

Daniel Stahl. *Nazi-Jagd: Südamerikas Diktaturen und die Ahndung von NS-Verbrechen*. Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag. 2013.

Reviewed by: Christiane Grieb, UCL

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Stahl's *Nazi-Jagd* (Nazi Hunt) investigates the responses of South American governments to international requests for cooperation in the search for Nazi war criminals from 1945 through 2011.

The Allied war crimes trial programs in Europe were largely limited to the trial of those Nazis identified and arrested in Allied detention centres in Europe. About many of the most atrocious war crimes and its perpetrators though, the public learned of only years or even decades later, and owed only to the locating or capture of Nazis like Mengele, Eichmann, Priebke or Barbie in South American countries. Previous research on escaped Nazi war criminals often focused on: the clandestine organisation of networks (ODESSA) that helped war criminals to thwart prosecution, provided fastidiously reconstructed operations of 'ratlines' out of Allied occupied Europe and into the safe havens of South America. Other more recent biographical studies crafted accounts of the social-nationalist careers and personal lives of war criminals in hiding. The German-based historian Daniel Stahl now complements these insights with his studies of judicial attempts to locate and to bring to justice those Nazi war criminals who had escaped to South America. Most capturing are his accounts of the resistance and diplomatic jiggery-pokery that West German prosecutors faced in South America. For decades, the majority of these efforts were foiled and Nazi war criminals could live unmolested in South America.

Stahl did not just offer narratives of events, but in fact sought to establish an historical account of the achievements and failures to identify and repatriate Nazi war criminals for trial for a period of 50 years. Ultimately, the author tells us why many of these efforts failed, how the escaped Nazis could enjoy a safe haven in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay or Bolivia, where military dictators ruled and often shared the racism, anti-Semitism or ideologies of those Germans. Stahl reconstructs how these German expatriates had formed personal friendships with local dictators and loyalties among diplomats of the West German embassies in South America. He pokes into a world of controversies and political resistance that the prosecutors faced in Germany and abroad. Stahl aimed to offer an account of the intricate links between the political environments found in those host countries and the politicking executed in divided Germany, where the geopolitics of the Cold War dictated the strategies of collaboration chosen; where the public rhetoric accompanied reports of whereabouts, and where every failed Nazi hunt of West Germany was exploited by East German propaganda.

Likewise, the international dimension of Stahl's inquiry gains significance as Stahl provides a simultaneously critical account of responses in the USA, where, for example, intelligence forces sought the collaboration of Argentinian opposition parties to discredit and weaken the ruling dictator there, and thus, tried to exploit the political ramifications of public outcry about hidden Nazis rather than actively seeking to bring these war criminals before their judges.

In five chapters, Stahl traces notable case studies that exemplify how South American governments helped Nazis leave post-war Europe safely, and how the diplomatic, geopolitical, domestic and even commercial interests competed with interests in the execution of arrest warrants and extradition procedures. Stahl describes how even Interpol offices were infiltrated by former associates of those Nazis they were supposed to arrest and repatriate for prosecution. Thus, the cases reviewed successfully narrate how German prosecutors seeking justice faced institutional and legal challenges in South America, but also in Europe, where institutions created after the war, did not show any pangs of conscience about hiring former Nazi bureaucrats.

Telling, are the extradition procedures for Walther Rauff. These failed thanks to the continued and tremendous personal effort that Ambassador Junker in Buenos Aires had put into the protection of a war criminal who was wanted for the murder of at least 97,000 people as the inventor of the mobile gassing-trucks. Continuously questioning the information he received from the prosecutor's office in Hanover where preparations were made for a trial, and refusing to comply with requests from the German Foreign Office pursuing the extradition, Junker claimed inconvenient repercussions such an arrest could have in Argentina. It was also argued that local police could not be sent out to arrest Rauff since intelligence information on Rauff's residence could not be trusted. This, although Rauff had provided the address under his proper name in correspondence to the authorities (Finanzdirektion) in Düsseldorf, and as Stahl suggests, very likely because he was on the payroll of the West German secret service (BND) well into the 1960s. After, thanks to the delay tactics of the ambassador in Buenos Aires, Rauff could relocate to Chile, he found similar protection under the wings of Ambassador Strack, in Santiago. Strack perseveringly sabotaged the order for arrest he had received from the Foreign Office in Bonn for almost two years. When Rauff was about to be brought to Germany in 1962, questions of applicable law and statutes of limitation were raised by his defence lawyers in public and in academia to thwart his extradition. Rauff also boldly claimed he could not financially afford to fly to Germany, which he substantiated by the fact that he had applied for welfare payments from Germany in the past. Eventually, his extradition case landed before the Supreme Court of Chile, which dismissed the extradition request from Germany. Rauff died unbothered in Chile in 1984.

