he says, civilizing influences will operate to soften the bestial edges of Nazi rule.

Philosophy of sorts is at work elsewhere. In arms factories, members of England's Communist Party are pursuing deliberate slowdown tactics on orders from Moscow. Stalin still believes that Hitler will adhere to the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact. (Stalin will hold that belief, against the advice of his own intelligence agents and Western emissaries, until Russia is attacked in June 1941.) In America, FDR is assailed by the Stalinist left as a war monger. In late May, Halifax urges a joint Anglo-French approach to Hitler through Italian mediation. On May 28, Churchill and his war cabinet consider the question for hours. The cabinet appears to be evenly divided until Clement Attlee breaks the deadlock. "Once any negotiations begin," he says, "we should find it impossible to rally the morale of the people."

On the second of June, Britain completes the evacuation of some 222,000 beaten British troops from Dunkirk, many by means of the private boats of British channel residents. Churchill had only dared hope for the rescue of 30,000.

But the defeat is palpable and news of it prompts that great moral preceptor, Mahatma Gandhi, to write to the British Viceroy of India: "This manslaughter must be stopped. You are losing. If you persist it will only result in greater bloodshed. Hitler is not a bad man."

On June 4, Churchill gives the House of Commons his historic accounting of Dunkirk, the status of the war, and the prospects for its conclusion. His peroration embraces the same sort of statement of resolve that Halifax had set down in his diary of the May 28 war-cabinet meeting as "the most frightful rot."

The frightful rot was now represented by these words: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated or starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle until, in God's good time, the new world, with all its power and might, steps forward to the rescue and liberation of the old."

The next morning, Virginia Woolf's old and close friend, Vita Sackville-West, writes to her husband, Harold Nicholson, about the speech: "Even repeated by the announcer it sent shivers (not of fear) down my spine. I think one of the reasons why one is stirred by his Elizabethan phrases is that one feels the whole massive backing of power and resolve behind them, like a great fortress; they are never words for words' sake."

Indeed, they were words intended to foreclose peace. Who can tell what that peace would have meant? Probably Hitler would have turned on Russia in 1940 and would have been victorious. There could have been no American foothold in Europe. Hitler's death camps would have had to be greatly expanded.

Africa, the Middle East with its oil, and the road to India would have been Hitler's for the taking. Japan would have accelerated her move into Southeast Asia. America, in her isolation, would be at peace—for how long, no one could know.

Hitler, for a while, did not give up his hopes. After ordering his generals to prepare for the invasion of Britain he convened the Reichstag on July 19 to warn Britain of "unending suffering and misery" if she did not accept his peace terms. Later that summer, along with Hitler's bombs, came leaflets showered on southern England, reiterating those terms.

It was much too late. Churchill had made a negotiated peace impossible.

There is a grotesque stereotype that he was a buoyant and bellicose man who had simply found his time. What really differentiated him from the pragmatic foreign secretary, from the hero-aviator, from the ambivalent philosopher, and from the Indian apostle of nonresistance, was that Churchill's moral judgment of evil was more acute and implacable than theirs. He himself, in his history of the war, called the final result "Triumph and Tragedy." But what we of the generation who participated in it called it at the time, and since, was Victory.

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Mr. Jencks is a former president of the CBS Broadcast Group.

Jewish Virtual Library

The Capture of Adolf Eichmann

by Doron Geller

In 1934 [Adolf Eichmann](#) was appointed to the Jewish section of the "security services" of the [SS](#). From then on he became deeply involved with the formulation and operation of the "[final solution](#)" to the Jewish question". He drew up the idea of deportation of Jews into [ghettos](#), and went about concentrating Jews in isolated areas with murderous efficiency. He took great pride in the role he played in the death of 6 million mainly European Jews.

A number of the top Nazis were captured after the war and tried at [Nuremberg](#). Many escaped. Many, too, were sought out by members of the Jewish Brigade of the British Army. In addition to assisting in the illegal immigration of Jews to Palestine, they also organized themselves into a group dedicated to tracking down Nazis. They called themselves the "Nokmim" - the Avengers. They located and captured hundreds of SS men, especially those involved with the running of concentration camps.

