They Escaped Eichmann

The Adolf Eichmann trial has uncovered deep emotional wounds for many Rochesterians who thought the nightmares were over. What do they think of the trial, the punishment?

By STEPHEN HAMMER

HANGING is too merciful for Adolf Eichmann, the Nazis' executioner of Jews, in the view of some who slipped out of his murderous fingers to a haven in Rochester.

Only a few concentration camp survivors here could bring themselves to discuss the subject at all. For each one willing to talk about the living hell Eichmann and his men put them through, there were three who begged off.

"I'd string him up by his thumbs, and little by little kill him," said Abraham Klotz, whose parents were burned alive in a Polish forest.

"Maybe they should keep him alive on two bowls of stinking beet soup and a slice of heavy bread a day —what we had to eat for all those years," said Mrs. Jack Feldman, one of four surviving members of the 200 in her and her husband's families.

"I don't see any punishment for him," said Arthur Rosen, who considers the very fact that he's alive "a miracle."

"Maybe they ought to keep him alive on bread and water until he tells where the rest of them are hiding," said Mrs. Rosen, another of the lucky few who lived. "To tell you the truth, I don't know what they ought to do with him, but what kind of punishment is hanging for a man like that?"

"They should make him watch his family suffer the way we had to watch," said Jacob Alexander who saw his parents and brothers taken to die, but was told to stay behind because "one of you dogs has to suffer."

"It's no good just to hang him," he continued. "No. Make him watch while they kill his children a little at a time."

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INHUMAN? Of course—and none of those people will deny it. It's just that, while their days are busy and rewarding, the horrors come back at night even now.

"My little brother, he comes to me in my sleep three, four times a week," said Alexander. "He says, 'Why don't you even give me a little piece of bread? Your father and mother are hungry; I'm hungry.' And then I have to get up because I can't sleep any more."

Mrs. Feldman put it another way:

"They say I'm happy now. I've got a husband, three nice kids, a good life. But how are you going to explain to a little child why he doesn't have a grandma like other kids? They say I'm happy. But how are you going to be happy with a broken heart?"

Eichmann's current trial in Jerusalem, Israel, for crimes against humanity stems from charges that he was responsible for the extermination of six million Jews from Central and Eastern Europe in a planned campaign of genocide. There is no doubt of his guilt in the minds of those who got away, only about a fit punishment.

"There are no penalties prescribed by civilized human beings for the crimes committed by Eichmann," said Feldman, who owes his life to the fact that he was among 203 men en route to a gas chamber that could accommodate only 200.

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ON THE SURFACE, all these people are like any other prospering new Americans — hard-working, hopeful, proud of their children. But some things remain that are as much of them as their aching hearts.

There are the tatooed serial numbers on the men's forearms, the indelible reminder of the days when the numbers were the only "names" that meant anything to their slave masters.

And just as permanent as the tatoos are the emotional scars. You can't see them. But get them to talk about Dachau, about Auschwitz, about Belsen-Bergen, and you see that they can never escape the nightmare of six years of Nazi hate, torture and murder.

Who are they?

Klotz is 35 and lives with his wife and their two boys in 48 Nye Pk. He owns and operates the Monroe Supermarket, 991 Monroe Ave.

Rosen, 42, also is a grocer. He lives behind his store, Arthur's Market, at 696 Clifford Ave., with his wife, son and daughter.

Feldman is 35 and owns the Modern Fish Market, 366 Joseph Ave. He and his wife have three youngsters and live at 47 Widman St.

Alexander is 47, although he could pass for 65. He is a tailor at Royal Uniform Co. and lives with his wife, son and daughter at 101 Rawlinson Rd., Irondequoit.

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SOME OF THEM say they have managed to get over their blanket hate of all Germans. Even with them you can't escape the impression that they are trying to practice the rules of humanity—but their hearts may not be in it.

"Yes, there were some good Germans," said Mrs. Alexander. "Some we stayed with right after the war were very good to us. Of course, they were ordered to make room for us even if some of them had to move out."

Klotz, however, made no attempt to hide his feelings:

"You see that fellow over there?" he said, pointing out a passer-by. "He's not a man any more. Eichmann did that to him.

"If they ever again send bombers over Germany, I want to be in the first one," he said grimly, and there wasn't the slightest doubt that he meant it.

