

the same river was accomplished many years ago by the city fathers of Philadelphia by placing the outlet of the sewerage system at a point on the Delaware some miles upstream from the intake point of the water supply, so that one day's bathwater was as likely as not to turn up in the next day's bath.

³*Ortega y Gasset, Existentialist*, by José Sánchez Villaseñor, S. J.; translated from the Spanish by Joseph Small, S. J. Chicago, 1949.

Studies in Mass Murder

Death in Rome, by Robert Katz; *New York: The Macmillan Company, Inc., 1967. 334 pp. \$6.95.*

Auschwitz, by Bernd Naumann; translated by Jean Steinberg, with an introduction by Hannah Arendt, *New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1966. 433 pp. \$7.95.*

Treblinka, by Jean-François Steiner; preface by Simone de Beauvoir; translated from the French by Helen Weaver, *New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1967. 415 pp. \$5.95.*

IN THE LATE afternoon of March 23, 1944 a column of SS police was bombed in the city of Rome and thirty-two of them were killed. The furious, drunken military commandant of the city wanted to kill at once the two hundred civilians who had been picked up at the scene, none of whom had had anything to do with the bombing, and to blow up the block of houses where the attack had taken place. Hitler, when he heard of the bombing, went even farther—he wanted the entire quarter destroyed and hostages killed at the ratio of thirty or fifty to one. Field Marshal Kesselring, commanding the German forces in Italy, was in the field at the time of the attack

but on his return to his headquarters he ordered the execution of ten hostages for each SS man shot—he was told that men already condemned to death would be killed—and the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*, Security Service) conducted the shootings in the Ardeatine caves just outside Rome. The Army had refused to carry out the executions saying that since police troops had been killed the police should perform the executions.

Through an error (the bookkeeping of death could be slipshod if there was an oversupply) 335 men were killed instead of 320, none of them members of the partisan group who had done the bombing. Among them were two fifteen-year-old boys and a seventy-four-old merchant, along with men of all ages picked up either for resistance activities, minor infractions of the occupation regulations, or because they were Jews.

The author of this book has set himself the task of digging up the facts of the *attentat* and of the massacre, who the perpetrators of both were and how they operated, and in the course of his researches has again had to come to grips with the controversial personality of Pius XII who, he seeks to show, did nothing to prevent the executions although most of the victims were Catholic and the Pope had had sufficient time to intervene with the German authorities.

Death in Rome is a serious book; the author has interviewed the surviving members of the partisan group of sixteen who carried out the bombing, and he has also questioned those on the German side including a number of the SS men who took part in making the arrests and the decisions. He has attempted, without success, to see the Vatican files on the subject and he has talked, without eliciting much information, with officials of the Holy See. All in all, he draws up a powerful indictment of officers of the German Army, the SS, and of the Pope for their widely differing degrees of responsibility for the killings; his heroes are the partisans and all

those who resisted the Nazi-Fascists. Despite a sometimes inept style—"The embracing arms of Saint Peter's square seemed to widen, as the car belonging to SS Standartenfuhrer Dollmann moved along" . . . "their [the prisoners'] hands were tied dorsal to dorsal behind their back. . ."—this is a well-constructed, carefully researched book bringing the events and the author's opinions clearly into focus.

In the author's view, the Pope should and could have intervened but he did not because Pius XII was essentially a man of diplomacy and secular *politique*, a pro-German who feared communism more than fascism and Nazism and feared not only the Red armies of Soviet Russia but the Italian Communists and the Italian partisan movement as well. It was the partisans, in the opinion of the Vatican, who were responsible for the reprisal executions in the Ardeatine caves and it was they who were denounced in the *Osservatore Romano*, not the SD executioners. Thus Mr. Katz fortifies the attack made on Eugenio Pacelli, Pius XII, by Hochhut, Lewy, and others adding to the already formidable set of charges that have been accumulated by critics, some of whom are themselves Catholic. Nor is it enough to dismiss the matter, as did that erratic English commentator, A. J. P. Taylor, when in writing of Mr. Katz's book he expressed surprise that non-Catholics should expect the Pope to behave differently from a businessman. Businessmen do not usually regard themselves as vicars of Christ nor are they heads of a spiritual kingdom whose laws are moral laws. Whether or not Mr. Katz is correct in his charges, they will remain unmet until the Vatican sees fit to disclose its documents—which it promises to do.