At first they handed over the SS men to the Allied authorities, but many of the SS men "escaped in the chaos that followed the war or were released." At one point the Russians released two Nazi Germans who had been turned over to them by the Jews. The Germans walked out into the street, laughing at their release. But not for long. The Avengers "cut the men down with a burst of sub-machine gunfire."

From then on the Avengers simply tracked down and killed former Nazis. Perhaps 1000 Nazis were tracked down in this way after the war.

But Adolf Eichmann had escaped both the Nuremberg trials and the Avengers. All trace of him had been lost in May 1945. He had actually remained in Europe until 1950, maintaining no contact with his family. In 1950, with the help of an organization assisting former Nazis to leave Europe, he escaped to Argentina. He sent for his wife and children two years later.

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Eichmann's wife and two children arrived in Argentina in mid-1952, and accompanied him to Tucuman. He registered his two children at a German school, known to promote anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi propoganda at the time, under the name Eichmann, suggesting again how the Argentine government aided and abetted former Nazis and their sympathizers.

In April 1953, the Capri firm declared bankruptcy and Eichmann moved his family to Buenos Aires, where he worked for a number of companies. He was hired by Mercedes Benz in March 1959, where he continued to use the alias Ricardo Klement.

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Eytan immediately alerted Isser Harel, the head of the Mossad. Harel spent one autumn night reading Eichmann's dossier. At that point Harel didn't know much about him. As Harel writes in his book on the capture of Eichmann, *The House on Garibaldi Street*; "I didn't know what sort of man Eichmann was. I didn't know with what morbid zeal he pursued his murderous work or how he went into the fray to destroy one miserable Jew with the same ardor he devoted to the annihilation of an entire community. I didn't know that he was capable of ordering the slaughter of babies - and depicting himself as a disciplined soldier; of directing outrages on women - and priding himself on his loyalty to an oath; or of sending helpless old men to their deaths - and classifying himself as an 'idealist'...But I knew when I rose from my desk at dawn that in everything pertaining to the Jews he was the paramount authority and his were the hands that pulled the strings controlling manhunt and massacre. I knew that at all the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals this man was pointed to as the head butcher. I knew that he was a past master in police methods, and that on the strength of his professional skill and in the light of his total lack of conscience, he would be an exceedingly dangerous quarry. I knew that when the war was over he had succeeded in blotting out all trace of himself with supreme expertise."

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It was not going to be an easy task. Eichmann was certainly living under an assumed identity, and had friends in and out of the Argentinian government. Moreover, Harel determined that he would capture him - but not kill him in the style of the Avengers. He was going to bring him to Israel and make him stand trial before the people he so murderously tried to wipe out.

Harel asked Ben-Gurion for the go-ahead. Ben-Gurion gave it. And thus the operational machinery of searching for Eichmann went into effect.

They had slim leads at first, but there were leads. One of Eichmann's supposed sons, Nicholas, had gotten involved with an Argentinian Jewish girl, and apparently not knowing she was Jewish, boasted about his father's role in the killing of the Jews of Europe. He had mentioned that it would have been better if the Nazis had "finished the job" during World War II. Nicholas Eichmann also used the family name Eichmann openly at times.

The Mossad followed up on it. But when they checked the old address of what was supposed to have been Eichmann's house, he no longer lived there. That lead didn't go anywhere, other than clarifying that one of Eichmann's sons was indeed in Argentina with Adolf Eichmann.

But the investigation still moved slowly and delicately. "The investigators could not risk the danger that their prey would learn he was being followed. Even more difficult was the necessity of identifying their man beyond the slightest doubt. The only thing worse than losing the real

Eichmann would be capturing the wrong one." But investigators had a very difficult task. Eichmann had carefully destroyed all evidence of his former identity. He had even removed the tattoo all SS men had under their left armpit. All the investigators had were blurred pictures before the war. No fingerprints were available.