Rosen, a jovial man who remembers his years of horror with a perspective only a strong, sanity-saving sense of humor can give a man, was no less vindictive on that subject. He explained his reason:

"Our Bible talks about 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' but that isn't the reason I feel this way. The reason is that I can't forget what I saw of that cultured people, the Germans. Once they marched us through Breslau, abut 300 that was left out of 3,500 who started out. You want to know what those cultured Germans did? Now these were civilians, not SS men. They leaned out of their windows and laughed and called to the guards, 'Where are you taking your herd of cattle?'

"That's why I feel the way I do about the Germans."

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ALL FOUR MEN are married to concentration camp survivors, women whose natural abhorrence of violence was blotted out by life with the master race.

"What's a hanging?" asked Mrs. Feldman in discussing Eichmann's proper punishment. "They used to take us to watch every time they were hanging groups of Jews for punishment. After a while it didn't mean anything any more. I just wished it were me who was being hung."

Mrs. Klotz did not happen to be in the store when her husband talked about his feelings and the reasons for them. But the other wives listened and participated in the conversations with no evidence that there was any horror left in the world that could bother him.

Once started on life in the Nazi camps, they all talked freely, as though recounting the sorry memories once more might help endure them. There was too much to permit recounting of full details; some samples will do:

——The parents of Klotz were taken to some woods near Lodz with most of the 12,000 Jews of their town, told to dig big holes, doused with gasoline and burned alive. Klotz himself later kept alive by borrowing the prisoner of war uniform every day from a Russian working in the same shop, which entitled him to PW rations rather than the filth from which Jews died daily by the hundreds.

——Rosen was "lucky" that only 50 Jews were put into one cattle car for transport rather than 150, as sometimes happened. He saw inmates lured with food to come near the fences and then shot, for guards earned extra furloughs by shooting inmates anywhere near camp's edge; 20 men in a chain gang shot on the spot if one of them collapsed from exhaustion.

——Feldman, arrested when the Germans first arrived in Sosnowiec near the Polish-German border (he was 13 then), was spared from the Auschwitz gas chamber two years later only because he was "experienced" and could still work and perhaps make others work. He was the only one of the four who remembered seeing Eichmann, who, he says, often took part in person in the daily selection of those who were to die.

——Alexander saw a trusted friend of Lodz Jews turn overnight into an SS officer who drove the ghetto population toward their extermination; he'd been an underground agent all along.

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WHAT OF THE trial in Jerusalem? Human justice and due process of law, they all agreed, is the basic right Eichmann denied to millions. Yet the machinery of justice in Jerusalem today and the motives behind its spectacular workings was questioned by Klotz.

"They're too occupied with making money," he said bitterly. "They're writing books, they're making films about it. It's wrong, all wrong."

Yet neither he nor Rosen could say what might be "right."

"I wouldn't deny anybody a trial if he killed my mother," said Rosen. "But this — but this — I don't know."

The Alexanders, however, thought justice is being done in Jerusalem—and a needed job of reminding the world of a black page of Western civilization too soon forgotten. They, too, had no answer fit for youngsters when their children were small and asked why they had no grandparents. Now the Eichmann trial record will serve to make such a job easier, for other children and their parents, if they only read and remember, will know that millions of grandparents died in horror but not in disgrace, and perhaps then help the grandchildren.

The Feldmans prepared for their interview by writing, in careful English, just how they felt about it:

"The trial of Eichmann in Israel, in my humble opinion, is not being conducted for the purpose of convicting him and imposing a penalty, since there are no penalties prescribed by civilized human beings for the crime committed by Eichmann. The trial is symbolic, so this generation and future generations will recall the horror of war with all the consequences and what price civilized people will have to pay for letting such monsters like Eichmann, Himmler, Hitler and Goering run at large.

"The tragic tales heard in the court room in Jerusalem were heard around the world. So let us hope and pray that such human tragedies will not be repeated in the future and that the human race will get rid of the potential Hitlers, Himmlers and Eichmanns in time."

HAPPY ENDING—Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Rosen, concentration camp survivors, work with children in their grocery. With the help of Gertrude, 9, and Henry, 14, they are building a new life to blot out their six years of nightmare.

City High In Safety

Rochester was given an award of excellence for pedestrian safety in traffic yesterday by the American Automobile Association in its 22nd annual national pedestrian program appraisal.

