# CONCENTRATIONARY MEMORIES

Totalitarian Terror and Cultural Resistance

# **EDITED BY**

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#### I Events leading up to the filming

#### How Fruchtman bit upon the idea

In the autumn of 1959 Milton Fruchtman, a producer then in his thirties, was in Munich to take charge of a programme for an American television station. After work one day his cameraman invited him to come along to a large brasserie, the Hofbrauhaus. That evening Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will (1935) was being screened and the place was packed. Fruchtman was stunned to see the thousand people gathered in the bar watching the film break into shouts of 'Heil Hitler!' during the Führer's speech. The next day the same cameraman took him to a fencing club. There he saw 16 photos of Hitler and other Nazi leaders hung on the walls. As members entered the sports club they would click their heels and give the Nazi salute in the direction of the portrait of Hitler. Fruchtman decided he wanted to let the public know about the strong residue of the Nazi movement and national-socialist ideology that persisted in the Bavarian capital. But no American television channel was interested in his film project. As one of the programme managers told him, 'The war is over'.

On 23 May 1960, Fruchtman heard Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion announce before the Knesset, 'A short time ago the security services apprehended one of the most infamous Nazi criminals, Adolf Eichmann, who was responsible, together with the Nazi leadership, for what they called the "final solution to the Jewish question" – in other words, the extermination of six million of Europe's Jews'. Eichmann was already in Israel and would soon be brought to trial 'under the Nazi and Nazi Collaborators (Punishment) Law of 1950'.

Fruchtman immediately decided to go to Israel. He had once directed the shooting of a biography of Ben-Gurion for NBC, and now he recalled that Ben-Gurion had thanked him and invited him to visit him the next time he was in the country. Fruchtman had not given up his idea of a report on neo-Nazis; he thought that thanks to the wide media coverage Eichmann's capture would provoke, his project would have a chance of succeeding if he obtained permission to use footage from the upcoming trial. But once in Israel, the producer learned that no filming of any kind had been envisaged.

#### Negotiations

Ben-Gurion was in fact hostile to the presence of cameras and lighting, which he believed could disturb the trial and turn the courtroom into a movie set.<sup>5</sup> A great deal was at stake; he wanted the Eichmann trial to become a seriously prepared, well-documented and widely covered Nuremberg of the Jewish people. But the role the filmed image might play in this media coverage did not seem crucial to him.

In Israel the announcement of Eichmann's capture and his transfer had the effect of a bomb. Journalist Tom Segev wrote:

'It is hard to remember any other instance of emotion and shock like the one that hit us this week', one of the newspapers said. The key word in all that was

said and written in those days was 'we'; the Israelis had not known, since the Declaration of Independence, so deep a sense of national unity.<sup>6</sup>

Historian Hanna Yablonka described the euphoria that took hold of the population. Day after day the Israeli press published articles about Eichmann's role, reactions to the kidnapping and the future trial, letters from readers, and interviews with survivors. In her opinion no event since the Sinai Campaign in 1956 had stirred Israelis so strongly. They were now citizens of a sovereign nation that was the master of its own destiny and could do justice to past and future victims. The publicity generated by the event all over the world was also considerable. The press devoted long articles to the Final Solution in general and to the figure of Eichmann in particular. Many books were published and translated into a host of languages. Films and telefilms were shot in Germany and the United States. In short, Eichmann's arrest was widely relayed in the written press and television – but it had been neither anticipated nor prepared by the media. Fruchtman read everything he could get hold of about Eichmann and his role in the Final Solution. It was then that he hit upon the idea of filming the trial using the latest technology.

Television was just starting to reap the benefits of the Ampex Corporation's inventions. Founded in California in 1944, Ampex had manufactured the first tape recorders; later it became interested in recording images. In 1956 its first videotape recorder was developed. The six inventors who developed it were honoured for their achievement with the first award ever given by the American Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. <sup>11</sup> On 24 July 1959, Nixon and Khrushchev debated the merits of their respective countries' political systems in a kitchen recreated for the American National Exhibition at the Moscow Trade Fair. The debate was captured on an Ampex videotape recorder. Two days later the 'Kitchen Debate' would delight American television viewers. <sup>12</sup>

Fruchtman, then the number two executive producer with the New York-based Capital Cities Broadcasting Corporation, went to the directors of the major networks and proposed creating a pool that would film the trial using Marconi video cameras and record the images on an Ampex videotape recorder. These technical systems would obviate the drawbacks of conventional filming – namely, the presence of cameras in the courtroom and harsh lighting – but above all, they would change the ultimate purpose of the recording by making television broadcasting and coverage of the trial possible. Yet no one responded to his request. When the European union of television companies met in Madrid, the professionals to whom he set out his project were equally unenthusiastic. Finally the German television stations, in particular the Hamburg-based Norddeutscher Rundfunk, stated that they were interested. On the strength of this first expression of support – and after making sure he would be able to avail himself of the services of the Ampex Corporation in Redwood City and those of Marconi in Chelmsford, England, where the video cameras were manufactured and perfected – Fruchtman returned to Jerusalem.

For Ben-Gurion and the Israeli government, a number of issues were at stake. Thirteen years after the creation of the state, there was a need to consolidate a national identity that was threatened by the heterogeneity of the population: in addition to the generation of Sabras – young people born in Israel who had not known life in the Diaspora – there was a growing community of Jews from the Mediterranean basin. The trial was an opportunity to produce an account of the catastrophe for those who had not lived through it. It was a matter of showing that the State of Israel represented the interests of all Jews. But the trial had an international scope as well: to emphasize the Jews' great solitude during the war, and perhaps to put the world to shame, 'recalling to world-wide public opinion', as Ben-Gurion wrote, 'whose followers are those who are planning the destruction of Israel, and whose accomplices they are, consciously or not'. The trial, therefore, had to be given extensive mass media coverage.

Preparations for the trial got under way. The prosecutors and judges were chosen, documents gathered and witnesses selected; the investigation of the defendant by Avner Less was tape-recorded and legal questions were examined.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, the elements required for wide media coverage were being put in place. Teddy Kollek, the director of the prime minister's office, played a key role in preparing for the media attention.

