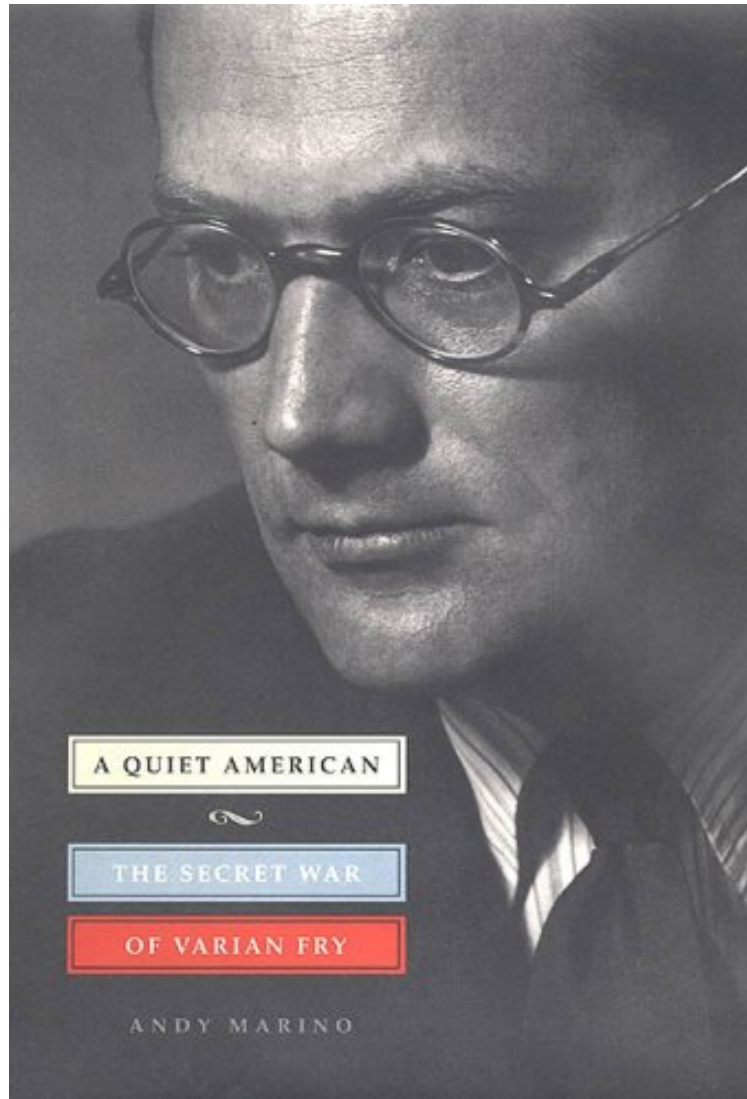


(Free and download) A Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry

A Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry

Von Andy Marino

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Von Andy Marino : A Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Astounding tale of an unknown chapter in Holocaust history Von Adelle Sometime, not-so-admirable people do incredibly admirable things, and find in themselves qualities that no one, themselves included, knew were there. Such was the case of Varian Fry. In August 1940, Varian Fry boarded a plane in New York and flew to Spain, and from there to Marseilles, on a mission that would resonate far beyond his imagination. Fry was an historian, involved with

"radical" politics: the Spanish Civil War, the looming Holocaust. He went from observing and writing about the coming crises to actively participating in a way that no one who knew him, or even he himself, would have anticipated. Far from being identified as a humanitarian, he was, in fact, an intellectual snob, a classicist by training. But he put his life on the line in an effort to save the leading cultural, intellectual, and artistic lights of Europe. Truth to tell, he had no idea what he was getting himself, or his New York sponsors, into, so the evolution of this rather untouchable, remote aesthete into a mover and shaker who consorted with the Marseilles underworld (and enjoyed it!) and worked outside the law is fascinating to observe. Varian Fry was personally responsible for saving the lives of, among others, Marc Chagall, Lion Feuchtwanger, Victor Serge, Heinrich Mann, Andr Gide, Franz Werfel, Andre Breton, Max Ernst, Hannah Arendt... He also saved about 1500 other lesser known people. Altogether, in the year he spent in France before being arrested and kicked out by the Vichy puppets of the Gestapo, he turned himself inside out, discovering in himself a depth of caring and feeling that neither he, nor most of the people who knew him, would have suspected was present. The story itself is so riveting that the book would have to be illiterate not to be absorbing. I found it well-written, with fascinating studies of the characters who worked with, and against Fry. It sort of fades out at the end, but then again, so did Fry, after his return to New York. He died in 1967, unrecognized for his work until the year before his death. In 1996, Israel further declared him "Righteous Among the Nations," the only American so honored.

