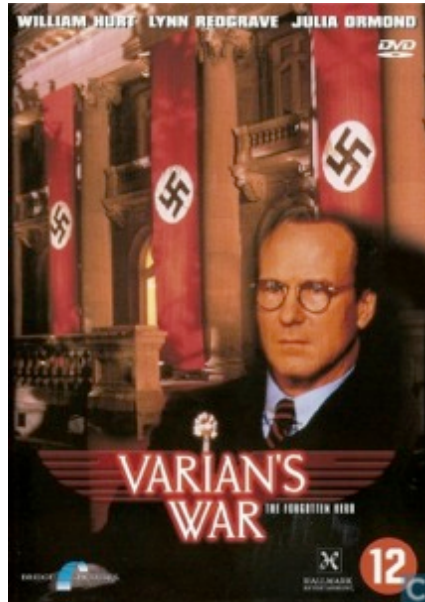


VARIAN'S WAR (2001)

A movie about a man of courage

By Magdi Roth



We have heard about a number of people who took chances (major gambling!) and saved Jews during WWII. Less known is the role played by Varian Fry, an American journalist, who helped approximately 2000 to 4000 anti-Nazi and Jewish refugees to flee Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.

Certainly we can all read about him on the internet, and it is interesting.

Varian Fry was born to middle class parents in New York in 1907. An exceptional student, he was admitted to Harvard, scoring in the top 10% of his class.

After graduation he became a journalist, being assigned to Berlin as foreign correspondent in 1935. Here he was a witness to the Nazi abuses against Jews and others, becoming a fervent anti-Nazi. Upon his return he wrote about the treatment of the Jews in Germany in New York Times, but had a hard time convincing other Americans of the extent of the Nazi threat in 1938. Same time he raised money to support the persecuted. After the occupation of France he went to Marseille, in the Free France area. With relative limited funds and a group of local volunteers he helped refugees who were in the area to escape via Spain. The list of the people he helped is long, among them Marc Chagall, Heinrich Mann, Max Ernst, Andre Breton, Franz Werfel. A number of other important artists and can be found in everybody's favorite place, Wikipedia:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varian_Fry

Coming back to USA he wrote about the failures of the USA immigration policy, and one of his major articles was entitled "the Massacre of Jews of Europe".

He continued his activities as a journalist. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1967.

I had no idea who Varian Fry is, but I took a class in historical movies, where we viewed the movie Varian's War made in 2001. Honestly, though I watch very few movies (not more than 3-5 in a year, shame on me!), I do have to say that I have seen better ones. But the subject was interesting, so I would recommend it if you can find it and have about 2 hrs try to see it.

Magdi Roth