

## The other immigration to Argentina: The case of Adolf Eichmann\*

La otra inmigración a Argentina: El caso de Adolf Eichmann

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**Resumen:** Adolf Eichmann llegó a la Argentina como otros 500 Nazis forajidos a través de una red de traficantes ilegales de migrantes entre 1945 y 1955. Esta red fue el resultado del interés de la República de Argentina, la Cruz Roja, la Caritas y el Vaticano por un lado y por el otro los delincuentes. Eichmann la cara de la 'banalidad del mal', como Hannah Arendt escribió en su libro "Eichmann en Jerusalén: un estudio sobre la banalidad del mal" (2ª. edición, traducción de Carlos Ribalta, Barcelona, Lumen, 1999) tuvo bastantes problemas para integrarse en la sociedad argentina y por ende, fracasó. Adolf Eichmann nacido en 1906 en Solingen/Alemania personificó un carácter típico de la sociedad en la posguerra austriaca-alemana, lo que hizo que fracasara en su vida laboral varias veces durante los veintes y los inicios de los treinta del siglo XX.

**Abstract:** Adolf Eichmann arrived to Argentina along with other 500 runaway Nazis through a smuggling network between 1945 and 1955. This network was the result of the interest shown by the The Republic of Argentina, the Red Cross, Caritas and the Vatican in one hand; in the other, the criminals of war. Eichmann, the face of Hanna Arendt's "Banality of Evil" had numerous troubles to integrate to argentinian society, failing as a result. Adolf Eichmann, born in 1906 in Solingen, Germany, personified a typical Austrian-german postwar character, a fact that conduced to his laboral failure in the twenties and early thirties of the twentieth century.

**Palabras Clave:** Adolf Eichmann - Holocausto - Tráfico Ilegal de Migrantes - Inmigración en Argentina - Peronismo - Tribunales Internacionales.

**Keywords:** Adolf Eichmann - Holocaust - Nazi Criminals - Trafficking of migrants - Post War Period - Immigration to Argentina - Peronism - Mossad - International Tribunal.

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## Introduction

During my first stay in San Carlos de Bariloche in Northern Patagonia I started my interest on Nazi immigration to Argentine. Some of the inhabitants of the town told us about numerous meetings of Nazis during the 50ties in a Castle named Thule some 50km out of town. The name of Adolf Eichmann as a closer friend of the German Nazi Erich Priebke was ventilated in all these stories.

European immigration to South America started with the case of Brazil and was facilitated in the year of 1878 on the initiative of archduchess Leopoldine of Austria (1797-26), wife of the first Brazilian emperor Dom Pedro I. (1798-31), it is appropriate to refer to the German immigration to South America as a systematic one to some extent. After Argentina was eventually constituted as an independent republic in 1862 it was supposed to replace Brazil first time as the main country of immigration in the years of 1880 and 1881 and established itself as a favoured immigration country on the American continent coming in second after the United States from 1900 onwards.

From the beginning there were Austrian immigrants among the German-speaking ones<sup>1</sup> and many non-German-speaking residents of the Habsburg multinational state as well. This ethnic and linguistic complexity dissolved over the outcomes of World War I within Austro-Hungary, thus allowing a more accurate assessment of the facts of the Austrian immigration as from 1918/19. At the latest from 1921 the separation to the former non-german-speaking Crown lands was completed, while the ambivalent relationship between the previous german-speaking allies remained due to the mutual experienced defeat. Adolf Eichmann, born in Solingen (German Reich) in 1906, relocated with his parents to Linz at the age of eight. Thenceforward the Austrian reality of the war and post-war years influenced the mind of the future SS-coordinator of the "*Endlösung der Judenfrage*" ("final solution" of the 'Jewish Problem' in the Third Reich 1941-45). The result of this identity crisis was reflected in the Argentinean perception of German speaking Immigration and therefore Austrian immigrants were often regarded as German immigrants. To implement the concept of the "White Argentinean people of the New World"<sup>2</sup> a focused governmental immigration policy was required in which economic, "racial", and religious motives were dominant. The admission of about 500 high-ranking National Socialists and their families by the Argentinean president Juan Domingo Perón (1946-55) is documented by this doctrine, without intending to question J. D. Perón's anti-Semite and Nazi-friendly policy<sup>3</sup>. It was not in Adolf Eichmann's power of decision to choose Argentina as his immigration destination in 1950, but rather the result of a well-functioning network of multiple refugee organizations on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean<sup>4</sup>. Thus some of the highest ranking individuals among those responsible for the atrocities of the Nazi regime escaped the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg (1946) and started a new life in Argentina and other American countries.

The arrest of Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires by special agents of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, on the 11 May 1960 roused the European societies

that were marred by the Second World War. –Mit dieser Bemerkung– so wie sie dasteht, kann ich überhaupt nix anfangen. Wer, bitte, von den Tätern und wer vo den Opfern „came to terms with the past“? The horror of the Holocaust finally had a face and Adolf Eichmann became the symbol of the industrial mass extermination in the Third Reich.

## The arrest of Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires in 1960

In the evening of the 11 May 1960 shortly after eight in the evening the former *SS-Obersturmführer* Karl Adolf Eichmann was being kidnapped by a team of Mossad operatives on the way to his home in the Calle Garibaldi in the area of San Fernando on the outskirts of the La Plata metropolis and was hidden, detained and interrogated in a house in the district of Quilmes for several days<sup>5</sup>. The search for the architect of the “Endlösung” had come to an end after almost exactly fifteen years.

At the beginning of the year 1957<sup>6</sup> the ball that eventually led to Adolf Eichmann’s arrest was set rolling. A sixty-nine-year-old German-Jewish senior citizen Lothar Hermann, who fled the Third Reich in 1936 and settled down in the town Coronel Suárez<sup>7</sup> in Argentina, suspected a man he had never met in person. The visually impaired Jewish immigrant heard about his daughter Sylvia relationship to a young man named Nicolas (Klaus) Eichmann who was a German immigrant as well. She was living in Buenos Aires at that time. This friendship raised Lothar Hermann’s suspicion and he supported the relationship to lure Klaus Eichmann to Coronel Suárez where he tried to implicate the young German in a conversation about his family.