The choice of venue was the first element. The trial could only be held in Jerusalem, the city that symbolized the State of Israel. Beit Ha'am (House of the People), a theatre and community centre, was under construction at the time, and the mayor, Mordechai Ish-Shalom, promised to have it completed in time for the trial. The centre's auditorium, which had a capacity of 750 people, would be turned into a courtroom. A joint ministerial committee was set up; it was chaired by David Landor, the director of the government press office, whose task included informing the Attorney General of everything that concerned what we now call communication. A second committee, which Landor and Kollek also sat on, was in charge of assigning seats. A handful was reserved for diplomats (45 seats on the mezzanine), representatives of the Justice Ministry, well-known survivors such as Simon Wiesenthal, representatives of organizations or research centres like the Wiener Library in London and the Centre of Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Paris, and personalities such as the widow of the first president of Israel, Vera Weizmann, the wife of chief prosecutor Gideon Hausner, and Foreign Minister Golda Meir. The vast majority of the seats in the orchestra - 450 in all - were reserved for members of the Israeli and foreign press, who were also allotted an additional 25 seats on the mezzanine. For, just as in Nuremberg, this trial was a must that the cream of journalism along with a number of intellectuals wished to attend. There were those, like Joseph Kessel, who had already covered the International Military Tribunal, 16 and those, like Hannah Arendt, who had missed it. As she explained in a letter to the Rockefeller Foundation, she felt she simply had to cover this trial; she had been unable to attend the Nuremberg trial and had never seen those people in flesh and blood; and this was probably her last chance to do so.<sup>17</sup> To provide facilities for the host of journalists who had flocked to Jerusalem from all over the world a press room was set up in the basement, complete with teletypes, telephones and closed-circuit television. Every day mimeographed copies of the minutes of the

proceedings were distributed to them in four languages, Hebrew, German, English and French, together with a ten- or 12-page summary in Yiddish. <sup>18</sup> The national radio, the Voice of Israel, was able to record the proceedings in their entirety.

In this organization the filming had a special place. To our knowledge no camera had ever entered an Israeli courtroom. The question of filming a trial had never even come up. There was, therefore, neither precedent nor jurisprudence. It is true that Israel was not to install a television network until after the Six-Day War in June 1967. The importance of the filmed image as a vehicle of propaganda or information seems not to have been clearly perceived. The major media were the written press and the radio. Yet Fruchtman managed to convince the Israelis to have the trial filmed.

On 8 November 1960, the government and the State of Israel signed an agreement with Capital Cities Broadcasting Corporation that included a short preamble. It stipulated that the trial was an event of worldwide interest; it was highly desirable that all the proceedings be broadcast as extensively as possible by all available media. Capital Cities was an American radio and television company and could provide the means of recording the sound and images on tapes; the government would give Capital Cities exclusivity provided it did not make a profit on the broadcasting operation; any profits were to be turned over to a charity or other organization designated by the Israeli government. 19 The agreement went on to stipulate that filming rights would not be granted to any other authority, not even the Israeli government. It was also agreed that three months after being notified of the date of the start of the trial, Capital Cities would transport the filming equipment to Jerusalem and take charge of installing it; it would bring a qualified team to Israel and Milton Fruchman would be authorized to make all the decisions on site in Israel. The company would make the video recordings available all over the world on a fair basis to television networks and distributor groups that requested them. The agreement was valid for four months. Should the judicial proceedings last longer than that, Capital Cities could ask to be replaced for the end of the trial if it did not wish to pursue the recordings.

The last measures concerned the material. The agreement stipulated that Capital Cities must provide the Israeli government with a copy of all the material supplied to the networks and that, owing to the historic significance of the trial, the company was not allowed to destroy the body of the material for the 90 days following the conclusion of the trial without the government's written permission. This last measure shows that neither the production company nor the State of Israel was in the least bit preoccupied with the idea of building up film archives of the trial.

The contract with Capital Cities was signed by the government, but it fell to the judges alone to authorize the filming. This they duly did on 10 March 1961, by a decision that they justified. No, the filming would not disturb the trial.<sup>20</sup> They had inspected the premises and were satisfied that the cameras could be neither seen nor heard. But did that necessarily mean that the filming was useful? The judges recalled first of all that under Israeli law all judicial proceedings, both civil and penal, are public, and that justice is done in full view of all. They cited Bentham on the subject:

Where there is no publicity there is no justice.' Publicizing what happens before the Court was simply extending its scope. It was not desirable to set any limits on publicity. The present trial was arousing immense interest in Israel and all over the world. Besides, audio or video recording of court proceedings is more faithful than the written word. The judges, then, raised no objections to filming the trial. On the contrary, they felt that it was in the interest of justice.

Nearly half a century later, when the power of images, their unfaithfulness to reality, and the recording of judicial proceedings on film are topics that are heatedly debated and carefully analysed, the judges' thinking seems somewhat naive. As French legal scholar Antoine Garapon writes, 'The traditional conception of publicity was well suited to the fragility of the glance, the evanescence of visual memory. Technology gives this publicity disturbing power; henceforth the traces of events remain eternal and indelible.'21 Another task remained for the judges: to respond to the objections of Dr Servatius, the counsel for the defence. Servatius was bitterly opposed to allowing cameras into the courtroom. He claimed that filming could influence the witnesses, who would alter their testimonies either out of fear of being seen on television or because they would have the feeling of performing in front of an international audience; moreover, television programmes could distort the view of the trial, by omitting the defence's arguments for example. To his objections the judges replied that the risk of false evidence exists with or without television and that a witness can also be overly theatrical in front of the court, the press and the audience. The judges deemed the risk of distortion a much more serious matter - but that risk was not restricted to the defence, it existed in like manner for the prosecution and the court, especially since the court had no means of taking civil or penal action against what was broadcast in the foreign media. Yet there too the dangers were the same as for the written press. Nevertheless, the court reserved the right to react in the event of serious distortion by withdrawing the permission to film.

Thus about one month before the trial began arrangements were made for wide media coverage, in which television held a special place, as it was doubly beyond the Israelis' reach – in terms of both recording and broadcasting. In February 1961, the task of carrying out this unique operation – shooting in the courtroom for months on end, seven hours a day, five days a week – was officially entrusted to Leo Hurwitz.<sup>22</sup>

#### II Hurwitz in Jerusalem

From ultra-left films to televised news

When the American filmmaker Leo Hurwitz learned about the negotiations under way with the State of Israel, he contacted Milton Fruchtman and offered his services.