In late 1959 the Israelis discovered that Eichmann had changed his name after the war to Ricardo Klement. He was on the way to Argentina when he did so. Apparently his sons sometimes still used their family name.

Eichmann had run a laundry business for a while, which went bankrupt. The Mossad team followed Eichmann's son's trail and was led to Garibaldi Street in the San Fernando section of Buenos Aires. "They surveyed the house constantly, photographing it from every angle with a telephoto lens, making notes about its lack of a fence, its fiberboard door, its unplastered walls. They observed the habits of the balding, bespectacled man who lived there with his family. They felt certain he must be Eichmann."

But they still didn't have the proof.

On March 21, 1960, "the agents got their proof." On that evening Ricardo Klement got off the bus "and walked slowly toward his home. In his hands was a bouquet of flowers." Klement gave the bouquet to the woman who greeted him at the door. Their children were dressed for a special occasion. Later they heard the sound of laughter, of people in a celebratory mood.

March 21 was the date of the Eichmann's silver wedding anniversary.

There were no more doubts.

Isser Harel decided to go to Argentina to personally supervise the capture of Eichmann. The Mossad team devised a plan for "capturing Eichmann and flying him out of Argentina with forged documents. Every detail was worked out and every contingency planned for. Minor changes were made in accordance with the new information supplied by the team in Argentina, who by this time were shadowing Eichmann's every move."

In May 1960 Argentina would be celebrating its 150th year of independence. Additional Israeli operatives were sent to Argentina in connection with the larger number of people who would be on hand for the country's anniversary. Each man was handpicked by Isser Harel for his or her special qualities developed and proven over years of undercover intelligence work. All had risked their lives in Arab and other countries." Each one could be trusted and depended on in times of crisis.

The leader of the group had proved his mettle helping illegal Jewish immigrants land on the Palestine shores under the vigilant eyes of the British. He later took direct action against the British himself. He had also fought Arab marauders and had been wounded. He later joined Harel's Mossad.

All the others had survived Nazi persecution. Most of them had seen most if not all of their families wiped out in Nazi concentration camps.

The man who was chosen to grab and overpower Eichmann had lost his sister and her three children at the hands of the Nazis. He would finally get his chance to do his part in avenging them, to whatever extent he could.

Another member of the team had been one of the original members of the "Nokmim" or Avengers we have already discussed.

Altogether, there were over 30 members of the team.

"Nothing was left to chance. To ensure that there were no problems with documents, plane connections, visas, health certificates, character references for the unit, a miniature travel agency was set up by the Mossad" in an unidentified European city. They tried hard not to leave the impression that they would be operating from Israel. As Isser Harel well knew, Israel would be violating Argentinian sovereignty by kidnapping Eichmann and taking him out of the country. Moreover, Argentina and South America had been a haven for Nazis and their sympathizers since the end of World War II, and it could be counted on that many of them would make things difficult for the Israelis if they knew what was afoot.

Israeli agents began to fly in from all over the globe ostensibly for Argentina's 150th anniversary celebrations, but in reality for capturing Eichmann. No two came from the same city. They rented safe houses and constantly changed cars to throw off anybody who might be watching them or who would get suspicious.

On May 11, Mossad operatives were ready to move into action. They knew Eichmann was home from work at about 7:40 p.m. They were there at 7:35. Two Mossad operatives tinkered with the engine of their car. Another car was parked about 30 yards behind the first one, and the passengers were also tinkering with their engine. A bicyclist stopped and offered to assist them in their efforts to fix their car. He must have been surprised when they politely but firmly refused his offer.

Two buses came and passed, but Eichmann "didn't alight from either of them. The men lying in wait began to get a little worried. Could it be that he had come back early that day and was home already? Perhaps he wasn't coming at all?" Four days had passed since they had observed Eichmann last; they began to wonder if he had changed his routine.

Another bus passed. Eichmann was not in it. Although they began to question whether he would arrive, nobody gave voice to their doubts.