The city shared the award with Wichita, Kan., and Fort Worth, Tex., in the 200,000-500,000 population group. Detroit won the top award among the nation's large cities for having reduced its pedestrian deaths to less than half of all traffic deaths last year for the first time on record.

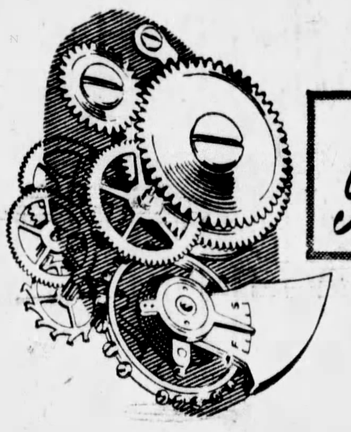
Bike Rider, 13, Hurt by Car

Thrown from his bicycle when it collided with a car in front of 1725 South Ave. about 3 p.m. yesterday, **Joseph Eyer**, 13, of 1691 South Ave., suffered shoulder injuries and bruises.

The son of Mrs. Winifred Eyer was treated at St. Mary's Hospital. Police said some spare bicycle parts the boy was transporting on his bicycle forced him to lose control. The driver was Mrs. Helen Destazio, 40, of 2152 West Henrietta Road, Brighton.

DRIVER'S LIP CUT

Arthur F. Walkowicz, 39, of 95 Ellington Road, was treated at Northside Hospital for lip cuts suffered when his car struck a utility pole in front of 241 Nester St. about 3 a.m. yesterday. Police said he fell asleep at the wheel.



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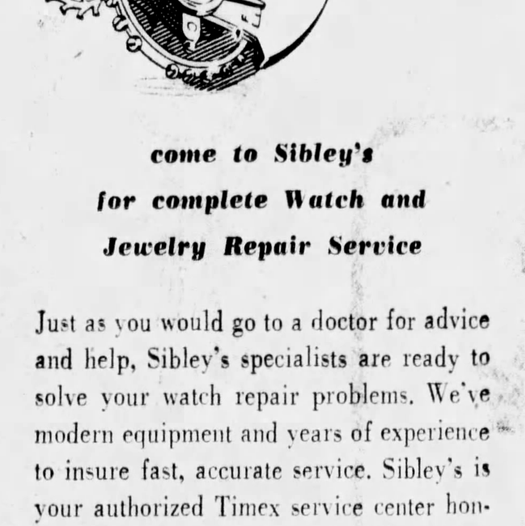

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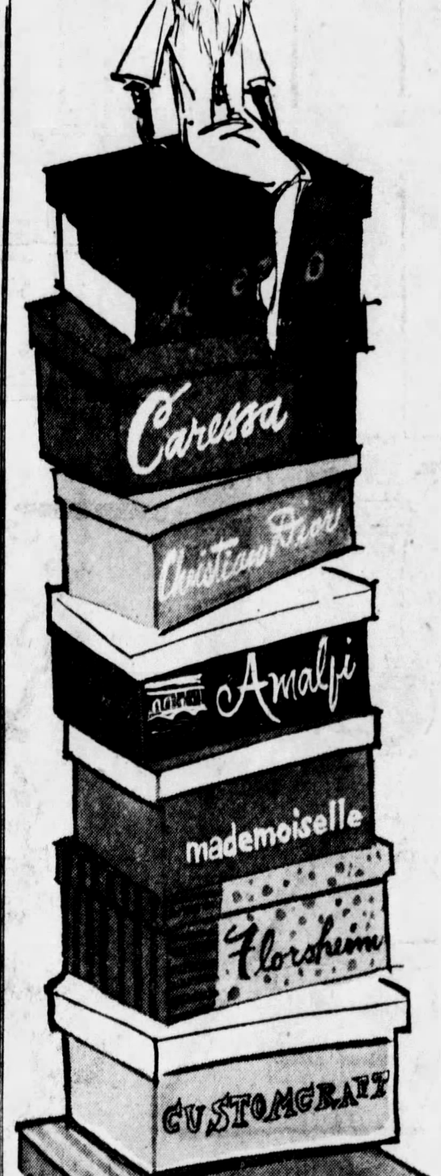

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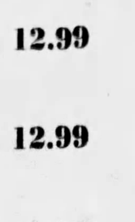

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