In other matters, such as the guilt of the German Army in the atrocity, the author's judgment may be substantially correct but it is certainly one-sided. An occupying army cannot permit its soldiers to be killed by un-uniformed civilians, however patri-

otic their intentions, without taking reprisals to deter a recurrence. One American military commander gave notice to the Germans when his army marched into the Reich at the end of World War II that hostages at the ratio of two hundred to one would be executed if American soldiers were killed by civilians. The French threatened executions at the rate of twenty-five to one. And the American judges at one of the later Nuremberg trials of German generals came to the conclusion that the taking of hostages and their execution was a lamentable necessity under international law, the only mitigating provision being that the ratios must not be excessive. What Field Marshal Kesselring was up against among other things was the Fuehrer who in his rage wanted to kill more than a thousand Italians for the crime of the partisans as well as blow up a large section of Rome. The ratio of ten to one, bad as it was, was undoubtedly the least with which Kesselring could hope to appease a Hitler who would have overruled a lighter punishment. The Fuehrer in 1944 was becoming increasingly an obsessed killer for whom the lives of Germans were unimportant compared with his visions, and those of his enemies forfeit from birth. Hostages were executed in the course of World War II by both sides although thousands more fell victims to the Germans than to the Allies since the Germans for many years were masters of foreign territory. The massacre in the Ardeatine caves was one of the horrors of a war that claimed the lives, it has been estimated, of thirty-five million people. Mr. Katz has done well to bring its main facts to light, but it is easier to disinter the atrocities of the past committed by the enemy than to project an aroused conscience of contemporary man into a future amply provided with all the accoutrements of mass murder.

One of the worst nightmare atrocities dreamed up in the mind of man occurred at Auschwitz. There, some two and half million people were done to death—in gas chambers, by shooting, or beating, or le-

thal injections; Jews, Russians, Gypsies, men, women and children, all those considered unworthy to share a living space with their National Socialist overlords. What went on at Auschwitz is no secret; detailed accounts have appeared in books, including one the former Commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Hoess, wrote in his death cell in Poland, in the reports of witnesses at the Nuremberg Trial of the Major War Criminals and in later trials. The book by Mr. Naumann, the reporter for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, is the day-by-day account of the trial of twenty-one former SS men and one political prisoner at Auschwitz, which was held in Frankfurt am Main in 1963-64.

This trial, in true German and Continental legal fashion, was a painstaking investigation of what these men had done in the camp. As such its record fills out a story that was already well known in its essentials; it adds details on the system of inflicting inhuman suffering on the prisoners, of the working of the mechanism of planned mayhem and slaughter, and it also drags out into the daylight of the relatively peaceful, relatively secure, convalescent world of the mid-1960's some of the perpetrators of these crimes to show not only what they did but how they appear now to themselves and to us so many years after they took part in mass murder.

Mr. Naumann's dead-pan method is to tell matter-of-factly what went on day by day in the courtroom, to paraphrase, to quote directly, and to comment as little as possible. The result is to compress what must have been a report of interminable length to the size of one book where the reader can find his way around and come to his own conclusions with the help of the lawyers, the Court, the witnesses, and the defendants, but without much help from Mr. Naumann, who obviously wants the record to speak for itself. Under these circumstances the reader cannot readily judge whether the defense charges that some witnesses were rehearsed in their testimony or admonished when it was not

strong enough may or may not be true. The East Zone of Germany was represented by a special prosecutor, as was the Federal Republic, and witnesses came from a number of foreign countries including East Bloc ones. In the past in such proceedings witnesses from the Soviet Bloc have been given explicit instructions as to how to testify, for in Communist countries the importance of any such trial is in its propaganda and political value at least as much as in bringing any criminal to justice.

Let it be said at once that the guilt of those sentenced in the trial that lasted 182 days seems incontestable. They were identified by witness after witness from outside the iron curtain as well as from within and their barbarities were described in detail. Their defenses were weak, mainly limited to blanket denials that anything they knew about or took part in in Auschwitz was other than ordinary prison routine. At times one of them would derisively laugh or otherwise show his contempt for the testimony of a witness and the Court would remind him of the seriousness of the occasion, but the impression they give the reader is one of stubbornly unrepentant men who in every sense belonged in Auschwitz which was indeed made in their image. They had all returned, in some cases after earlier trials and a term in prison, to civilian life, to a polite, conventional world of good mornings and waiting their turn in line, taking off their hats when they met a woman even if she might be a Jewess or Social Democrat, shaking hands and mingling harmlessly with people they would have beaten or shot as a matter of course only a few years before. The parallel sometimes drawn with the soldier returned from war is far from accurate. In the soldier's case the society he rejoins fully accepts what he has done, honors him for having risked his life against the lives of the enemy and killed, not for himself but on behalf of others. Thus is the breaching of the eternal commandment against killing justified, it

is the sacrifice made at the risk of his life by the individual for the community. But while these prison guards and officials often call themselves soldiers, for the name is one of the few shreds of respectability they lay claim to in describing what they were, the claim is preposterous in this courtroom. "You were not a soldier. You belonged to a uniformed murder squad," said the prosecutor at the Auschwitz trial.

