Eichmann Before Jerusalem – book review

TITLE: **Eichmann Before Jerusalem**
AUTHOR: **Bettina Stangneth**

PUBLISHED: In English, Alfred A. Knopf, New York (2014)

- **GENRE:** Non-fiction
- **INTENDED AUDIENCE:** Historians, and those interested in World War II history.
- **GENERAL INFORMATION:** Examines the life of the notorious war criminal, **Adolf Eichmann**, following his escape from Europe after World War II. Also highlights his significant role in organizing the murder of millions of people, including 6 million Jews in the **Holocaust**. Touches on his capture (kidnapping) in Argentina by the Israeli **Mossad** in 1960. Eichmann was taken to Israel, tried as a war criminal, convicted, sentenced to death in December 1961, and executed by hanging in May 1962.
- **REVIEW:** Eichmann was one of the central figures in the Nazis' plans to deliver Jews to their death. He was caught by the Israeli Masaad, spirited out of his new home, Argentina, tried and executed in Israel.
  Apparently Adolf Eichmann's name was not as well known as other notorious Nazi war criminals—at least not until he was captured (kidnapped) in 1960 and taken to Israel for trial.

  Although considered by many to be the architect of the **"final solution,"** as late as 1939, Eichmann was scheming to exile Jews from German held land through forced emigration (p. 13). European Jews soon learned about Eichmann and his efforts to expel and disenfranchise them (p. 19).

In 1939, Eichmann helped orchestrate the efforts to put thousands of Jews on trains, with no known destination. The Nazis were concerned about public opinion, as this was all done in full view of the public. The public did not object in any significant way.

By 1940, Eichmann was a Gestapo official in charge of forced Jewish emigration and their "relocation" in the east (p. 22). Eichmann "*showed a talent of organizing large scale population displacements.*" Jews were being transported to Poland by 1941.

Toward the beginning of 1942, the meaning of *"Final Solution"* changed from forced removal to extermination.

Eichmann claimed to have invented the name, *"Final Solution."* He was instrumental in it's planning and implementation. In the end he was key role in calculating the number of Jewish murders, by reference to official Nazi war records.

Enough about the criminal. He was a very bad person. *Eichmann Before Jerusalem* explains it all, without giving the central figure any breaks or excuses. We have anecdotes about his relationship with his children in Argentina. Perhaps he wanted to be a good father. But mass murderers ought not be given the chance to be portrayed as kind or even human. He was monster. The author makes the point clear.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** Excellent book. Highly recommend to anyone with a historical interest in **World War II.**
- **RATING (out of 5 stars):** ★★★★★