When Lothar Hermann felt confirmed in his suspicion, he composed a letter to the Hessian Attorney General as well as the Nazi-hunter Dr. Fritz Bauer and decided to approach them by placing an ad in the German newspaper “Argentinisches Tageblatt”<sup>8</sup>, because he did not have much trust in the German Embassy in Buenos Aires<sup>9</sup>.

Fritz Bauer’s role regarding the tracing of Eichmann in Argentina was an important one because he offered valuable clues about Adolf Eichmann’s whereabouts, which he received from Lothar Hermann’s letter in September 1957, to the director of the delegation for reparation issues in Western Germany Felix Shinnar who put the Israeli Intelligence Agency Mossad on the right track<sup>10</sup>. The first meetings of Fritz Bauer with Eric Cohn from the Mossad already took place in November 1957 and in January 1958 the first Mossad special agents were sent to the Argentinean capital.

Before Isser Harel took over Mossad in September 1952 (“ha Mossad le-Modi’in ule Tafkaidim Meyuhadim”)<sup>11</sup> there was no governmental department for the tracing of Nazi criminals. Due to the head of the Israeli Intelligence Agency, Isser Harel, Mossad was coping with difficult tasks in the Israeli-Arabian conflict

and also managed to track down Josef Mengele and Adolf Eichmann. Mossad was relying on material that had been gathered by two survivors of the Shoa, Tuviah Friedman and Simon Wiesenthal. The dispute about the detection of Eichmann was an issue in the controversy between these two protagonists<sup>12</sup>.

Back then the Federal Republic of Germany was not pursuing a systematic search for Nazi criminals. It was the public prosecution authority in Vienna that started investigating Adolf Eichmann, although it the authority remained unsuccessful. Only after the closing of the Viennese investigation in 1956, the dossier finally reached the public attorney's office in Frankfurt on request of the department of justice in Bonn<sup>13</sup>.

The first official investigations in Buenos Aires in January 1958 remained without any result and Mossad classified Bauer's information as virtually useless. Nevertheless, Israel's interest in the prosecution of Nazi criminals arose, and so Mossad decided to send special agent Efraim Ilani, alias Efraim Hofstetter, to Buenos Aires to observe the situation while still relying on Lothar Hermann and his private investigations until they lost confidence in him on account of a mistake<sup>14</sup> and broke off contact. In April 1958 the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution started dealing with the case of Eichmann whereupon the German Judiciary investigated the connection between the newspaper "Der Weg" and Adolf Eichmann specifically<sup>15</sup>. The German Embassy in Buenos Aires was supposed to check his particulars and reassess his whereabouts. The officials in the Argentinean capital asserted that Adolf Eichmann was not residing in South America but that there was evidence about his stay in the Middle East<sup>16</sup>. It wasn't until the middle of 1959 that the head of Mossad received news from Fritz Bauer from Germany. This time Bauer was able to recruit a new informant in Buenos Aires, a former SS-Officer, whose name was kept secret by Bauer<sup>17</sup>.

At the same time Simon Wiesenthal was searching for Adolf Eichmann too. By chance, a look into the newspaper "Oberösterreichischen Nachrichten" on 22 April 1959 was drawing his attention to the Nazi perpetrator. There was an obituary of Maria Eichmann who was Adolf Eichmann's stepmother. It said that she was survived by Veronika Eichmann, and Wiesenthal came to the conclusion that Veronika Liebl (Eichmann's wife) must have reassumed the name Eichmann abroad, so Adolf Eichmann might be still alive. When Eichmann's father Karl Adolf Eichmann passed away in the first week of February 1959, Wiesenthal decided to send two photographers to the funeral in Linz. Even though the former SS-Obersturmbannführer did not attend, Simon Wiesenthal forwarded photographs of the brother Otto Eichmann as photofit pictures to the Mossad. Finally Wiesenthal found both of Eichmann's sons under their real last names in the phone directory of the La Plata metropolis and hereby confirmed the inquiries of the last couple of months.

The search for Adolf Eichmann gained momentum in 1959, also on account of Lothar Hermann who approached Nazi-hunter Tuviah Friedman in Haifa due to insufficient support by Fritz Bauer and the Mossad. Friedman launched the

search for Adolf Eichmann in the Israeli public and expected more support from the Israeli authorities without knowing that the Mossad and Bauer had never given up the trace in Argentina. A meeting of Fritz Bauer with the Attorney General Haim Cohn, Isser Harel (Director of the Mossad at this time) and the special Mossad agent Zvi Aharoni by the end of 1959 in Israel was supposed to determine the final steps to the arrest of Adolf Eichmann.

On the 24 December 1959 the Israeli press released an article about Eichmann's residence in Kuwait as a distraction from his real location in Argentina. The Israeli's following actions are not clarified until today. In February 1960 Isser Harel has sent special agent Zvi Aharoni to Buenos Aires to finally identify Adolf Eichmann. At the beginning of April Aharoni already came back to Israel to report to Isser Harel that the identification revealed that "Ricardo Klement" was in fact the wanted former SS-OBERSTURMBANNFÜHRER ) Adolf Eichmann<sup>18</sup>. The operation that would lead to the abduction of Eichmann had begun.

## The nazi perpetrator Adolf Eichmann

Adolf Eichmann was born on the 19 March 1906 in Solingen in the German Empire. He was the eldest of five children born to Karl Adolf Eichmann and his wife Maria Eichmann (born Schefferling). When he was seven years old his family left their home in the *Rheineland* and moved to Linz, the capital of Upper Austria in 1914, where Eichmann sen. found employment at the local Streetcar and Electricity Company. In 1921 the son changed schools and attended a technical high school for electro-technical and mechanical engineering, but dropped out to join his father's newly founded company which had to file for bankruptcy soon. So the twenty-year-old tried to make a living as a salesman of radio receivers and later as a representative for various oil products of the Upper Austrian Vacuum Oil Company. In the middle of 1933 Adolf Eichmann Junior, who was then twenty-seven years old, was given notice of his dismissal and he decided to join the SS after being persuaded by a friend of the family named Ernst Kaltenbrunner<sup>19</sup>. Only a year later he married his long time fiancée Veronika Liebl<sup>20</sup>. The Ban of the NSDAP in Austria of June 19<sup>th</sup> 1933 forced Eichmann to return to the Third Reich, where he joined the *Österreichische Legion* (Austrian legion)<sup>21</sup>. He eventually went to Berlin where he was transferred to the *Freimaurerabteilung* (department for observation of the activities of the Freemason lodges in the Third Reich) of the SD head office. As a matter of fact he was very interested in the so-called *Judenreferat* (Department for Jewish Affairs) where he intended to transfer soon. Eichmann, who was a SS-Unterscharführer by then, studied Hebrew and over the years he acquired knowledge by studying plenty of literature on Jewish affairs and gained more expertise. The diligent officer took his position very seriously and worked meticulously. It was only a matter of time that he got promoted within the bureaucratic structure. The Department for Jewish Affairs II 112 in the SD head office was expanding.