Hurwitz, a Brooklyn native, was the son of East European Jewish immigrants. A Harvard graduate, he had been one of the leading members of three successive groups of radical leftist American documentary filmmakers: the Workers' Film and Photo League (1930–35), Nykino (1935–37), and Frontier Film, <sup>23</sup> which he had

founded in 1936 together with Paul Strand, a photographer and filmmaker. Frontier Film was an independent company that operated as a cooperative. Among the films it produced were *Heart of Spain* (edited by Leo Hurwitz and Paul Strand – the latter also did the scripting of the film – from shots filmed by Geza Karpathi and Herbert Kline, who had followed Dr Norman Bethune's team around Spain), *People of the Cumberland, China Strikes Back* and *Native Land*.<sup>24</sup> Co-directed by Hurwitz and Strand after a long period of preparation, *Native Land* was a very innovative 'documentary' film that combined newsreels with re-enacted scenes. It fulfilled Frontier Film's vocation of promoting films that blended radical content with radical form. It dealt with the struggle for civil and social rights in the United States while touching on the subject of racism against Black Americans. Racial bias was also the subject of Hurwitz's first post-war film, *Strange Victory*, released in 1948.<sup>25</sup>

The connection with World War II and the focus on Nazism were even more marked in *The Museum and the Fury*, a documentary about the state museum at Auschwitz that Hurwitz directed in 1956 for Film Polski. It is this strange film, a long meditation on art and barbarity, that he showed Milton Fruchtman to convince him that he was the right man for the job. However, the decisive trump card in Hurwitz's hand was his experience in television.

In 1944 Hurwitz had started working for CBS as a director; with the fascination of the pioneer he had discovered this 'extremely primitive and complex' new medium, for which almost everything remained to be invented. In 1946 he became the head of news and special events at CBS. As he acquired experience with live filming, he measured the differences between directing a film and directing a TV programme: '[on television] you can't hold the film in your hand, you can't try out little things to test an immediate response. You've got to put that show on the air. You have to edit it, direct it while on the air.' To form his crew, Hurwitz called on radio professionals and film projectionists and trained them in television techniques. It was not only a matter of individual training but of training them to work in perfect symbiosis with the knowledge of each other's tasks and the understanding of the specific nature of the televised event.'

When in 1947 Hurwitz took leave from CBS to devote himself to the editing of *Strange Victory*, he thought he would return to his job as soon as the film was completed. But this was reckoning without McCarthyism. Denounced as a Communist, he fell victim to blacklisting and was not rehired. Thus began a long period in the wilderness for Hurwitz, from which he had not really emerged when he met Fruchtman, who agreed to entrust him with the recording of the trial.<sup>29</sup>

For Fruchtman, Hurwitz embodied the 'ideal combination' of for resolving the specific problems of the filming in Jerusalem. Aside from his availability and the acute awareness of Nazism he had demonstrated in his artistic work, which meant that as a director he would be 'passionately implicated' in the filming of the trial, his background in television would enable him to rapidly train Israeli cameramen who would be recruited on site and to assemble an effective, coherent crew by incorporating technicians of different nationalities, 32 profiles and horizons.

Hurwitz's contract was signed in February 1961. On 2 March he was on a flight out of New York bound for Lod airport. At the age of 51, he was making his first trip abroad. During the flight, in that muffled state of disorientation typical of air travel, he began to think about his task as a director, mulling over philosophical ideas and the historic meaning of the future trial, but also dwelling on several images and reference points pertaining to the camera's place in the courtroom. Hurwitz was familiar with the footage of the Nuremberg trials, excerpts of which he had edited into Strange Victory and The Museum. He had in fact had some courtroom experience himself in the distant past.<sup>33</sup> In March 1933, at the request of the American Communist Party's International Labor Defense, he had filmed the second trial of the Scottsboro Boys, nine teenagers falsely accused of raping two white girls in an Alabama train in March 1931.34 In that Decatur, Alabama, courtroom Hurwitz had shot using just one very noisy camera with very limited mobility. The technical resources video offered gave him hope for more elaborate 'stage direction' work when it came time to cover the Eichmann trial. It was this imaginary exercise that he engaged in during the flight to Tel Aviv: in the excitement of beginnings, lacking any concrete information about the configuration of the courtroom, the judges' requirements or the projectionists' skill, Hurwitz pictured a series of positions for his cameras that would give them maximal potentiality so as to penetrate as accurately as possible the spirit and 'meaning' of the trial.<sup>35</sup>

On his arrival in Jerusalem, however, Hurwitz came back down to earth: 'the neat desirable plans I had had in my head, on the plane, were quickly consigned to the bin for wishful thoughts'. Once he had settled in at the Reich guesthouse in Jerusalem, he became aware of the restrictions imposed on the filming of the hearings and the obstacles posed to his preparatory work. The judges demanded that the cameras be invisible from the courtroom; the time allowed for training his crew would be limited due to delays in the construction and fitting out of the courtroom.

From 5 March to 10 April Hurwitz worked relentlessly to find solutions.

For Milton Fruchtman and myself, it was the rough matter of making do with the rules set by the court, the existing spaces and walls of Beit Ha'am, the press of time; making use of whatever was to hand, and pushing it as far as we could beyond the restrictions imposed ... And yet, those wishful thoughts in the plane somehow served as the driving motor to the whole experience.<sup>38</sup>

# Partager

### Preparations

The stages of the preparation for filming can be reconstructed thanks to Hurwitz's working notes and the letters he sent his wife Jane and son Tom from Jerusalem.

By 5 March the director was already on site. First he visited the control room, which had been set up on an upper floor of a bank building across the street from Beit Ha'am. A cable had to be stretched between the two buildings to connect the four cameras to the control room monitors and the recording equipment.

Hurwitz spent most of his time at Beit Ha'am picking out new spots where he could position the first two cameras, which initially had been installed in such a way as to impose absolute immobility. T came in time', he told Jane. The first place he chose was in back of the glass cage: concealed behind a false wall, camera one (which he called the witness camera) would shoot through a screened opening running lengthwise along the wall. The camera was placed on wheels so that it could be moved over a span of more than six feet. This meant that not only could it film the witnesses from the front, it could also record Eichmann either in profile or from behind with the judges in the background, film the members of the defence and prosecution, and shoot views of the audience and of the witnesses as they walked from the orchestra to the stage (3.1 and 3.2).





