

Lord Russell of Liverpool: Eichmann Trial a Finale

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Jerusalem Post Reporter

For me, personally, the Eichmann case is a kind of finale. I feel as if I had come around full circle since the publication of "The Scourge of the Swastika."

The author of the book on Nazi crimes that rocked Britain in 1954, Lord Russell of Liverpool, told The Jerusalem Post on Saturday that with the trial of Eichmann, Nazi war crimes would perhaps cease to be a major issue. He noted, however, that those responsible for the Auschwitz outrages are still to be tried, or, worse, in West Germany.

In answer to a question he said: "No, I don't believe Hitler is alive; perhaps Martin Bormann (Hitler's deputy) is."

Lord Russell is now in Israel to collect material for a series of newspaper articles on Eichmann's part in the destruction of the Jews. He has also been commissioned by the Israeli Embassy in London to write a short book on Hitler's "final solution" for the Jews, though the details of the book have not yet been worked out.

Since his arrival on Thursday as guest of the Foreign Ministry, he has already called at Yad Vashem, spending more than three hours on Friday studying documents on Eichmann's career. Some of the material he had already seen in France; at the Foreign Office in London, the records of the International Military Tribunal; and the Weiner Library. Nevertheless there is much that he can use, and the institution has kindly offered to send on to him microfilms of these papers, he said.

When he published "The Scourge" in 1954, Lord Russell had been Deputy Advocate-General. He had been pressured by the Government not to publish the scathing indictment of Nazi war crimes for fear it might harm relations with West Germany. He resigned his official position and saw the book through the press.

Post-War Prosecutor He began his career as "scourge of the Nazis" as Deputy Advocate-General in the British Army of the Rhine, where he was responsible for prosecuting all war crimes committed in the British Zone of Germany. This involved 354 trials and over 1,000 war criminals.

When he returned to England in 1951, he found such profound ignorance on what had happened, and decided that what was badly needed was a short factual book to be read by everybody. At that time, the only work available to the public was the massive 46-volume records of the Nuremberg trials, which obviously was not for the ordinary reader.

"The Scourge" sold tremendously, partly no doubt, Lord Russell says, because the Government had tried to stop it. There is nothing like a ban to sell a book, he observed. And it is still selling; the 16th hard-cover edition appeared in April after some 180,000 were sold. This is apart from the sale of about half a million paper-back edition, published by Corst, and apart from editions published in 17 foreign languages including Hebrew.

He is next due back to attend the opening of the Eichmann trial. Another London paper has commissioned him to write two articles; one on the first few days of the trial, and the other on the closing sessions.

The holding of the trial in an Israel court he described as historic, justice, and he thought that this was the opinion held by the majority of people, people not concerned with legal niceties.

Lord Russell visited Germany last June, after an absence of nine years, as guest of the West German Government. He was agreeably surprised that what he saw and heard from men that means...

Young Improved

He met with a great number of young people, and found strong evidence that they did not have that old German reverence for authority characteristic of the older generation. More was being done to educate youth than he had expected, he said, though this might not apply to all Germany, since education is the responsibility of the individual Land (states), of which he visited only one or two. He found West Berlin to be very good in this respect, perhaps because young teachers were engaged there, people who didn't mind being asked where they were when these things were happening.

Of course there are still dangers, Lord Russell went on, and it is premature to pass a conclusive opinion, and "good Germans" admit this.

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