In 1937 SS-Oberscharführer Herbert Hagen and SS-Hauptscharführer Adolf Eichmann travelled from Berlin to Palestine to assess the requirements for a

Jewish settlement. The order was issued by Reinhard Heydrich himself. Eichmann travelled to Palestine undercover, claiming to be a journalist of the newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt* which was known to be associated with the NSDAP and debarked at Haifa. The two "Jewish Experts" visited a kibbutz near Tel Aviv and the German templar colony in Saroná<sup>22</sup>. To extend their visitor permit they soon left the British mandated territory towards Egypt, where they were supposed to have a meeting with Grand Mufti Amin al-Husseini. Their applications for the visa extensions were refused which meant the end of their journey. Despite this failure, Eichmann was promoted SS-Untersturmführer on the 30 January 1938. His new rank would encourage him even more. After the invasion of the German troops in Austria the diligent "Jewish Expert" and "Austrian" was transferred to the central office for Jewish immigration in Vienna.

Eichmann's ambition was the total disintegration of the Jewish organizations in the entire Ostmark. Outgoing from the evil clima, Eichmann started exerting pressure and terror against all Jews in Austria, as well as intimidating functionaries of Jewish communities in particular.

The purpose of this inhuman policy was to render the Ostmark *judenfrei* (free of Jews). Later 1939/40 the deportation was the main aspect of the „Jewish Immigration and within few days forty-five exit permits were applied for at the Kultusgemeinde ("Jewish Religious Community") in Vienna. The ethnic cleaning of the German Reich has reached more than 50.000 austrian Jews until 1945. 150.000 Jews were already deported from the Ostmark under Eichmann's responsibility and supervision.

Therefore Heydrich promoted Eichmann SS-Hauptsturmführer in January 1939 and transferred him to Prague in April. The establishment of the new "Zentralstelle" (central office) in the city by the Moldau was a challenge to the SS-Hauptsturmführer, but the beginning of the war required the expansion of the department for Jewish Affairs IV D 4 in the Gestapo headquarter in Berlin, located in the Prinz Albrecht Strasse 8, which was going to emerge as the administrative department for the final solution of the "Jewish Problem". Soon the utopian concepts of a Jewish state<sup>23</sup> faded, and a new concept surfaced – the total extermination of all Jews. This plan was being put into action in October 1939 when SS-Oberführer Heinrich Müller, Chief of the Gestapo division II<sup>24</sup>, issued an order to send a first transport of 900 Jewish men from Moravian-Ostrava to conquered Poland. Although this operation "Nisko am San" officially no was part of the total extermination, the deportation represents a new policy of Hitler against the German and Austrian Jews<sup>25</sup>.

But soon difficulties arose and in the course of the year 1940 it turned out that the evacuations were progressing too slowly and Adolf Eichmann - within the Department of Jewish Affairs and Evacuation IV B 4 later on IV D 4- was assigned to resolve the transportation issues. That department played an utmost important role after the decision in favor of the final solution of the "Jewish Problem" in the winter of 1941/42<sup>26</sup>.

Since 1941 toxic gas was utilized for the murder of so-called “antisocial elements” and the task force “Lange” of the SS, for instance, even developed special mobile gas chambers for the killing of Jews. In Auschwitz-Birkenau Cyclon B (hydrogen cyanide) was already used in September 1941.

The result of Eichmann’s and his men’s work made history as the Holocaust<sup>27</sup>. By the end of the year 1944 three million Polish people were already sent to death by Adolf Eichmann. Now his last big mission in Hungary began. There he succeeded to deport more than 450,000 Jews to death camps or to use of special military applications. Many of them forced on death marches along certain routes through Slovakia to Auschwitz or through Hungary to the Austrian border or further on to the death camp of Mauthausen in Upper Austria.

At last SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann was ordered back to Prague in April 1945 from where he successfully attempted an escape only a couple of weeks later.

## Eichmann’s years on the run in Europe 1945-1950

At the end of April 1945 Adolf Eichmann fled to the Eastern Alpine region, where he reached Ebensee in Upper Austria on the 1st of May. Shortly after, during the last days of war, he moved on to the area of Altaussee, where he was ordered by his last superior Ernst Kaltenbrunner to set up a line of resistance in the “Tote Gebirge” in Upper Austria, but this order remains unverified due to lack of proof<sup>28</sup>, whereas a systemically “escape behavior” of former top-ranking Nazis<sup>29</sup> can be considered as confirmed. From March 1945 on, a kind of escape line formed, leading to the “Festung Nord” in Schleswig-Holstein and to the “Alpenfestung” in the “Ausseerland”, along which more and more top-ranking SS-officers followed. The occupation of the entire Alpine region by American armed forces would render “guerilla warfare” ineffective, so Eichmann began his long escape through the European continent, a journey that should lead him to numerous internment camps until January 1946. Accompanied by his longtime adjutant Rudolf Jaenisch, Eichmann fled from the Ausseerland towards Bavaria, wearing a uniform of a corporal of the “Luftwaffe”. The two SS-officers worked their way to the Northwest as hitch-hikers. Repeatedly Eichmann absconded from justice by giving false details, like name and rank. It took a while before their escape was eventually stopped around the area of Ulm for the first time when a patrol of General Patton’s Third Army captured the two fugitives and detained them in the internment camp in Berndorf. Eichmann was posing as Captain Adolf Barth<sup>30</sup> and alleged the loss of his documents. The American military officials believed him and appointed Eichmann a truck driver after they had transferred him to the camp in Rosenheim. As a driver he managed to escape soon and went to Munich. But it didn’t take long until Eichmann was captured again and ended in another American internment camp. This time in Oberdachstetten, Eichmann claimed he was Untersturmführer Otto Eckmann from the Waffen-SS<sup>31</sup>, because he feared that the SS-tattoo on his right arm might reveal his true

identity. The preliminary investigations conducted before the Nuremberg trials which resulted in testimonies of former comrades that incriminated Eichmann and interrogations in the camp unsettled him increasingly<sup>32</sup>, and in January 1946 he prepared for another attempt to escape. While he was working for road construction, Eichmann sneaked from the construction site with the cooperation of another inmate and fled over Prien at Chiemsee to the north of Germany<sup>33</sup>.