Images 3.1–3.14 from video recording of the Trial of Adolf Eichmann reproduced with permission from Israeli Government Archives and the Estate of L. Hurwitz

A second camera was set up in a recess high up on the opposite wall and likewise concealed behind a wire screen. Camera two was in Eichmann's axis and could take slightly high-angle shots of him; it also would film the members of the prosecution and defence and, in a more difficult axis, the judges' table (3.3 and 3.4).





After the first cameras were installed there began a round of visits to the court, the defence, the police and the press. At this point Hurwitz confided to his

wife that he hoped to be allowed to place two other cameras in full sight, at the back of the auditorium or on the mezzanine, so that they would be as mobile as possible. But although the demonstrations proved convincing – visitors entering the

courtroom noticed no noise at all and were unable to locate the cameras that were filming them – the court stipulated that the other two cameras must also be hidden. Consequently Hurwitz set up camera three to the left of the mezzanine, concealing it behind the wall of a hallway. It was also somewhat moveable and could film Eichmann's booth, take three-quarter angle shots of the witnesses



and high-angle shots of the defence, and get shots of the judges (3.5).



Camera four was installed at the back of the courtroom inside the projection booth built for the future theatre. It would provide general and overall shots of the court and capture details with its powerful zoom. It would film the spectators from behind and record any reactions they may have (3.6).

Once the devices were in place Hurwitz organized a work session with the electricians. The Marconi

cameras that had arrived from England were acutely sensitive; they could shoot in poor lighting conditions and record through screens and through the glass enclosing Eichmann's dock. But because Hurwitz set great store by the quality of his images, he nevertheless had the electrical installation changed so the light beams would be more carefully directed; larger light bulbs were tried out to obtain top lighting and light the proscenium, mainly the tables of the defence and the prosecution; and lights were redirected into the interpreters' booths to illuminate them. Now all that remained to be done was to test the equipment, prepare the 20-odd members of the crew and allot them their roles.

#### Training

Training began on 23 March and after a short Passover recess got more intensive as the opening date approached. The Israeli projectionists<sup>40</sup> were trained in technical handling and in the subtleties of video cameras by the two British technicians sent by Marconi,<sup>41</sup> and under Hurwitz's guidance were introduced to the conditions of live shooting. Connected by headphone to the director, who issued instructions from the control room on shooting angles, shot scales, and the directions and movements

of the cameras, they had to acquire new reflexes and learn to work quickly so as to adapt to the directives and the unforeseen circumstances of filming. Not all of them seem to have responded with equal agility to the instructions and Hurwitz assigned the four cameras in accordance with the skills he thought he could detect.

During the preparatory phase the director became friendly with a very promising young projectionist named Emil Knebel (known as Millek), who was particularly involved in the initiation in television. In late March Hurwitz took the talented young man along on a trip to the Negev during which he sought to sound the country out and find out how Israelis felt about the trial.

An incident with Israel's security, however, compromised Millek's participation in the filming. On 5 April Commander Koppel, the head of the police force's court unit, refused to grant Millek a permanent pass on the grounds that he was a member of the Israeli Communist party. Hurwitz was stunned. Aside from arousing his political solidarity and the painful personal echo of being banned from exercising professional duties, it worried him, because Millek's exclusion jeopardized his whole arrangement. The Israeli had mastered the camera positions to perfection and, considering the time allowed, he could not be replaced at a moment's notice without harming the production. Commander Koppel met with Hurwitz and asserted that Knebel's political affiliation was a security threat to the trial; he could steal documents or jeopardize the proceedings by acts of vandalism. 42 Tense negotiations ensued. Hurwitz argued that 'the Eichmann trial is not a secret military installation', and deplored 'the inhuman inflexibility' of the police chief, who was confined in a purely administrative line of thinking that Hurwitz did not hesitate to compare to that of the Nazi bureaucracy. The outcome of these stormy discussions was that Millek was granted a partial lifting of the interdiction and in the end was able to participate fully in the filming.

After five weeks of preparation, the team was ready to film. On 11 April, the eve of the opening of the trial, Leo Hurwitz wrote to Jane:

We had our first day of televising the trial. And it went remarkably well! Considering the fact that all the cameramen had never [handled] a TV camera before and had to whip together a team in a very short time, it went smoothly and of excellent quality. Better I think than most shows of experienced crews. This day is the climax of weeks of preparation, and I feel I've run the 4 mile run as a sprint.

A look at the way the recording apparatus was set up sheds light on the director's intentions and the relations between the judicial and televisual staging.

### III Judicial ritual and televised dramatic art

'The reality of the filmed trial will ... first be the reality that justice has settled, regardless of whether the cinema enters the courtroom or not', writes Jean-Louis Comolli. In fact, it is from a pre-existing stage design that Hurwitz thought out, designed and adjusted his apparatus. He knew he would have no hold over the unfolding of the judicial ritual and the figures imposed on it, or over the emplotment

chosen by Hausner; nor would he have control over the bodies, the positions or the verbal exchanges. He designed his installation based on the auditorium's architecture, the stage and the imposed decor.<sup>44</sup>

Indeed the trial was first thought out by the Israeli prosecutor in the framework of the constraints of a procedure determined by the law. The newly-created Israeli legal system was based on English law which, unlike continental law, has no examining magistrate. By and large, cases are investigated before the court and the defendant serves as a witness at his own trial. The order of events was determined as follows: reading of the indictment by Judge Landau; the defence's objections and legal discussions; reading of the charge, sometimes called the opening address, by prosecutor Hausner; and witnesses' testimonies (the first being that of Eichmann - or rather his voice, since it consisted of excerpts from a tape recording made during his detention), interspersed with presentations of documents. Then came the cross-examination of Eichmann by the prosecutor, his lawyer, and the judges; the prosecutor's charge; the argument by the defence counsel, Dr Servatius; and the defendant's final statement. Finally, on 11 December, after a very long four-month deliberation the judges passed the sentence. Hausner and Servatius addressed the court, followed by Eichmann, who had the last word. On 15 December the court sentenced him to death. This immutable order of legal proceedings explains why Eichmann spoke for the first time on 20 June, two and a half months after the opening of the debates. Hannah Arendt, who did not cover the trial in the journalistic sense, since she left Israel on 7 May after less than one month of the four-month proceedings, did not see - not in the courtroom at least - Eichmann rise and take the floor, except to say, like the defendants at Nuremberg, he pleaded not guilty 'in the sense of the indictment'.