What manner of men were these? Some were out and out sadists obviously delighting in their power to torture and to kill; others were on occasion decent to individual prisoners, taking part with some reluctance in the selections where those who were to die and those to live were decided with the wave of a hand. Every one of them was given the opportunity to act as he did and to be rewarded for it by the criminal state they all served. Prisons have often been a collecting point for vicious people who were not always wearing the uniforms of the prisoners; at Auschwitz, however, the prisoners almost by definition had committed no crime of any kind, they were merely Poles, or Russians, or Jews, or Gypsies and whether they were newborn or very old, men or women, they had far less meaning for their guards than cattle in pens for their slaughterers. They were numbers to be cut up and obliterated.

The introduction to *Auschwitz* is written by Hannah Arendt who, as in the case of her book on Eichmann, is possessed of opinions that no facts can shake. Miss Arendt believes that Adenauer's Germany had a policy of employing former Nazis in high positions, a view shared passionately by the East Bloc press, among others, and she apparently also believes that the OKW, the high command of the armed forces, and not Hitler invented the infamous "Commissar Order" that all Soviet Commissars whether or not in uniform should be shot when captured. Actually Hitler on March 30, 1941, almost three months before the start of the Russian campaign, told the high command that bolshevism was criminality and that they must forget

any concept of soldierly comradeship in the coming war. This is a war of extermination, he told them, and the generals were to overcome any personal scruples in waging it. It was owing to the resistance of the generals when the order was not carried out, and while OKW reluctantly drew it up, it was Hitler's order. But Miss Arendt, despite all the evidence to the contrary, must have it that the Germans are unrepentant, that Nazis remain Nazis forever and that the German General Staff was worse than Hitler. She continues to live in her own mental concentration camp.

Jean-François Steinert's book, *Treblinka*, has been praised, his American publishers say, by Charles de Gaulle, Francois Mauriac, the West German periodical, *Der Spiegel*, as well as by Senator Javits of New York. It is in fact an extraordinary book. It tells the story in minute detail of the rising of the damned against their SS guards; of the Jewish revolt in one of the most notorious extermination camps, a revolt that permitted six hundred prisoners to escape to the Polish forests, of whom forty were still alive at the end of the war. The rest had been killed by Ukrainian and Polish bands, by German units, and by deserters from the Gestapo and the armies of both the Allies and of the Third Reich.

It is a remarkable story which the author has based on interviews with survivors of Treblinka and on three previously published books. One of these was written by Rachel Auerbach, a member of the Court of Inquiry on Nazi Crimes in Poland, a second was published secretly during the war, and the third was written by a war correspondent in the Russian army who, like Mr. Steiner, interviewed survivors.

The great defect of Mr. Steiner's book is that he has made a novel out of his researches. Nothing, of course, is wrong with writing a historical novel, in telling what people thought or dreamt of and in recording their streams of consciousness, but such books are usually labelled novels and the reader knows where he stands. In

Steiner's book the reader does not know; even the names of his informants have been changed and all that is certain, one takes it, is that the author has conducted his interviews and read the three books he refers to. And such books, it may be added, stemming from iron curtain sources, have not been striking in the past for their reliability.

It is a pity that Mr. Steiner has chosen to mix fact inextricably with fiction for the Treblinka story is an important one; Treblinka, like the Warsaw ghetto, was one place where the Jews did fight back with unquestionable heroism and self-sacrifice and as in the case of the Warsaw uprising a comparatively few managed to escape. One of the reasons, Mr. Steiner tells us, for the revolt, aside from the prisoners' knowledge that they would all be liquidated in any event, was to let the terrible story be told by those who had been inmates of the camp. The more reason, it seems to this reviewer, to keep to strict canons of writing history. Mr. Steiner portrays his shining heroes as well as his villains, and such there undoubtedly were, but in what they thought, or murmured to themselves, when they beamed, or floundered, or sensed traps, or silently looked at one another we have Mr. Steinert, a moderately gifted novelist, and not the courageous men who went down fighting and deserve the historical monument it may be hoped another writer will one day provide.

Reviewed by EUGENE DAVIDSON