Under the false name Otto Heninger he ensconced himself in the Lüneburger Heide in the area around the town Celle, where Eichmann started working in the forestry and farming industry<sup>34</sup>. This was possible because a fellow convict had given him a letter of recommendation, addressed to his brother, who worked as a forest official close to the village Eversen<sup>35</sup>, where Eichmann registered himself as a new townsman on the 12 March. During his four year stay in Northern Germany, Eichmann worked as a lumberjack with a moderate salary and supplemented his income with a little chicken farm.

For the majority of the German population SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann remained a dark horse during the reign of the National Socialist regime in the German Reich and Europe. The manhunt for the perpetrators was concentrated on NSDAP politicians who were known to the public, like ministers and secretary generals as well as war criminals among the armed forces. The importance of Adolf Eichmann as the head of department IV B & D 4 of the *Reichsicherheitshauptamt* became known when several testimonies during the Nuremberg trials in January 1946 were disclosed to the general public<sup>36</sup>, which is just around the time when Adolf Eichmann settled down in Northern Germany under the name of Otto Heninger. In the first instance the testimonies of concentration camp survivors revealed that Eichmann was the mastermind behind the Holocaust<sup>37</sup>. The main German newspapers addressed him as the "Massmurderer Eichmann" or asked "Where is the mass murderer hiding?" His disappearance was subject of the Allies' investigation that remained unsuccessful, but rumors about his alleged location were spread. At the end of 1947 the Allies abandoned their search for Eichmann, NSADAP-Cancellor Martin Bormann, Auschwitz physician Josef Mengele, Gestapo Director Heinrich Müller and others. The Cold War directed the Allies' attention towards the threatening menace of the new atomic age.

On the Jewish side of Palestine the public was speculating about the true whereabouts of Eichmann and Egypt was reported to be a possibility. Taking into consideration that his Hebrew and Yiddish skills were not so bad, it could even lead one to assume that Eichmann settled down in Palestine, posing as a Jew. At this point the Haganah was the only entity engaged in the search for Nazi war criminals<sup>38</sup> before they slowly got entirely roped into the Arabian-Jewish conflict in 1948.

## Along the “Rat Lines” to Rome

Apparently the fear of being detected must have been unbearable to “Otto Heninger” when he, the former SS-Obersturmbannführer, decided to flee from Europe<sup>39</sup> by spring 1950. The so-called Nazi-hunters like Tuvia Friedman or Simon Wiesenthal performed their work meticulously, and also groups of veterans of the Jewish brigades began to focus on the search for Adolf Eichmann, who was on top of the most-wanted-persons-list. The face of the Nazi criminal was rather unknown among the investigators, because Eichmann had refused to be photographed for many years. This fact made it even more difficult to trace him. The escape route of Eichmann corresponded approximately with a scheme that is known as *Klosteroute* (the “route of the monasteries”) among historians. He profited of the vast Catholic and National Socialist network from Germany over Austria to Italy, furthermore he received support from the Bavarian Franciscan father Anton Weber from the St. Raphael society<sup>40</sup>. After his arrival in Italy, the Roman-Catholic church organized the onward journey of the Nazi criminal. In Rome two clergymen, an Austrian bishop from Graz and rector of the theological college Santa Maria dell’ Anima<sup>41</sup>, Dr. Alois Hudal, and the Croatian Ustascha priest Krunoslav Draganovic established a contact point and place of refuge for absconding Nazi criminals<sup>42</sup>. Their task was to hide the refugees in several Italian monasteries and to provide them with necessary documents and new identities<sup>43</sup>. The escape agents also used their good connections to the Italian Red Cross and the Caritas, as well as they did benefit of their most valuable contact to Pope Pius XII<sup>44</sup>.

Finally the Argentinean Immigration Office issued the sought-after entry permit to Adolf Eichmann, this time under the name of “Ricardo Klement”<sup>45</sup>. This was how the former head of the “deportation department” Referat IV B & D 4 in the Third Reich<sup>46</sup>, who was responsible for the murder of millions of innocent people, was enabled to embark the ship *Giovanna C.* and leave the port of Genoa on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1950<sup>47</sup>.

## The organized networks of the escape assistance

The myth ODESSA (Organisation der Ehemaligen SS-Angehörigen; organization of former SS-members) appeared in the files of the Counter Intelligence Corps for the first time in 1946/47. The investigations of the Americans were mainly inconclusive and so the myth ODESSA was in the making. Until this day numerous scientists, documentarists and writers were engaged in this matter - particularly Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal (1908-2005). The Polish-Austrian survivor of the death camp in Mauthausen names Altaussee as the original center of the Nazi underground movement, which was supposedly a network of various organizations.

The Donations to the *Reptilienfond* (illegal funds) of Bishop Alois Hudal originated mainly from the United States. The more the German armed forces were facing defeat, the higher the demand for immigration became, which encouraged the Argentinean authorities to act, which resulted in good contacts to Germany by 1944<sup>48</sup>.