This framework determined by the law constituted the first stage direction. It was not negotiable. Within this pre-established framework Hausner imposed his own conception of the trial, which was also an emplotment. The first element was the story the prosecutor wished to tell. He chose not to limit himself to facts directly linked to the accused but rather to retrace the complete history of the genocide, from Hitler's rise to power up until the German surrender. The second element was who would tell the story – in other words, what elements would be used to back up the history. Hausner knew how monotonous the lengthy presentations of documents in Nuremberg had been. As a result he chose to give the witnesses the central role: to select them through a veritable casting and call to the stand 'as many as the framework of the trial would allow, and to ask each of them to tell a tiny fragment of what he had seen and experienced'.<sup>45</sup>

The debates took place in fact before a stage, in front of an audience. In this sense, as Agnès Tricoire remarks, the architects were also the authors of the judicial staging. 46 The stage direction imposed by the law, Hausner's choices and the architecture of the auditorium were elements imposed on Hurwitz. Taking them into account, he worked out his recording arrangements, which offered a fourth staging of the event.

The positions of the first two cameras, which were set up facing each other, respected – but also in a sense reinforced – the way the accused – witness axis was dramatized by the spatial organization of the courtroom. The face to face encounter of the cameras offered an interpretation of what could be one element of the trial's dynamics, intensifying the prosecutor's own interpretation. The choice of main characters on whom the projectionists would direct their attention was underscored again by the names given to cameras one and two: in his preparatory notes, Hurwitz called them the 'Eichmann camera' and the 'witness camera', in contrast to cameras three and four, which were designated by their location (mezzanine and projection booth).<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, while the dramatic art of the trial was thought out separately from its filmed recording, we note that the work on lighting interacted to some extent with the judicial stage direction: by redirecting the play of lights, Hurwitz modified somewhat the audience's perception of the stage, made secondary characters (the English-Hebrew interpreters) more visible, and emphasized the theatrical effect of the judicial drama.

A last point concerning the raising of the curtain on 11 April is worth mentioning. To prepare the filming of Eichmann's first entrance into the courtroom, the security team provided the filmmaker (and probably the press) with a very detailed and carefully timed description of the opening of the trial. It indicates that at 8:45 a.m. the defence, the prosecution, the interpreters, the stenographers and the usher would take their seats. Around 8:50 a police officer would enter the glass booth, from which he would signal to the judges with a small light that the defendant could be brought into the courtroom. This procedure would take three minutes. The usher would immediately inform the judges that the defendant was installed. They would be in control of the timing from then on. When they would decide to enter, the usher would go to his seat between the witness stand and the stenographers and shout Beth Hamishpat (the court)!' .The judges would then open the first session and, the memo adds, 'the most significant trial of the 20th century will be under way'.

This document is very edifying. It brings to light the theatrical quality conferred on Eichmann's entrance and the meticulous organization, which aimed not only to surround the 'opening ceremony' with great solemnity but also to make it easier to record. Prior to the schedule being drawn up, in fact, Koppel the police commander and Hurwitz the director conferred on the details of Eichmann's entrance. <sup>49</sup> The whole procedure was set up so that there was no chance of the cameras missing this historic moment, the image of which must be presented to the world.

This collaboration contributed toward making the opening of the trial, the importance of which was emphatically underlined at the end of the technical memo, into a spectacular event. What we see here is the co-production of an event, played on a dual stage, the judicial stage and that of the mass media coverage, combining the thorough organization determined by the masters of ceremony, the demands of precision required for filming the event, and the timing specific to the judges, who retained control over the second climax of the scene underscored by the usher's

cry of the court. This scene would be repeated for the opening of each of the 114 hearings.<sup>50</sup>

So while on the whole the filmed recording was subordinated to a pre-established stage design and emplotment, these few points of conjunction between the judicial machinery and the mass media machinery underline the effects of making this trial, with its unique status, into a performance. It is precisely by focusing on the dynamics of the two stages – judicial and televisual – that Leo Hurwitz's directing should be analysed.

### Stage, off-stage, off-screen

To assess what Hurwitz's directing may have contributed, let us first follow the second proposition of Jean-Louis Comolli, according to which a film cannot reproduce the reality of a trial but necessarily offers a 'fundamentally different translation of the "same" reality that is not filmed, such as a spectator present at the hearings could observe it'.<sup>51</sup>

Antoine Garapon mentions that a trial proceeds in a delimited but completely visible space: 'in a trial, the same people must see everything and nothing else, in time as well as in space... The courtroom is organized in such a way that each individual sees everyone at the same time'.<sup>52</sup> Now the filming of a trial, even if it is claimed to be a pure 'captation', by necessity modifies the perception of space and the relations between the protagonists. As Comolli points out:

The camera is not a machine that leaves what is visible intact. And it is not because it is a machine that it is assumed to be 'objective': indeed, even before a cameraman intervenes, the frame determined by the aperture and by the focal distance of the lens being used blocks out (André Bazin) a portion of the visible field that is greater than the part it circumscribes and shows. In the tribunal there is no 'off-screen' but only 'off-stage', that is, the wings, hallways, waiting rooms and so on.<sup>53</sup>

The camera may fragment the space of the stage, but it changes the view of the protagonists even more perceptibly. The cameras set up in the courtroom isolate the actors of the trial and offer them to television viewers at a distance, in a framing ratio and from an angle that are not the same as those afforded the spectators attending the hearing. At the trial of Klaus Barbie, the images captured in the courtroom and then rebroadcast by the history channel showed television viewers the faces of witnesses who faced the judges while giving their testimonies, with their backs to the spectators attending the hearing.