Other case studies cover the events that led to Eichmann's capture by the Mossad and his deportation to Jerusalem; introduces us to the extradition procedures for Franz Stangl from Argentina; discusses the politicisation of the Barbie case in Bolivia, and tells us a suspenseful story of Mengele's identification and locating in Paraguay – to no avail.

Owed to the investigations of German journalists working for the BILD and STERN, Stahl's research provides us a glimpse, as to how journalists funnelled information in the 1960s to initiate prosecutions. In the case of Mengele's locating, journalists sent their files to Fritz Bauer's office, instead of immediately breaking the news. They found Bauer's enthusiasm, but again, once the German diplomats in Paraguay became involved, relations with the host country soured. Mengele's case reverberates how the West German domestic debate on the statute of limitations created tensions with the authorities in Paraguay. This time, being watched closely especially by the pro-Communist government in the GDR and by the Jewish World Congress, the pressure West Germany exercised on Paraguay caused the

government there to reject cooperation in – what they figured – was a German political campaign staged in Paraguay. Result was that the soon titled ‘Mengele Affair’ never resulted in Mengele’s trial to ease relations in South America.

Overall, Stahl pieces together how the investigation of Nazi atrocities and prosecution of identified Nazi war criminals was non-existent after the war and in the 1950s; how German authorities dragged feet or actively sheltered wanted Nazis from extraditions in the 1950s and 1960s, before the ‘hunt’ for them gained momentum in the 1970s. For the 1970s and 1980s, Stahl also researched the lesser known cases of Edouard Roschmann and Josef Schwammberger, Walter Kutschmann and Gustav Wagner, and picks up again the continued interests in a prosecution of Rauff and Mengele.

The extradition request of the Stuttgart Prosecutor’s office for the extradition of Schwammberger for crimes committed at the Janowska concentration camp at Przemyśl (Poland) was successful after the Argentinian Supreme Court ordered his extradition in November 1988. Stahl also skilfully traces the operations that led to the extradition of former SS captain Erich Priebke from Menem’s Argentina to Italy in 1994. In Rome, Priebke stood a military trial for his role in the massacre of 335 Italian civilians in the Ardeatine caves in 1944. Ultimately, he received a life sentence.

But Stahl also reminds how much the Nazi death machinery counted on collaborators in occupied countries when relating the genocide committed by Ustaše forces on Jewish and Serbian inmates in concentration camp Jasenovac to the locating and extradition of Dinko Šakić in the 1990s. Šakić was a Croatian fascist and commander of the camp in 1944/1945. He was extradited from the so-called ‘Ustaše Exil’ in Argentina (where many Ustaše fighters had fled to) to Croatia. He was the first perpetrator tried and sentenced for collaboration in Nazi crimes after the collapse of the East Block in Europe. In Šakić’ case too, it was owed to the perseverance of Nazi hunter Efraim Zuroff and the Wiesenthal Centre, that the Nazi hunt gained momentum once more in the 1990s. President Menem subdued to the international pressure and signed the order for Šakić’ removal from Argentina in 1999.

As he moved through the decades, Stahl describes how the capture of Eichmann – executed by the Israeli secret service – eventually brought about a public exposure of the indecisiveness and a change in the West German judicial landscape. Decisive was also the creation of a special investigation office for Nazi crimes (the Zentralstelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen) in Ludwigsburg/Germany, and the increasing political pressure exercised by the communist movements, the Cold War rhetoric unleashed by East Germany, and notably, the continuing Jewish initiatives to bring about justice for Nazi crimes.

The gross ambivalence of a need for judicial coping with the past that the research of the individual cases revealed is also at the centre of Stahl’s critique. Although having a judicial mandate and the legal and political power to prosecute war crimes under the Criminal Code of Germany after 1949, it were for the personal continuities in the Foreign Office that a lack of political will could prevail for two decades in West Germany. These also allowed for the renitent sabotage of extradition procedures in West German embassies in South America. In the end, of the many thousands Nazis who had escaped through the ‘rat lines’, only six – Eichmann, Stangl, Barbie, Priebke, Šakić and Schwammberger – faced trial.

Therefore, the mission ‘Nazi Hunt’ in South America must be declared a failure. And departing from the subtitle Stahl had chosen – ‘Südamerika und die Ahndung von NS-

Verbrechen' – this was exactly what Stahl sought to argue. As the reader walks off the pages, it becomes clear that no matter how much is known about the war criminals, how much evidence has been gathered, how water-proof the charges are termed in the prosecutors' offices and how many international debating these crimes have advanced, in the end, the political will must meet its avengers to raise gathered evidence to justice.

Overall though, this study is not comprehensive.

To be so, it would be logic to study the same topic as related to the political and judicial efforts to capture Nazis located in South America as made by the East German regime. This is especially needed, since otherwise, the historiography on repatriated Nazi war criminals who faced trial in Germany, remains concerned with an ashamedly low number of cases.

Christiane Grieb.

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