As the economic and political pressure on Italy increased, the business with illegal immigration emerged in the most important seaports in Italy and unauthorized "immigration offices" appeared all over the Apennine peninsula. In December 1946 the Italian government announced their cooperation with the *Delegación Argentina de Inmigración en Europa*<sup>49</sup>. Argentina waived the denazification of "their Germans" despite of their pledge as Allies against Nazi Germany and therefore certain applications for visas were usually approved without any problems. President Perón himself pleaded for the German immigration repeatedly<sup>50</sup>. The seaport Genoa became the main exit port for Austrian and German refugees, Father José Clemente Silva was appointed director of the Argentinean immigration office "Delegación Argentina de Inmigración en Europa" which was cooperating closely with Bishop Alois Hudal. German immigrants had to undergo much stricter controls, because Germans were prohibited to leave Europe. The cooperation between the Hudal group, the Red Cross and the Argentineans became more complicated as well. The central contact point was the Argentinean Consulate General that was channeling German immigrants together with the Catholic Church. All three organizations were going to great lengths for German war criminals who were able to obtain new passports without coming under scrutiny at all and thus possessing a "libre desembarco"<sup>51</sup>.

## Argentina's ideologic background as an immigration country Argentina and the new man

To be able to understand why South American states and in particular, most notably Argentina, became favoured exiles for top Nazi criminals diverse factors must be taken into consideration.

Since the *Conquista* the widths of the American continent and its preliminary islands were colonized by Europeans and the autochthonous groups became the victims of this colonization. After the success of the Independence Wars of the 18th and 19th centuries, systematic immigration waves from many German-speaking regions of central Europe started to enter the new "White Nations" of the United States of America, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay<sup>52</sup>. In the southern countries of South America the ideological concepts of "Civilization and Barbary" were developed increasingly after 1850 and the immigration of European people was looked upon as the future of the "Latino" as a "White Race"<sup>53</sup>. The oligarchic rulers expected a rapid capitalization of the economy from this Europeanization and thus a substantial progress towards the modern age. Purposefully the post-colonial states established immigration companies on

European soil and were also specifically interested in German-speaking settlers. There were numerous Austrians among the immigrants that were registered as “German immigrants” by the immigration offices, because the linguistic identification usually determined the person’s origin. For this reason Swiss and Austrians were classified as German Immigrants and the only feasible way to determine the true origin was to study the sources thoroughly<sup>54</sup>.

Ever since 1890 Argentina evolved into an interesting immigration destination for Austrians. The immigration rate was at its peak in the year 1896 with 11,549 new Austrian immigrants in total<sup>55</sup>. Most of the immigrants left Austria due to economic reasons, while religious or ethnic aspects hardly played a decisive role. The states that were not involved in the European crises and the following World War I. profited from the devastating consequences of the war and Argentina’s economy was booming. For many of the German immigrants the reorganization of Europe after the First World War was eventually the moment to avow themselves to their German roots, and for the first time the German-speaking Argentineans engaged in a political debate about the concepts of *Heimat* (homeland) and *Deutschtum* (“Germanness”) that were being highly influenced by the newcomers.

### Perón’s concept of the “Third Way” (1946-55)

The strong economic upturn allowed Juan Domingo Perón (1885-1973) to establish Argentina as the second hegemonial power of the Southern hemisphere. The political independence and the resistance against the American imperialism became – next to (X) and (Y) which were the two first bases - the third pillar of the Peronist “justicialismo”<sup>56</sup>. Bigger investments in the armaments industry were required and therefore the Argentineans started to purchase military supplies from Great Britain and Canada.

Perón demonstrated his politic independence with his “Latin American policy”. In succession he openly supported the MNR (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario)- in Bolivia, the APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana in Perú and opposed the Unión Panamericana<sup>57</sup>, which was proposed by the United States. In spite of being put under severe pressure by the United States, Perón did not abandon his concept of the “Third Way”, instead he approached Franco as a future ally. Their objective was to establish the *Confederación de Pueblos Hispánicos*, but the plan finally failed in 1949/50 due to the strong opposition of the United States.

Another pillar of the “Third Way” was supposed to be associated with the promotion of immigration per se as it was common in the Argentinean “history of thought”. In an ideological point of view, industrialization and progress can be considered as the fundamental base for the social cohesion in the La Plata state.

The emphasis was placed on the “racial enhancement” by blending the population with white European immigrants. The classic agricultural worker should be led by technicians and engineers to evolve as the new *homo argentinensis*.



like the pensions Arnold and Don José or the Hotel Meier in the district Belgrano among others, was particularly reserved for Nazi immigrants. On the other hand there was the immigrant's hotel of the immigration authorities that offered free board and lodging for seven days to impecunious immigrants.

The "special immigrants" were being taken care of by a special department (founded in 1946) of the "Sonderkommission Peralta" under Santiago Peralta<sup>61</sup> lead and the logistics of Peron's first private secretary Rudi Freude.<sup>62</sup>

Other supporters were the two industrialists Guillermo Staudt and Horst Fuldner who were of German origin. With this kind of regulated supervision Argentina secured her direct influence on the German newcomers.

Within days "Ricardo Klement" found work as a mechanic in a metal-working company in Buenos Aires. Only two months later he handed in his notice. His restlessness must have induced him to change his occupations several times.

Adolf Eichmann worked in the province Tucumán as the department manager of the outpost Río Potrero, where he was responsible for the measurement of water and the geological analysis until the summer of 1953.

## Photo 2.



Personal ID of Ricardo Klement issued in Tucuman. Source: <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/trials/images/False%20identification%20papers%20used%20by%20Adolf%20Eichmann%20while%20he%20was%20living%20in%20Argentina%20under%20the%20assumed%20name%20Ricardo%20Klement.jpg> (Access: 25.9.2009).

Eichmann who didn't have proper vocational training, learned his new trade very fast. At his work place he was known to be inconspicuous and respectable and never forgot to reassure his decisions with the management<sup>63</sup>. Eichmann received his job placements by the CAPRI (Compañía Argentina para Proyectos y Realizaciones Industriales - Fuldner y Cía)<sup>64</sup> which was founded by the German-Argentinean Horst Carlos Fuldner in the beginning of the year 1950 under the patronage of the national water and energy corporation Agua y Energía Eléctrica.

This project was supported by Dr. August Siebrecht<sup>65</sup> as well as Perón himself. Fuldner was also a former SS-Officer and from 1945 on he was responsible for the recruitment of capable German aeronautical engineers and aircraft designers, amongst others the recruitment of Prof. Kurt Tank from the Focke-Wulf works<sup>66</sup>.

