

4. Israel: The Myth of the best intelligence agency of the word. From the noble avenger to a moral hypocrite?

Prime Minister David Ben Gurion never said that the Mossad kidnapped war criminal Adolf Eichmann. This version was invented first by journalists, quoting anonymous sources; then, from 1975 on, through accounts written by three Mossad-agents, among them the head of Mossad, Isser Harel. Over the years, Mossad officials liked the role of the "noble-minded kidnapper" who broke international laws in order to do justice. On their homepage (www.mossad.gov.il - section "history") they praised "their heroic action". Steven Spielberg shows it in his film "Munich", Mrs. Golda Meir shouting: "As we brought Eichmann to justice, we will bring the Palestine terrorists to justice too".

There are a lot of books and films about Eichmann, repeating the Mossad version of kidnapping the war criminal in Buenos Aires. If now the truth will come out, the perception of the intelligence agency can fall from the "noble avenger" to a moral hypocrite.

It is a historical truth that the Israeli government knew during years that Eichmann lived in South America and did anything to detain him. In 1952, Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal received information about the presence of Eichmann in Argentina and tried to convince the Israeli authorities to capture him. In vain. Remember that the CIA had hired many Nazis for the Cold War and Israel had other problems in the Middle East.

From 1957 on, a refugee from a concentration camp in Germany, Lothar Hermann, who lived in southern Argentina, passed the information about where Eichmann lived to the General Attorney in Frankfurt, Fritz Bauer. And Bauer passed this information to the government in Tel Aviv. But nothing happened. Wiesenthal wrote in his memoirs: "the American Jews had other problems. And the Israelis had another interest, not in Eichmann. They must survive against Nasser".

It was not only this. The young Hebrew state had yet another interest that was far more important than any idea of justice; it was the idea of its own nuclear bomb.

In the fifties, the U.S. State Department did not have much sympathy for the Israeli government. Harry Truman's policy of no arms proliferation in the Middle East was still in force. Therefore, Ben Gurion looked to Europe for technological help for his first nuclear plant in Dimona. The attack by Israel's armed forces against Egypt during the Suez War was part of an agreement of nuclear collaboration between France and Israel.

But Paris was under pressure from the U.S. And in 1958, Charles de Gaulle came to power and in order to pursue his own nuclear program, he cancelled the collaboration with Israel. Ben Gurion then sent Simon Peres to Argentina, Gabon and South Africa to buy natural uranium. And he negotiated successfully with the Argentinean government of Arturo Frondizi to buy uranium. The relationship between Israel and Argentina was so good, that on the 9th of May 1960, two days before Mr. Eichmann disappeared, the bilateral treaty about Extradition between Israel and Argentina was signed. The climate had become so positive between the two countries that Ben Gurion did not want to risk catching a Nazi hidden in the Pampa.

It was a great surprise for president Frondizi when on 23rd of May 1960, Ben Gurion announced in the Knesset that Mr. Eichmann was in Israeli detention and that he will be taken to trial for his crimes against humanity. As it was known that Eichmann was living in Argentina, journalists invented the version of a "kidnapping" and this meant a severe violation of Argentinean sovereignty. Some days later, Ben Gurion wrote a letter to his furious Argentinean colleague. He did not explain how Eichmann had come to Israel but he apologized, mentioning a "group of volunteers": "I am aware of the serious violation of Argentinean laws - committed by persons who, after a long investigation, bring their work to an end. I am sure that only few people in the world do not understand their noble-minded motivation and their moral justification".

Ben Gurion never publicly said how he was "convinced" to receive the war criminal after years of disinterest and who convinced him. Had it been Standard Oil which wanted to get rid of a witness who knew about their secret pact with the Nazis and had started to talk? This is possible, but not necessarily the primary reason. For Israel, too, the talkative Nazi had become an incalculable risk.

What could Eichmann have revealed? The co-operation of the Nazis with the Zionist movement in the thirties? At that time, they had a common interest: the eviction of the Jews from Europe and the establishment of a separate Jewish state with immigration of Jews to Palestine. This co-operation was not secret. Ben Gurion had said clearly: " It is not a task of Zionism to save the part of Israel which is in Europe, but to save the land of Israel for the Jewish people. The Jewish Agency is convinced of the fact that a minority which can be saved must be chosen for the needs of the Zionist project in Palestine ".

While the anti-fascists appealed for the world-wide boycott against Hitler's regime, the German Ministry of economic affairs concluded with the Jewish Agency and the Zionist union in the summer 1933 the Haavara agreement. It allowed Jews who wanted to emigrate, to transfer parts of their possessions (at least 1.000 pounds of sterling) in the form of German goods to Palestine. Ben Gurion and Golda Meir participated in the Haavara Company in Tel Aviv.

The agreement allowed 52.000 well-to-do Jews to save themselves and their property. And the transferred 140 million Reichsmarks were, for the Jewish settlements in Palestine, an important injection of capital. The SS and Eichmann in the "Department of Jewish Affairs" actively helped with the emigration of German and Austrian Jews. Eichmann met in Cairo in 1937 several times with leaders of the Haganah to discuss details of the money transfer. These details were never known.

Eichmann continued negotiating with the Zionists, also during his time in Hungary (1944) when he offered to exchange one million Jews who were awaiting deportation to Auschwitz for 10.000 trucks for the east front. Ben Gurion supported this deal which was rejected by the Allies. At that time also Eichmann offered, along with his superior in the SS hierarchy, Kurt Becher, another deal in Budapest with wealthy Jews about departure. Becher lived after the war as a successful businessman in Bremen, without Israel ever demanding his extradition. Becher was protected. He never talked.

It is obvious that after the Eichmann-trial, where Eichmann made no compromising declaration about former allies of the Nazis or his former employer Standard Oil, the

diplomatic relations between Washington and Tel Aviv improved, also in military questions. From that time on until today, no U.S. government is scandalized at the (illegal) nuclear bomb in Israeli hands.

I asked several times for an official statement of Israel if they confirm the Mossad version of "their" kidnapping of war criminal Eichmann from Argentina - first in the Embassies in Berlin and Buenos Aires. The press officer in the Embassy on Buenos Aires hung up the phone. I asked for the records and interrogatories taken between May 11th and May 20th in Uruguay. No comment neither.

I asked the Premier Minister, the Defense Commission of the Knesset and Mossad directly (www.mossad.gov.il - "contact us"). The only answer, which I had received, was a letter from the office of the Prime Minister: "we acknowledge receipt of your letter and have noted the contents". No word if I will ever receive an answer to my questions.

But, in the meantime, Mossad removed from its homepage "their heroic action" against Adolf Eichmann.