Eight o'clock came. This was some time after Eichmann usually arrived, and some of the Mossad operatives thought they should get out of there. They didn't want to "risk spoiling their chances of putting their plan into action another day." However, without telling the others, the leader, Gabi, had decided to wait until 8:30 p.m.

In the second car, Ehud, had decided to continue waiting as well - although neither Gabi nor Ehud had communicated his thoughts to the other.

At five minutes after 8 another bus pulled up. A man began walking towards Garibaldi Street. The Mossad man in the first car recognized Eichmann immediately; in the other car, they recognized him 15 seconds later.

Eichmann approached the car. One of the Mossad operatives said to him "Just a moment" and then pounced on him. Eichmann "let out a terrible yell, like a wild beast caught in a trap..." as he fell to the ground. Then the others pulled the panic-stricken Eichmann into one of the cars. "The whole operation had taken less than ten minutes."

They started driving off. Eichmann's head was pressed below the view of a passerby. He showed no resistance. They gagged him, tied his hands and feet, put a pair of goggles that blocked his vision and lowered him to the floor. During the whole operation, Eichmann didn't utter a sound." The Mossad team limited their verbal contact with him to a terse "If you don't keep still, you'll be shot."

They drove off towards their safe house without a hitch. The two cars were let into the garage by another member of the Mossad team. Eichmann was taken out. It was 8:55 - 50 minutes after the bus had arrived.

They drove the first car back to the city in case it had been noticed. They then shackled one of Eichmann's legs to a bed frame. They took off his clothes and put pajamas on him. They checked in his mouth for poison - they didn't want him to take his own life before he had been tried in an Israeli court.

They looked for the SS tattoo under his left armpit. It had been removed. He only briefly tried to hide his identity, then he cooperated. He told them "that when he was briefly in American hands after the war he had tried to remove the number with a blade." They found all of his other distinguishing features they had on record. His cooperation was full and unhesitating - even obsequious. "Gone was the SS officer who once had hundreds of men to carry out his commands. Now he was frightened and nervous, at times pathetically eager to help."

The Mossad team could hardly believe that such a monstrous criminal could look so ordinary. But that was their impression. Everyone who saw him was amazed at his extraordinarily ordinary appearance. They expected him to look more sinister, more imposing - but there was nothing.

They kept him for a week in a room in a safe house, never letting him out of their sight. They had to plan the next phase - getting him out of Argentina. They had organized an EI-AI plane to leave Buenos Aires on May 20. Its departure could not be advanced for fear of arousing the suspicions of the Argentinian authorities.

Isser Harel was almost alone among Mossad operatives who felt that the Eichmann family would not make a public fuss about the missing Eichmann. If his missing would be brought into the public eye, it would almost certainly bring to light his true identity - not Ricardo Klement, but Adolf Eichmann. He would receive little succor then. Moreover, his Nazi associates could also be implicated if they got publicly involved.

His family did call hospitals and clinics, but avoided calling the police. They contacted their friends but none were willing to help. "Most of them ran for their lives and scattered all over the continent. Some even headed for Europe - just in case the group who had seized Hitler's henchman were also on their tracks." They assumed it must have been the Israelis that had gone to all the effort to seek out and capture Eichmann in South America. They assumed that the Israelis might invest the same effort in capturing them.

Several acts of revenge were plotted by Nazi sympathizers in Argentina following Eichmann's abduction, including kidnapping the Israeli ambassador and bombing the Israeli Embassy, though neither came to fruition, according to researcher and author Uki Goni. On August 17, 1960, a young group of Argentine Nazis called the "Huaraches" attached Jewish students in the Legions National Pimientos. They fired several shots and wounded a 15-year-old student named Edgardo Vilnius.

The Mossad also tried to capture Joseph Mengele, the sadistic Nazi doctor who had performed particularly cruel experiments on Jewish men, women and children without anesthetics in the Auschwitz death camp. The Mossad nearly got him, but were unable to finalize the capture. Unfortunately he was never taken by the Israelis.