The Tucumán project of the CAPRI was commissioned by state in the course of the first five year plan of the Perón government considering the study of inshore waters in the secluded provinces Tucumán and Santiago del Estero. In the decree 23.881<sup>67</sup>, the expansion of the irrigation system in general and the construction of reservoirs and energy generation were declared the purpose of this project. The lack of more governmental orders in the years of 1954/55 forced the corporation to file a petition for bankruptcy in 1955. The German associates scattered in all directions. While Eichmann already returned to Buenos Aires in 1953 and settled down in the suburbs of Olivos, people like Prof. Küper, Assistant Prof. Schoklitsch and the Engineer Silberkuhl immigrated back to Germany or to Graz, Austria like Dr. Uiberreither. On the other hand people like Sterzinger immigrated to Brazil where they established very successful businesses<sup>68</sup> or they just stayed in Argentina like Dr. Siebrecht who managed the connections with the aspiring Federal Republic of Germany as a well-respected member of the German-Argentinean chamber of commerce.

Compared to those German "immigrants", it seemed like Eichmann failed as an immigrant and his career did not seem quite as outstanding. From 1953 to 1960 he worked as a labourer in a fruit juice plant, as an employee in a laundry, he owned a rabbit farm, then he temporarily worked as a mechanic, then he was a foreman on a vegetable plant and warehouseman for the company ORBIS.

In his spare time Eichmann listened to music and read books, preferably in German. His volume of "Die letzten Tage der Reichskanzlei" by Gerhard Boldt, for example, was marked with many critical notes and jottings which might suggest a theoretical discussion about the Third Reich in some way.

Despite his rather negative development of his career, Eichmann has to be credited for accepting Argentina as his new home and perfecting his language skills in Spanish. Certainly the arrival of Eichmann's family (his wife Veronika and their three sons Klaus, Horst, and Dieter) in 1952 was the high point in his life in the La Plata state<sup>69</sup>. In 1955 Veronika Eichmann who was registered under her maiden name Liebl, but began her new life in Argentina as Catalina Klement, gave birth to their fourth child who was named Ricardo Francisco. This new addition to his family forced the Eichmanns to move into a small rented house in the periphery of Olivos in the Calle Chacabuco 4261 until he eventually acquired a piece of land in the Calle Garibaldi in Bancalari San Fernando, a hardly developed suburb of the capital, and began to build a house in 1959. This costly building project forced "Ricardo Klement" to look for better employment. After a little while he found a new occupation at Mercedes Benz in Suarez San Jarosto, where he started as an office clerk and worked his way up to the management of the company.

Throughout all those years he kept contact with the National Socialist circles, like the Dürer Verlag and their magazine “Der Weg”, which was documented in the already mentioned interviews with Sassen<sup>70</sup>.

## Final considerations

The attempt to come to terms with the involvement of the Peronist regime in the process of the admission of Nazi immigrants was subject of CEANA (“Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de las Actividades del Nacionalsocialismo en la Argentina”; The Commission of Enquiry into the Activities of Nazism in Argentina)<sup>71</sup> that was founded in 1997. Scholars from Argentina and Europe as well as from the United States were working together, trying to analyze their common past and hereby making a great contribution to the Transatlantic history considering aspects that were ignored in the German historiography so far. There are some very interesting other cases of Austrian Nazi emigrants in the history of Latin America, that should be subject to future investigations in Europe and overseas. The life of Eichmann doesn't seem to be the perfect example for a typical Nazi Immigrant in Latin America, but it shows how easily even one of the Mastermind of the Holocaust could flee Europe with the help of highly organized network of supporters of the Third Reich and Catholic Fascism.

The results of this research give hope that the relations between the continents can be reconceived in a new historical point of view.

## Notas y Citas

- (1) CHMELAR Hans, Höhepunkte der österreichischen Auswanderung. Die Auswanderung aus den im Reichsrat vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern in den Jahren 1905-1914. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1974.
- (2) The “Branceamento-concept” in Brazil failed because of the high percentage of Afro-Brazilians in the population. Argentina derived its claim for leadership from the “White concept”. SARMIENTO Faustino Domingo, Facundo. Buenos Aires 1998.
- (3) Juan Domingo Perón (1895-1974) became the President of Argentina again in 1973, but passed away on the 1st of July 1973 after less than nine months in office. About the number of Nazis in Argentine after 1945 still exists a controverse between MEDING Holger, Flucht vor Nürnberg. En: Lateinamerikanische Forschungen, Bd. 19. Köln-Weimar-Wien: Böhlau, 1992. y ZADUNAISKY Daniel, Investigadores discuten sobre refugio otorgado a criminales nazis. Buenos Aires 1994.
- (4) HUDAL Alois, Römische Tagebücher. Lebensbeichte eines alten Bischofs. Leopold Stocker Verlag, Graz-Stuttgart 1976. (5) Regarding the abduction: AHARONI Zvi / DIETL Wilhelm, Der Jäger. Operation Eichmann. Was wirklich geschah. Deutsche Verlagsanstalt. Stuttgart 1996. MALKIN Peter Z., Ich jagte Eichmann. Der Bericht des israelischen Geheimagenten, der den Organisator der “Endlösung” gefangennahm. Piper. München 1991.

