

Littman, Sol. *War Criminal on Trial: Rauca of Kaunas*. Toronto: Key Porter Books Ltd. 256 pp.

At a time when former presidents like Milosevic, Karadjic, and Pinochet, together with less known, but not less guilty, other parties to recent war crimes and crimes against humanity are still at large, and mostly beyond the reach of international tribunals or national courts, and when less than a third of the requisite number of states have, so far, ratified the International Criminal Court treaty, it is perhaps not untimely to have *War Criminal on Trial* reissued. After all, it is such evil men and their heinous crimes that help goad reluctant nations into making responsibility for these types of crimes an integral part of international law and world order.

The book, by veteran journalist Sol Littman, better known as the highly vocal, and activist director of the Canadian office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, was first issued in 1988. It was inspired by the convoluted saga of the first of altogether too few Canadian extraditions of war criminals like Helmut Rauca who, after a long and complicated legal hassle, was finally extradited for trial in Germany. Rauca was one of the estimated 23,000 Nazi war criminals to have been welcomed after W.W.II to, given sanctuary in, and for many decades sheltered by Canada. Rauca, who could easily pass for Goldhagen's "ordinary German" rose in 1941 from tradesman apprenticeship and policeman in the small German city of Plauen to become the almighty "Czar" of more than 35,000 Jews squeezed into the ghetto of Kaunas in Lithuania. The indictment leading to his extradition charged him with "aiding and abetting the murder of more than 10,000 Jewish men, women and children".

Generally, Littman uses a reporter's concise, simple language, and, with frequently short, staccato sound-bite like sentences, attempts to convey the ineffable horrors perpetrated during the holocaust by one ordinary but exceptionally blood-thirsty German in one corner of one of the many lands briefly occupied by Hitler's hordes. To provide context for Rauca's

story of rags to mass murderer extraordinary, and for the story of the destruction of the Kaunas ghetto by means of planned hunger, deprivation, several major killing “aktions” and the deportation of the remnants to the death camps, Littman provides an abbreviated primer on the “final solution”. Since the book was not revised for the new edition, this is somewhat anachronistic as it obviously does not, since it cannot, include the results of the massive amount of testimonies, research, and documents which have come to light since the book was first published.

Littman’s book is in part a written memorial dedicated “To the courageous Jews of the Kaunas ghetto-the few who survived and the many who were slain”. He stands in awe of the president of the Judenrat, Dr. Elchanan Elkes, and speaks with reverence of the wisdom, dignity, courage, and dedication to the service of his forlorn constituency with which he faced the Nazis. Quite uncommonly, Littman, also has praise for the ghetto police he deems faithful to the ghetto population, often winking and when possible even helping the hopeless underground. Similarly, Littman is quite lavish in his admiration for a number of survivors he has extensively interviewed, or who have otherwise contributed to the writing of his book by recounting their harrowing and heartbreaking experiences in print or in recorded testimonies.

Beyond this, however, Littman’s book is frankly an indictment of successive Canadian governmental policies and bureaucratic attitudes prior to and following World War II. He is unsparing in his criticism of the Canadian “none is too many” immigration policy refusing entry to Jews before, closing its gates to desperate refugees during, and limiting their entry into the country even after the war, when many war criminals were rather liberally admitted. Citing cold war and domestic political considerations as the motivation, Littman, with undisguised anger, decries the governmental stonewalling and legalistic nit-picking by the judiciary which enabled so many war criminals to enter Canada, live tranquil lives here, and evade trial on her

soil or extradition to the countries where their unspeakable crimes were actually committed. The sordid details of this deliberate footdragging are forcefully described in the concise update to the book, entitled "Aftermath", and should serve to alert vigilance and watchfulness of Canada's role and participation in shaping the evolving international attitude towards and treatment of the perpetrators of genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity.

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Margolian, Howard. *Unauthorized Entry: The Truth About Nazi War Criminals in Canada, 1946-1956*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. 327 pp.

Howard Margolian's, *Unauthorized Entry: The Truth about Nazi War Criminals in Canada*, purports to explain how Canadian immigration and security officials tried their best in the decade following the end of the Second World War to prevent Nazi war criminals from reaching Canada's shores. Notwithstanding their concerted efforts, problems in obtaining adequate and accurate screening information resulted in the arrival of some war criminals and collaborators to Canada. Yet the proportion of such unsavory characters compared to the total number of postwar immigrants to Canada, argues Margolian, is statistically insignificant.

Intended as an antidote to the Deschênes Commission's inquiry into Nazi war criminals in 1985-1986, and those reports and books criticizing Canadian immigration authorities for their laxness in allowing at least 2000 Nazi war criminals into Canada from 1946 to 1956, *Unauthorized Entry* is utterly unsuccessful in proving its thesis. Instead, Margolian succeeds in confirming his critics' worst suspicions: Canada was, in fact, a haven for Nazi war criminals and collaborators in the early postwar period. The only surprise is that more of them did not enter the country.