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# 'Memory of Justice' — Nazi horrors documented, updated

**THE MEMORY OF JUSTICE.** A film by Marcel Ophuls. Camera, Mike Davis; editor, Inge Behrens; historical consultant, Telford Taylor. At the Surf, SF starting June 15 for one week only.

## SAN FRANCISCO

LIKE HIS documentary masterpiece, "The Sorrow and the Pity" of some years ago, Marcel Ophuls has succeeded in re-creating on film a quite wonderful if incomplete — despite its length — history of the horrors of Hitler's Germany to the present day here in America — and there in Germany. More than 50 of the participants of those days who are still alive are interviewed and the events in which they took part are graphically and terrifyingly shown with extraordinary documentary film.

We are shown events and characters from the Nuremburg trials of 1947, actual film footage that is a chilling recollection of the Nazi terror and its arrogant creators who were brought to justice, to the Nazi-like horrors of the Kennedy-Johnson-Kissinger-Nixon actions in the Vietnam War, which were NOT brought to justice. With few exceptions, which we will come to later, Ophuls has performed a unique and remarkable service. Almost explicit in his document is a plea for peace, for an end to all wars, since the cruelties of war create cruelties in its makers.

But the absence of a Socialist, Communist point of view is a clear evasion, and the customary bow to capitalist distributors of films is made by a few gratuitous derogatory remarks, particularly ludicrous in some cases for those who understand, but of necessity confusing for those who don't. With this exception — and it is one which must be protested — the film in its four and half hours achieves long periods of excellence. Although complex, it is repetitious, and without a ruthless editor who could easily have eliminated at least an hour of footage without depriving the viewer of the essential points. But Ophuls sought to tell it all as he saw it, and his material using Daniel Ellsberg and some of the deserters of the Vietnam War along with some of the dissident participants is outstanding in its veracity and straightforwardness. And the tragedy of the parents of a son who was killed in the war is a series of scenes you will not easily forget.

GENERAL TELFORD Taylor, as his historical consultant and sort of spokesman throughout the film, the man who was chief prosecutor for the U.S. at Nuremburg, now looks back upon those days with something like benign "understanding," and a feeling of some tolerance toward the Nazis. He is properly rueful in confessing that at the time he believed we, as prosecutors, were seeking to uphold and promote a U.S. ethic in regard to the rules of war. But with the introduction later on of Ellsberg, and the napalming of the Vietnamese people, the bombing of the hospitals such as Bach Mai, he is reluctantly forced to admit we didn't live up to the rules we set down for others.

Even then, however, he equivocates; he pronounces that our bombing of Bach Mai Hospital was a technical error, we were aiming at a North Vietnam airport — and unfortunately missed. The U.S. Military, he assures us, would never do such a thing on purpose.

He is reminded of the defoliation, My Lai, and the fact that no U.S. officer above the rank of Lieutenant (Calley) was ever brought to justice. It is ironic that some of these reminders come to him from Nazis. The picture makes its points.

LISTENING TO those old, still-living Nazis today is most revealing. They luxuriate as heads of industry or have retired with great wealth, men who were

given 15-to-20-year sentences for the crimes of slave labor, and who were released from prison as early as 1951, to employ their industrial skills to re-build Germany's armies against the Russians with the advent of the Cold War. Their rationalizations, as they are interviewed today are tragi-comic and instantly bring to mind the recent Frost-Nixon interviews on TV. Admiral Doenitz, an old man, staunch in his belief in Hitler and the Third Reich, so circumvented questions he might have been Nixon himself.

Yehudi Menuhin, the splendid violinist, is not so adept as a social scientist and philosopher. He could well have been dropped and spared us his pontifications on how the USSR and the U.S. were the modern manufacturers of the devices and methods of torture. To prove his point, he mentioned only the terror that exists in Brazil and Chile, whose torturers are trained of course by U.S. experts. No examples of a similar nature were given against the USSR. Just the accusation.

THIS IS a film not to be missed. It will play for only one week at the Surf, but surely will come to other cities and towns. I advise everyone — despite its four and a half hours, to see it.

—LESTER COLE