- (5) *Ibíd.*
- (6) Isser Halperin alias Harel had doubts that Hermann approached Fritz Bauer in 1957 for the first time. He said in an interview with Irmtrud Wojnak that the first contact must have taken place in April 1956. WOJAK Irmtrud, *Eichmanns Memoiren. Ein kritischer Essay.* Campus Verlag. Frankfurt/M. New York 2001. p.212.
- (7) The small town Coronel Suárez is located in the southern part of the province of Buenos Aires around 200 km away from the capital.
- (8) The "Argentinisches Tageblatt" already argued against the National Socialism in 1933 and became the organ of the German Opposition against Nazi-Germany. See also: SCHOEPP Sebastian, *Das "Argentinisches Tageblatt" 1933-1945. Ein Forum der antinationalsozialistischen Emigration.* WVB. Berlin 1996.
- (9) L. Hermann also referred to that in his letter to Fritz Bauer 1960. En: WOJAK, "Eichmanns Memoiren," p. 27 s. In this letter to Bauer, L. Hermann complained about the way the Nazi hunters dealt with the issue. Especially his expenses for the search for Eichmann were not covered by the hunters sufficiently. Hermann also pointed out that Eichmann's whereabouts could have never been located without his help and that he never received the promised reward from T. Friedman.
- (10) Mossad Chief Isser Harel is going into details on this issue once more. En: HAREL Isser, *The House of Garibaldi Street. The capture of A. Eichmann.* London 1975.
- (11) The Institute for Intelligence and special tasks was established on the 1st of April 1951 and was emanating from the Sherut Jediot. En: AHARONI/DIETL, "Der Jäger," p. 93.
- (12) Regarding the controversy: siehe GIEFER Renate / GIEFER Thomas, *Die Rattenlinie. Fluchtwege der Nazis. Eine Dokumentation,* 3. Ed., Weinheim 1995, p. 62-65. WIESENTHAL Simon, *Recht nicht Rache.* Berlin 1988. FRIEDMANN Tuvia, *Die "Ergreifung Eichmanns". Dokumentarische Sammlung.* Haifa 1971.
- (13) WOJAK, "Eichmanns Memoiren," p.17.
- (14) Hermann mistook Friedrich Schmidt, the owner of the house in the Calle Chacabuco, for Eichmann who was only a tenant. The Mossad's background check on the landlord showed that F. Schmidt could never be A. Eichmann. En: *ibid.*, p.30. When Hofstetter met Hermann the first time in the first week of March, the Mossad special agent realized that his apparently most important informant was a blind man. In: AHARONI / DIETL, "Der Jäger," p.122.
- (15) MEDING Holgar, "Der Weg" *Eine deutsche Emigrantenzeitschrift in Buenos Aires 1947-1957.* WVB. Berlin 1997 p. 132-34.
- (16) WOJAK, "Eichmanns Memoiren". p. 31.
- (17) The mentioned SS-officer is assumed to be W. A. Sassen who also offered his transcript to the American Publisher Time/LIFE shortly before Eichmann's abduction. *Ibid.*, p. 32. The Mossad expected even more information about other Nazi criminals from W. A. Sassen, especially about J. Mengele und F. Stangl. LAURYSENS Stan, *De fatale vriendschappen van Adolf Eichmann.* Leuven 1998. p. 179.
- (18) According to Lauryssens, Isser Harel was notified about an offer regarding the publication of the memoirs of a war criminal by the Time/LIFE-Buenos Aires bureau chief Phil Payne himself and travelled to the La Plata metropolis right away in April 1960. At the same time he supposedly made plans for the abduction. *Ibid.*, p.207.
- (19) The SS registered Eichmann with the number Nr. 45 326.

- (20) Eichmann had known Veronica Liebl who came from Sudeten Czech stock, since the summer of 1932. KONING Ines de, "A Study of Adolf Eichmann (1906-1962). Adolf Hitler's expert in Jewish Affairs", Bach. Arts, Newton College of the Sacred Hearth, 1964, p. 6.
- (21) Later his service at a Foreign Legion was used as an excuse by the Austrian government to present him as a German to avoid possible restitutions after his arrest in 1960. The discussion of Eichmann's citizenship is the subject of my contemporary research. CWIK Christian, „Österreichische Nationalsozialisten in Argentinien. Der Fall Adolf Eichmann und seine Perzeption“, En: Meding Holger (Ed.), Argentinien und das Dritte Reich, Berlin 2008, p. 255-282.
- (22) AHARONI / DIETL, "Der Jäger", p. 20.
- (23) Various geo-politic considerations suggest that the Jewish State was supposed to be located around Galicia, Madagascar, Brazil or Palestine.
- (24) In addition Heinrich Müller was also the chief executive officer of the "Reichszentrale für jüdische Auswanderung" and the RHSA-Amt IV in 1939
- (25) MOMMSEN Hans, Auschwitz, 17. Juli 1942. Der Weg zur europäischen "Endlösung der Judenfrage" München 2002. MOSER Jonny, Die Judenverfolgung in Österreich 1938 - 1945. Europa Verlag. Wien 1966.
- (26) The meeting took place on the 20th of January 1942 at the department of the "Internationale Kriminalpolizeiliche Kommission" in Berlin, Am Großen Wannsee 56/58, setting the seal on the killing of the so-called "enemies of the Third Reich".
- (27) The scientific documentation and analysis of the Holocaust is so extensive and therefore impossible to quote at this place.
- (28) WOJAK, "Eichmanns Memoiren", p. 19.
- (29) LINCK Stephan, "Festung Nord" und "Alpenfestung". Das Ende des NS-Sicherheitsapparates", En: Paul Gerhard / Mallmann Michael (ed.), Die Gestapo im Zweiten Weltkrieg. "Heimatfront" und besetztes Europa. Darmstadt 2000. p. 574-595.
- (30) Adolf Barth was a grocer in Berlin who supplied the Eichmann family. MALKIN, Ich jagte Eichmann", p.92.
- (31) Eichmann stated the Polish town Breslau as his birthplace and the 9th of March 1905 as his birthdate, because he was acquainted with the fact that the registries were being destroyed in the course of Allied bombings. AHARONI / DIETL, "Der Jäger", p. 93.
- (32) Eichmann's former closest co-worker SS-Sturmbannführer Dieter Wisliczeny testified against him in Nuremberg and gave the CIC a detailed description of Eichmann.
- (33) Eichmann used the false name Otto Heninger and stated that he was born on the 19th of March 1906. Ibid., p. 71.
- (34) WOJAK, "Eichmanns Memoiren", p.20.
- (35) He was the forest official Feiersleben, Revierförsterei Kohlenbach, Altensalzkoth, Eversen, Celle.
- (36) Eichmann was still ranked far behind the Nazi politicians, the political strategists and the Nazi military leaders in the German public's comprehension. After the unsuccessful hunt, he fell into oblivion.
- (37) As some of his former comrades did, who were directing the attention to the fleeing Eichmann and named him as the main coordinator and mastermind of the Holocaust during the Nuremberg trials.