By the same token, spectators at Beit Ha'am saw Eichmann from a distance, in profile, through the reflection of the glass booth, whereas television viewers could see the accused from the front, sometimes close up. This is why Joseph Kessel went to the press room every day, because it had television screens on all four walls. Eichmann delivered himself up to the 'ruthless eye of the cameras'. He was, wrote Kessel, 'much clearer than in the courtroom, better outlined, and above all, seen in

full face'; these images 'were truer, more detailed, more revealing than the features of his face directly offered to the audience'. <sup>54</sup> By isolating the characters, moreover, the camera defuses the effect of the co-presence of protagonists, which, according to Emmanuel Levinas, constitutes the very essence of justice in action. <sup>55</sup>

In addition, when several cameras are involved, the recording constructs new relations between the actors through editing. It is with the aim of limiting these effects of producing meanings that strict specifications were imposed on the director of the Klaus Barbie trial: cutaway shots in particular were prohibited and the rule was to record only whoever was speaking and not those who were listening or supposed to be listening (e.g., actors in the trial, journalists and spectators). The ban on cutaway shots was based on the awareness of the effects they produced in films of the montage school (the famous 'Koulechov effect' comes to mind) and on the desire to rebalance the unequal relation that is played out on screen between image and sound. As Jean-Louis Comolli remarks:

What the audience-spectator of a hearing hears and sees is quite different from what the spectator-audience of a film of this same hearing sees and hears. I emphasize the term 'audience' (from the Latin *audire*, to hear), which indicates that speech and the act of hearing it are the main pieces of information of the judicial stage in the unfolding of the trial ... Film an audience, and you force-reinforce the visual aspect, you draw it over on the side of the visible, spectacle, spectators; at the same time you distance it from the dimension of the audible.<sup>57</sup>

To limit the production of affects and over-dramatization of the filmed image, the specifications drawn up for the Barbie trial also prohibited the use of close-ups, zooms and camera movement.

In light of these considerations, the filming of the Eichmann trial stands out from the outset by virtue of the directing work Leo Hurwitz asserted and his manifest desire to mark the difference between the place of the spectator and that of the television viewer.

## The role of editing and the status of the media

In all his works, Leo Hurwitz gave editing a central role. His first initiation into cinematographic language was imparted to him by Pudovkin: reading Film Technique was a veritable 'illumination'<sup>58</sup> for Hurwitz; it instilled in him an intimate perception of the architecture of a film and the function of editing. Even before he became a director, Hurwitz saw in editing the means to combine political involvement and poetic expressiveness. The ultimate purpose and the truth of a shot were not to be sought in the shot itself, according to this approach, but in its relation and interaction with the other shots in the film. For Hurwitz, then, film does not have the illusory vocation to duplicate reality: truth does not offer itself to the camera, it is constructed with the camera as the outcome of a patient operation of the production of meaning.

From this perspective, we understand that Hurwitz's work in the control room for the Eichmann trial seemed to him decisive: sitting in front of the four monitors that transmitted what his cameramen could see live in their viewfinders, he had to choose which of the four images – selected on a fifth monitor – would be recorded on the band, according to the concept of 'shoot and edit'. He also had to define the rhythm, logic and form of the transition from one shot to another.

It is this stage direction that Hurwitz dwelled on in a letter to *New York Times* television critic Jack Gould after seven weeks of shooting.<sup>59</sup> Protesting against the American networks, which used his images without listing his name in the credits, Hurwitz stressed the creative part of his directing work: the footage is not automatically captured 'as if it flowed into their studios from the water tap'; the images are the product of a human act, of the combined action of a hand, a mind and a spirit, and thus the fruit of creative work. In this viewpoint, Hurwitz takes note of an intrinsic difference between what the spectators of the hearings saw and what he offered to television viewers:

My objective was to reveal the events of the courtroom with greater clarity and penetration than would be possible for the public really present in the courtroom. The ability of the TV cameras to bridge the distances – to show the details of Eichmann's face and hands, the expressions of the judges, counsel and witnesses – in such a way that these events could be seen from all relevant angles [meant that the cameras showed] more than can be seen from the court itself where most of the key participants had their backs or profiles to the audience.

In a later interview with Susan Slyomovics, Hurwitz pointed out again that a courtroom audience is not involved in the same exercise of observation and perception as a director in the control room. Once spectators got their bearings and familiarized themselves with the décor, the positions of the protagonists and their features – Hausner's bald spot, the judges' appearance and faces, Eichmann's profile, Servatius's thick neck, the witnesses' bodies – they would have a generic idea of the overall scene. Then they could concentrate on speech and let themselves be guided more by hearing than by sight. In contrast, Hurwitz, sitting outside the courtroom in front of his four monitors, had a panoptic view of the trial, a multiplication of capacities of vision that allowed him to glimpse what no one else could see: in a state of extreme concentration, far greater than that of a person seated in the courtroom, Hurwitz set out to offer the television viewer the front-row seat of an super-powerful observer fitted with an apparatus that gave him keener, more acute vision.

The primacy of image over sound was all the more pronounced as the meaning of the words was delayed in reaching him owing to the slight time-lag of the translation. Hurwitz understood Yiddish (the language his parents spoke) and consequently German, which is fairly close to it. But the exchanges in Hebrew were unintelligible

to him and he had to interpret the situations he watched unfolding on the screen before being enlightened as to their meaning.

The emphasis on the visible aspect and the heavy-handed editing were justified in Hurwitz's eyes by the target audience and the conditions in which the recordings were broadcast. He was thinking about the expectations of the viewers who would be receiving his footage daily – live but for the delay entailed in shipping the tapes – when he fought for the right to move his cameras around: if they had remained stationary, he explained to critic Jack Gould, the live pick-up of the recording would have become tiresome and 'the trial would not have had the freshness of each new day'.<sup>62</sup>

By virtue of its very nature as a 'TV series' destined to be rebroadcast on a daily basis to American viewers, the filming of the trial seems to be intrinsically subject to being stylized and dramatized in order to keep the audience's interest up. Unlike the directors who filmed the trials of Barbie, Touvier and Papon, who worked on recording archives for history and were subject to restrictive specifications, Hurwitz was totally in control of his cinematographic choices. To analyse them as thoroughly as necessary, we would have to go through all the available resources. This we have not yet done. The present analysis is based on about 30 hours of recorded material.

