

Lessons from the Eichmann trial, 40 years on

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JERUSALEM — No-one could have known on 11 April 1961, just how much of an impact the trial of Adolf Eichmann would have on Israeli history and society, but the result of that seminal moment was so great that two conferences are being held this week to mark its 40th anniversary.

Both gatherings will focus not so much on the trial, but rather on how it influenced and forever changed Israeli society, from the educational

system to the way Israelis look at themselves.

"One of the impacts on society was the vision of Israel's place vis-a-vis the other nations, Israel's place in the world," said Hanna Yablonka, a lecturer at Ben-Gurion University and author of *The State of Israel vs Adolf Eichmann*, just published in Hebrew and due out in English in September.

"The concept that 'all the world is against us', was very much emphasised during the trial. It was a concept that Israelis have a predestination — they are predestined to be hated, they

will never be a normal state among other states."

Until that time, Yablonka said, one of the successes of Zionism was that it gave Jews a sense of normalcy, that despite having enemies like the Arabs, there was never a feeling that the whole world was against the Jews.

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"It gave a very pessimistic world-view," said Yablonka, who is participating at both conferences. "It is a key to understanding some of the fears, the existential fears, of Israelis, even today."

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