



Jewish Books in Review

is a service of the JWB Jewish Book Council,
15 East 26th St., New York, N.Y. 10010

Nazi Hunting in America

Quiet Neighbors: Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals in America. By Allan A. Ryan, Jr. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1250 Sixth Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101. 1984. 386 pages. \$15.95.

The Outraged Conscience: Seekers of Justice for Nazi War Criminals in America. By Rochelle G. Saidel. State University of New York Press, State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246. 1984. 246 pages. \$29.50 (cloth); \$9.95 (paper).

Reviewed by Roselyn Bell

Rochelle G. Saidel opens her book, *The Outraged Conscience*, with a quotation from Amos, "Let justice well up as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Allan A. Ryan, Jr., in his lengthier inscription to *Quiet Neighbors*, quotes Thomas More's line in "A Man for All Seasons": "Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake." Their choices of openings are indicative of their differing approaches to their common subject, the search for Nazi war criminals in America.

Saidel and Ryan, both passionate seekers of justice, tell the story from opposite perspectives. Saidel traces the travails of the pursuers: the journalists, rabbis, government workers, survivors and housewives for whom the tranquil existence of former Nazi persecutors in America was unconscionable. Hers is a twisting tale of frustration, isolation, jealousy and limited success.

Ryan, who, from 1980 to 1983, headed the Office of Special Investigations, a unit of the Justice Department created to step up denaturalization and deportation trials of ex-Nazis, gives the historical record: what the various accused did to contribute to the "Final Solution" in Europe, how they were able to camouflage themselves by being "quiet neighbors," and how they were discovered and dealt with by the American agencies of justice.

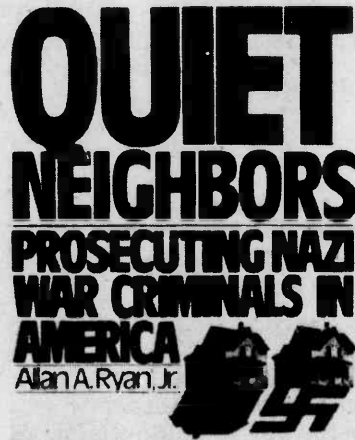
Justice was not always served, Ryan readily admits, as in the case of Andrija Artukovic, "the most prominent Nazi of all in the U.S.," who as Minister of the Interior of the Independent State of Croatia, ordered the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Jews and Serbs; he came to America under a false name on a 60-day visa in 1948, was ordered deported in 1952, but through a series of reversals was allowed to stay for over 30 years. His case is now back in the courts, though the defendant, at age 83, may not survive the final verdict. Of the 24 cases brought to trial by the OSI during its five years of existence, the prosecution has won 21.

Ryan, as director of OSI for three of those five years, brings an authoritative insider's view to his book. He describes how he and Walter Rockler, only four weeks after the invasion of Afghanistan, went to Moscow to hammer out an agreement with the Soviet Procurator General that would permit the taking of depositions from Soviet citizens who had witnessed war crimes. He quotes the trial transcripts to show both the horror of the crimes and the flatness of the accused's responses to them.

He quotes at length from his own investigative report on the Klaus Barbie case, in which he concludes that "officers of the United States government were directly responsible for protecting a person wanted by the government of France on criminal charges and in arranging his escape from the law," but that the Counter Intelligence officers involved could not be prosecuted for obstruction of justice because the statute of limitations had run out.

Saidel's book, drawn from interviews with the Nazi hunters and their families, tells more than we might want to know about the private lives of these individuals and less than would have been useful about the criminals they pursued. Furthermore, her greatest wrath seems directed not at the war criminals themselves, nor at the Immigration and Naturalization Service which put higher priority on finding Communists and smugglers than Nazis among new immigrants, but on the Jewish communal organizations and the Jewish press which, in her view, did not pursue this issue for 2½ decades.

She suggests that Nazi-hunting in the 50s and 60s was perceived as a leftist or Communist preoccupation and so the organized Jewish community did not want to be associated with it. She also implies, not persuasively, that the Jewish Agency's financial support of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency was the reason for the news agency's silence on the subject of Nazis in the 50s and 60s for fear that



Israel might lose vital reparation money.

Ryan, in contrast, dismisses conspiracy theories and thinks the U.S. got the kind of immigrants it deserved when it

enacted laws, specifically the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, which favored Nazi collaborators over Nazi victims, the Jews. "They (the Nazi war criminals) came in, not because unaccountable officials ran amok, but because we enacted laws that made entry so easy."

The only remedy for that bad law now is a good law, the Holtzman amendment of 1978 which ordered deportation from the U.S. for any alien found to have "ordered, incited or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person because of race, religion, national origin or political opinion" during the Nazi era. Ryan's pursuit of Nazis has been rigorously within the law because "it is our adherence to law that separates us from them."

Why now? Why are the prosecutions coming now and why the books about the search now? Because enough time has passed to deal with it, suggests Ryan. "If it is true...that our silence immediately after the Holocaust was not due entirely to apathy but, at least in part, to the inability to respond intelligently to such a massive wound to the human race, then the record is not beyond salvage." These books are both part of that salvage operation.

Roselyn Bell is senior editor of Hadassah Magazine.

The Jewish Calendar

Candlelighting



Mar. 1 - 6:01 p.m.	
Mar. 8 - 6:07 p.m.	
Mar. 15 - 6:13 p.m.	Mar. 6 - Fast of Esther
Mar. 22 - 6:19 p.m.	Mar. 7 - Purim
Mar. 29 - 6:24 p.m.	Mar. 8 - Shushan Purim
Apr. 5 - 6:30 p.m. (Pesach - 1st Seder)	
Apr. 6 - 7:39 p.m. (Pesach - 2nd Seder)	
Apr. 11 - 6:35 p.m. (Pesach - 7th Eve)	
Apr. 12 - 6:36 p.m. (Pesach - 8th Eve)	

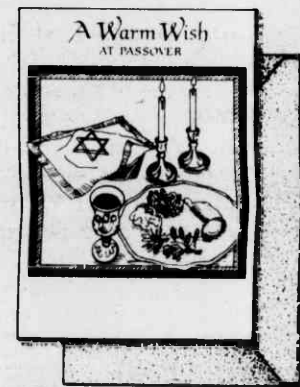
JCC Begins Weekend Phone Update

As the JCC is no longer open on weekends except for special events, a taped recording of weekly JCC activities and highlights will be available by dialing the JCC phone number (366-0357). Please let us know if you have suggestions for our recordings.


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