# IV The main stylistic device of Hurwitz's dramatic art

An examination of Hurwitz's filming confirms the effects of cutting scenes and heavily editing. The recording of the first day of hearings, devoted mostly to the reading of the charges, reveals the choices made by the director in the preparatory and training phase. Although certain static shots by cameras three and four seize all of the judicial space, the director also crosses it and explores it by means of panoramic movements: he emphasizes above all a combination of tight shots and close-up shots that re-cut up the stage of the trial. The stage, moreover, was extended to the orchestra (images of the audience, isolating at times a profile or a hand writing on a notebook) and to the wings (shots of stenographers or translators at work in cubicles placed high up along the mezzanine) (3.7, 3.8 and 3.9).







This fragmentation of space was combined with effects of reconstruction offered by camera one, which captured the reflections on the glass wall of Eichmann's booth. Superimposed by refraction on the image of the defendant from behind with

the judges in the background were the first rows of the audience and the table of the defence (3.10).



The depiction of the actors in the trial is marked by the variety of points of view. For example, Eichmann's counsel is filmed from the very first session from all possible angles: high-angle shots from behind, left and right profile shots, but also from the front when he speaks to his client or when his image is reflected in the glass enclosure. These images of Servatius sometimes appear in line with

the bodies and faces of the other members of the defence or prosecution; but most often the lawyer is isolated in the frame and shown in tight or close-up shots that emphasize the presence of his powerful body, the rolls of fat on his neck and the expressiveness of his watchful face. During the same session, camera one frames the first sharp look Hausner darts at the defendant who has just made his entrance, foreshadowing the upcoming confrontation. Thus by isolating the protagonists, by yielding them frequently in close-up shots, Hurwitz knowingly produces effects of dramatization; his portrait gallery emphasizes the character traits of the individuals present and transfigures them into characters in a drama (3.11 and 3.12).





In his videotape recording, Hurwitz does not stop at modifying the view and the angle of vision on the protagonists; he puts them in relation to one another and constructs their relation by means of editing. This production of meaning is particularly pronounced in the recording of the witnesses' testimonies, which for Hurwitz constituted the main dramatic thrust of the trial.<sup>64</sup> Using the effects of editing, the director takes pains to construct a confrontation, which is sometimes artificial, between the defendant and the witnesses. Relying on cameras one and two, which face each other, he uses the shot/reverse shot technique to create an exchange of looks – albeit with no attendant exchange of words, since Eichmann remains silent during this phase of the trial.

The bias of the directing appears clearly in the way the testimony of the psychologist Gilbert is filmed. Gilbert had been assigned to the prison at Nuremberg to look after the defendants' mental health. In Jerusalem he testified about what the leading Nazis who stood trial in Nuremberg had confided to him about Eichmann's role in the Final Solution. While he testified Hurwitz caught the penetrating looks Gilbert would shoot at the accused and the obvious annoyance they provoked. 65

Yet although the shot/reverse shot procedure does work with some of the other witnesses – those who had known Eichmann, like Joel Brand, whom Hausner asks if he recognizes the accused – most of the time the confrontation between the defendant and the witness appears artificial, as if the reality of the trial were resisting the director's preconceived ideas. There are several reasons behind this. First of all, most of the witnesses do not look at Eichmann: sometimes they face the prosecutor who is questioning them, but more often than not they are self-absorbed, entirely focused on reliving their story. Moreover, Eichmann does not seem to be looking exactly in the direction of the witnesses. For this reason their eyes do not follow the same axis and their looks fail to meet in the shot/reverse shots. Lastly, the accused remains impassive most of the time and falls short of the expectations of the camera and the production crew, as well as those of the journalists and other spectators of the trial. In his interview with Barbara Hogenson, Hurwitz recalled:

He looked as stony as he could for nine months. I told you, in one camera I had his face on the screen all the time. In order to cut to it, if there was a betrayal of emotion. He had a twitch on one side of his face. I tried to watch that twitch to see whether it corresponded to some responsiveness to whatever was being said, or whatever was happening. I couldn't locate a parallelism between the twitch and events.<sup>66</sup>

Hurwitz's device is also based on a premise that is particularly well developed in fictional cinema: the assumption that the observer can read the truth on the face of the accused, and decipher an enigma in his features. The shot/reverse shot betrays his hope – closely akin to Hausner's – of seeing what he assumed was the mask of Eichmann the actor fall off.<sup>67</sup> Thus the discrepancy between the actual trial and the one Hurwitz imagined also results from the free will of the 'actors', from 'the dose of acting, that is, enactment, artifice and simulation'<sup>68</sup> inherent in every judicial procedure.

The choice of shots on the defendant during the testimonies of the survivors – most of whom had had no direct contact with Eichmann – reinforces Hausner's proposed emplotment of the trial. The shot/reverse shot contributes in fact to producing the image of Eichmann's guilt and makes him personally accountable for all the tragedies recounted in the courtroom. On this point, however, Hurwitz the dramatist was not necessarily in harmony with Hausner the stage director. Several times in his correspondence Hurwitz deplored the fact that more emphasis was not put on what he called 'fascism' according to the Communist terminology of the time. In the interview he gave in the framework of Columbia's oral history

programme he expressed his disagreement with the Israeli point of view that, in his opinion, isolated the Jews from other victims, undermining the meaning of the word 'fascism'.

The second stylistic device of the filming of the testimonies appears more spontaneous. It relies on the observation of the trial and Hurwitz's desire to capture its distinctive characteristics in action. As the hearings proceeded, the director became the witness of an event in the process of happening and recorded the signs of that event – the effects and the shock produced on the audience by the testimonies. The filmmaker brought out this aspect by taking cutaway shots of the audience and the court, showing their attentive, sometimes deeply upset, faces (3.13 and 3.14).





The emotion of the speakers and onlookers during certain testimonies echoed that of the filmmaker in the sound room. On 9 May Hurwitz wrote to his wife after two particularly trying days. On the previous day Rivka Yoselewska had related in Yiddish how her small daughter had been killed before her eyes, while she herself was shot and thrown alive into a ditch full of bodies, from which she managed to extricate herself. On 9 May Georges Wellers, the only French witness at the trial, described the arrival of a group of children at Drancy. The children had been arrested in the Vel d'Hiv round-up and transferred to camps in the Loiret region; they had been separated from their mothers, who were deported, and left alone. The daily testimonies of the trial are frequently devastating', Hurwitz writes. I fear often that tears will close my eyes and that I will not be able to see the monitors to direct the programme. I find my voice getting flat and monotone to defend myself in talking to the cameramen and switcher.' He adds,

And yet, in all this overwhelming feeling, there is a curious relief. It is the catharsis that the witnesses have in at last relating their ungraspable experiences to the world. They stand at the loudspeaker of history and each one of them revenges himself by his clarity, his recall and his full statement of feeling.