- (38) In the course of the investigations even Mrs. Eichmann was being tracked down in Bad Aussee, but a possible abduction was declined by the young Israeli leadership.
- (39) PENDORF Robert, *Mörder und Ermordete. Eichmann und die Judenpolitik des Dritten Reiches*. Hamburg: 1961, p. 139; AHARONI / DIETL, "Der Jäger", p.82.
- (40) WOJAK, "Eichmanns Memoiren", p.20.
- (41) Santa Maria dell' Anima is a theological college for German priests in the Vatican.
- (42) An "Austrian consulate" (Guiseppe Siri: Bishop of Genoa, Monsignor. Heinemann und Gruber, et cetera) was set up in the Vatican by a syndicate initiated by Bishop Alois Hudal and guaranteed a facilitated transaction of administrative aspects. HUDAL Alois, *Römische Tagebücher. Lebensbeichte eines alten Bischofs*. Leopold Stocker Verlag. Graz-Stuttgart 1976.
- (43) The Pallotine padre Anton Weber of the St. Raphael society in Rome claimed that A. Eichmann approached Hudal under his new name Richard Klement to conceal his true identity. SERENY Gitta, *Am Abgrund: Gespräche mit dem Henker*. Franz Stangl und die Mörder von Treblinka. Zürich 1995, p. 377. KLEE Ernst, *Persilscheine und falsche Pässe. Wie die Kirchen den Nazis halfen*. Frankfurt/Main, 1991, p. 25.
- (44) Alois Hudal and Eugenio Pacelli (Pius XII) had known each other since 1923 when they were spending time in Germany together. It was also Cardinal E. Pacelli who mitred Hudal in 1933. LANGER Markus, "Alois Hudal. Bischof zwischen Kreuz und Hakenkreuz. Versuch einer Biographie". Diss., Universität Wien, 1995.
- (45) Eichmann indicated Bolzano as his place of birth and stated he was born 1913, which made him seven years younger.
- (46) SAFRIAN Hans, *Die Eichmann Männer*. Europaverlag. Wien 1993; SAFRIAN Hans, *Eichmann und seine Gehilfen*. Fischer Verlag. Frankfurt/Main 1997.
- (47) AHARONI / DIETL, "Der Jäger," p.72-75.
- (48) STEINACHER Gerald, *Nazis auf der Flucht. Wie Kriegsverbrecher über Italien nach Übersee entkamen*. Innsbruck 2008.
- (49) Argentina announced the admission of 4 million immigrants with a rate of 30,000 per month. An official immigration treaty was signed by Italy on the 20th of March 1948 and another one by Spain on the 18th of October 1948. MEDING Holger, *Flucht vor Nürnberg? Böhlau Verlag, Köln-Wien 1992*, p. 47.
- (50) *Ibid.*, p.85.
- (51) STEINACHER Gerald, *Nazis auf der Flucht. Wie Kriegsverbrecher über Italien nach Übersee entkamen*. Innsbruck 2008. *passim*.
- (52) To a minor degree there was also German immigration in all Ibero-American states while the immigration to English, French, Dutch and Danish colonies were negligible as a demographic factor.
- (53) From Faustino Sarmiento or Juan Batista Alberdi, the two Argentinean philosophers.
- (54) The registration of non-German-speaking immigrants from Austro-Hungary is very difficult aside from the few statistic facts about immigrated Hungarians in the United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, South America, Africa, Australia and Asia between 1876 and 1910. CHMELAR, "Höhepunkte," p. 24.
- (55) Englisch Karl Ritter von, *Die österreichische Auswanderungsstatistik*. En: *Statistische Monatsschrift, Jahrgang 18, Neue Folge* (Brünn 1913) p. 65.
- (56) Perón appointed the former director of the immigration department Santiago Peralta to be the head of the Instituto Étnico, a preliminary stage of the confederation. MEDING, "Flucht vor Nürnberg," p.44.

- (57) *Ibid.*, p.44
- (58) STEINACHER (2008). P.64 s. A photograph shows him with two companions on the deck of a ship. Eichmann is wearing a hat, a black coat and a bow tie. AHARONI / DIETL, "Der Jäger," p. 84.
- (59) Audio tapes of an interview (for the "stern") with the former Flemish SS-officer Willem Sassen (Federal Archive in Coblenz).
- (60) BAR ZOHAR Michael, *Die Jagd auf die deutschen Wissenschaftler*. Propylen. Berlin 1965, p. 174.
- (61) Santiago Peralta is considered as the head of the anti-Semitic policy before 1945 in the newer Jewish-Argentinean historiography. KLICH Ignacio, *Four Decades after the Capture in Buenos Aires of an Austrian from Linz: The Eichmann Affair in Memoirs, Argentinian Testimonians and Journalism*. Rathkolb Oliver (ed.), *Revisiting the National Socialist Legacy*. Studien Verlag. Innsbruck 2002, p. 259-309.
- (62) Other cooperators were Pablo Diana and Enrique González. See: MEDING, "Flucht vor Nürnberg", p. 159.
- (63) *Ibid.*, p. 218.
- (64) Avenida Cordoba was the registered office of the CAPRI 374 in Buenos Aires, *Ibid.*, p. 215.
- (65) Dr. August Siebrecht was the executive director of the AEG in Chile during the WWII. After his detention in the United States he returned to South America in 1945, where he became J. Peron's advisor.
- (66) *Ibid.*, p. 215.
- (67) Resolución 882/50; Expediente C-63-50-cde. Buenos Aires 21.07.1950. *Ibid.* p. 216.
- (68) Sterzinger's construction company in São Paulo had approximately 3000 employees. *Ibid.*, 219.
- (69) Mrs. Eichmann told their children that they were going to visit Uncle Ricardo in Argentina. WOJAK, "Eichmanns Memoiren," p. 21.
- (70) MEDING, „Flucht vor Nürnberg,“ p. 261.
- (71) BLASCHITZ Edith: *NS-Flüchtlinge Österreichischer Herkunft: Der Weg nach Argentinien*. DÖW. Wien 2003; KLICH Ignacio, „Argentina de cara a la historia“ *En: .Américas – Zeitschrift für Kontinentalamerika und die Karibik*, No.28/4-2003: 53-67.