The Mossad still had to plan the taking of Eichmann out of the country without arousing the suspicions of the Argentinian authorities. Thus they sent one of their own agents into a local hospital with the claim that he had suffered brain damage from a fake accident. He was supposed to exhibit gradual progress.

On the morning of May 20 it was shown that the patient had recovered sufficiently to fly home to his native Israel.

The Mossad simply took the certificate and substituted Eichmann's name and photograph on the form.

Eichmann was then drugged so that his senses would be blurred when brought to the plane. He would still be able to walk, if supported by a man on either side of him.

They dressed him in an El-Al uniform and brought him aboard. "The Nazi prisoner cooperated so fully that at one stage he reminded his captors that they had forgotten to put on his airline jacket. 'That will arouse suspicion for I will be conspicuously different from the other members of the squad who are fully dressed,' lectured Eichmann."

The Mossad men drove in a group of three cars, with Eichmann in the second, to the airport. The men in the first car "began singing and laughing as they approached the guard house entrance. The driver explained in an "embarrassed" state that the men had enjoyed themselves so much that some were still dozing off.

The guard didn't question the ruse. In fact, he evinced a masculine fellowship in the results of their carousing.

Two Mossad members took the half-conscious Eichmann aboard the plane. There were no foul-ups. Many of the crew members got very emotionally disturbed finding out Eichmann was aboard the plane. But on Isser Harel's orders no one manhandled him until the trial.

Two months after Eichmann's abduction in Buenos Aires, Eichmann's wife Veronica formally presented herself to the Argentine Federal Court on July 12, 1950 and denounced her husband's kidnapping, where she revealed the documents concerning Eichmann's entry into Argentina. In her statement to the Court, she proclaimed, "I understand that with this declaration I am undeniably admitting that Ricardo Klement is Adolf Eichmann. For the record, let it be known

that he does not deny his name and he will confront his responsibility as I have assumed mine by bringing the knowledge of the occurrences to the courts."

The Argentine court that received Veronica's complaint (that he husband was denied due process) officially closed the case at the end of 1962, claiming they were unable to identify Eichmann's kidnapers.

Adolf Eichmann stood trial before an Israeli court in 1961. The trial, with the recounting of the ghastly crimes the Nazis perpetrated on the Jews, brought out a tumultuous emotional response among the Israeli public and the Jewish people as a whole.

Memories that had been repressed burst forth in the courtroom. People screamed and cried and wanted to attack and kill Eichmann in his bulletproof glass box. The whole story of Eichmann's directing the "final solution" came out into the open. He asked for understanding and mercy from the Jewish people - claiming that he had acted "under orders", that he was just a "cog in the machine", that he had only done as he had been told - that it was the Nazi government's fault, and not his own for what had been perpetrated on the Jewish people.



He did not receive sympathy and was hanged in 1961. Finally, a persecutor of the Jewish people had been forced to stand trial and had been condemned by a Jewish court - a court of the state of Israel. After many centuries, those who had been freely humiliated, ostracized, deported, expelled, and murdered the Jews would be answerable for their crimes. The Jews now had a nation, and an army, and a very efficient Intelligence Service to look after its interests - the interests of the Jews worldwide. Adolf Eichmann found that out first hand. It was probably Isser Harel's greatest achievement.

Twenty-one days after Eichmann's execution, unrest in Argentina over the incident returned anew. In June 1962, nationalist extremists abducted a 19-year-old Jewish girl, tortured her, and scarred her with swastikas.

Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion was revered as a hero in the Jewish community in Buenos Aires, amidst official condemnations made by the Argentine government at the U.N. The government was pressured by the nationalist-right to sever diplomatic ties with Israel, and the Israel Ambassador Arie Levant was indeed expelled for a brief time. Only a short four months later, tensions between the two countries simmered down and relations returned to normal.

The Mossad officially acknowledged their involvement in Eichmann's abduction in February 2005, in response to an article published in the Israeli daily newspaper, Ma'ariv.