The choice of the term catharsis can be understood in the psychoanalytic sense (with which Hurwitz was familiar), the courtroom testimony appearing as the means by which the witness manages to liberate himself from repressed traumas. But by underscoring the fact that the witness is confiding 'to the world', Hurwitz summons up the Aristotelian definition of catharsis, whereby theatrical performance produces the effect of purifying the soul and passions of the spectator.

By using cutaway shots on the audience in Beit Ha'am, the director intended to reveal the effect of the testimonies on the spectators, particularly on the Israeli public. In the letters he wrote to Jane during the preparatory phase Hurwitz was initially surprised at Israelis' apparent indifference to the trial that was about to open. As the hearings proceeded he discovered the unplanned part of the judicial event and made room for it in his staging. Instead of emphasizing a face-to-face encounter between witnesses and television viewers, Hurwitz's staging gave preference to a triangular exchange of looks. By showing the spectators' faces he added a third dimension to the viewing experience, highlighted the affects it produced, and dramatized the perception of the testimonies that by then had become an integral part of the event. At the same time he shifted it to another scene, that of the trial's reception in Israel and the unforeseen emotion it brought about.

The filmed recording was thus not simply a matter of captation. It constituted a new staging that Hurwitz took upon himself – a staging that contributed to accentuating the primacy of image over sound, transfiguring the protagonists into characters, producing a drama of testimony, and constructing the confrontation between accused and witnesses. This set design of the trial was staged one last time by the television networks, especially in the US and West Germany.

#### Televised staging

The representatives of television networks in the US and in English-speaking countries in Europe made their selections from Hurwitz's recordings. The director had no influence over their choice. As he explained in a letter to his wife dated 16 April, it was an American delegate, somewhat amateurish in fact, who made the choice for the major American networks every day, selecting one hour of images out of the seven hours recorded. This footage was transported daily by plane to New York, where representatives of NBC, ABC and CBS took turns accepting delivery. For Europe, it was London that served as the hub.<sup>69</sup>

Judging from the few TV programmes we were able to watch, we ascertained that the footage was re-edited into broadcasts that showed highlights of the hearing; the images were then commented on and analysed by journalists on the set and compared with interviews, in particular interviews of survivors and certain witnesses who had testified during the trial. The American programmes were constantly interrupted by commercials. In a letter dated 13 April, Jane Hurwitz told Leo about it with a sense of humour: the programme aired on ABC New York was 'sponsored by Glickman Real Estate Interests with a speech explaining that property is one of the first things taken away from people when their freedoms are deprived them – hence, said Mr. Glickman in person, we are sponsoring the Eichmann trial'. Hannah Arendt mentions this same commercial.

These broadcasts themselves deserve to be studied, but the difficulty of such a study should not be underestimated. Television programmes were very poorly preserved and archived at the time. Although many different accounts testify to the considerable impact the images of the trial had in the United States<sup>71</sup> and West Germany, only an analysis of all the broadcasts would allow us to assess what TV viewers actually saw of the trial: a selection of Hurwitz's footage, filtered a first time in Jerusalem and a second time by the networks or the European channels, which then proposed a new emplotment specially designed for their national audiences.

It was based on these different filters that television viewers formed an opinion of Eichmann. In part this was also the case of Hannah Arendt who, as we mentioned, stayed only a short time in Jerusalem. To write her book, which is not strictly speaking a report, she explains that she made use of the sources accessible to anyone: the mimeographed minutes of the trial, a press file, and certain books, including those by Hilberg and Reitlinger. The portrait she draws of the accused – and which has come to depict the 'real' Eichmann – was modelled in part on the transcript of his interrogation by Avner Less and what Arendt or people close to her saw of the trial on television. Thus the televised mediation of the trial and the effect the filmed images had of dramatizing the trial influenced even the most critical minds.

#### Conclusion

The trial of Adolf Eichmann marked the emergence of the memory of the genocide in Israel, the United States and West Germany. Its legacy was considerable and took a variety of forms. In particular it spurred the resumption of legal proceedings. There was, for example, the trial of the Auschwitz personnel held in Frankfurt (1963–65), which generated considerable publicity in Germany. Yet it was not filmed.

The entrance of television cameras into the courtroom in Jerusalem was a unique event in the history of media coverage of crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide. Granted, the trial of major war criminals that was held in 1946-47 had been filmed in 35 mm, but this was done very scantily; only 30 hours or so were filmed - a few snatches of the hearings. Those images were in all likelihood intended to be used in newsreels and compilation films. They were used liberally by Marcel Ophüls in his 1976 film The Memory of Justice. After the Eichmann trial, more than 20 years would pass before the complete proceedings of a trial would be filmed again. The idea was resumed with the political trials that began in the 1980s, the last trials connected to World War II - Barbie in 1987, Touvier in 1994, and Papon in 1998 as far as France is concerned - and the trials connected to events in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and, more recently, Cambodia. But for these trials, filming was coupled with an aim that was absent in the Eichmann trial - the desire to build up archives in order to contribute to the subsequent writing of history. The filming of these later trials adheres to rigid specifications and tends to be a simple captation, very far removed from Hurwitz's work in Jerusalem.

On this account the Eichmann trial was both a turning point in the perception and memory of the genocide of the Jews and a major landmark in the history of a new medium, television – a medium still in its infancy, whose possibilities and

effects had not yet been fully assessed at the time. If international reception of the proceedings was uneven, it was presumably due not only to the degree of interest in the trial of a Nazi responsible for the Final Solution, which varied from one country to another, but also to the role of television in these countries' systems of media coverage. Yet television contributed in large part to determining how the event was imagined; this imaginative depiction, filtered by the nature and processes specific to the medium, dramatized the trial and made it more spectacular. The event marked a concurrence between a memory that was in the process of being internationalized and this moment in the history of television, perhaps prefiguring the new nature of global events widely covered in the mass media that are brought to fulfilment by the advent of live filming.