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Absorbing well researched book on Varian Fry , Vichy France Von David S. Rupp If you are interested in the dark events leading to the holocaust, especially French collaboration, this is an absorbing book. For those not quite so familiar with Vichy France it will be an eye opener, for there can be no doubt that many French officials bent over backwards to serve their German masters during those shameful periodic roundups and deportations of the Jews in France. New to this reader, were the descriptions of the horrible conditions of the "refugee camps" in Vichy-controlled France. These were not the infamous concentration camps because detainees could be released, but they were, nonetheless, death camps simply because of shameful conditions and inhuman neglect. In fact, some 3,000 Jews and non- Jews died in those camps in southern France because of the atrocious conditions. But French Vichy officials were not the only villains. Americans may be surprised to learn just how anti-Semitic U.S. officialdom was during the early years. One could argue that were it not for the openly anti-Semitic treatment of Jews by our own State Department there would be no book written about Varian Fry. If all of the US officials in France, in the Embassy and various consulates, had a mind set to save the Jews it is quite likely thousands more could have been saved. Varian Fry filled a void. He was fighting two battles, the enemy in France and the enemy at home, in the form of the State Department. It was a shameful period, only fairly recently recognized by former Secretary of State Warren Christopher. This book, about Varian Fry's rescue of the Jews under the auspices of the American Emergency Rescue Committee, raises some questions. Why was he not recognized sooner? And why did many of those Jews rescued seem to turn their backs on him, once saved? Part of the answer is simply that Fry is not a very heroic figure, not even particularly likable. For some he was distant, not easy to know, but he did what he had to do at the time and that did not include being popular with everyone. It is unfortunate that personality flaws probably did play a role early on in the assessment of his role in that period. Even after reading this book, I cannot shake an ambivalent view of Fry as a tragic figure caught very much by accident in an heroic period. Yet, what he did rightfully makes him a hero. One must read this book to better understand that tragic period and place. Marseilles was the end of a funnel at the beginning of the war. Jews from all over Europe were spilling into that port city, desperate to get out, their backs against the Mediterranean wall, but not a non-Jewish friend in sight to help. Enter a few good people like Fry. It would suffice to be a hero at that time in that place simply by feeling compassion. Elie Wiesel expressed it when he said, "In those times one climbed to the summit of humanity simply by remaining human." There were other heroes and heroines to be sure, the cooperative police inspector, the compassionate Prefet official. I had just finished reading Mary Jayne Gold's Memoir of Marseilles, 1940-1941 in which she recounts her version of that same rescue effort. My feeling is that she deserves a little better treatment than Marino gave her. The fact that Fry may have dismissed her should not diminish her contribution. Although deceased now after a long life, she genuinely felt that those were really the only useful years of her life. (See .com for review of her book, "Crossroads Marseilles, Nineteen Hundred and Forty" by Mary Jayne Gold) In short, an absorbing well researched book. Although many of the players on that Marseilles stage have now passed from the scene, including Varian Fry, Marino had the good fortune of being able to interview many of those still living. The book is not at all pedantic, but I do wish to thank the author for expanding my vocabulary with "spavined" and "solipsism".

Kurzbeschreibung The story of Varian Fry, called the "real Rick" of Casablanca, is perhaps one of the most unknown, yet extraordinary sagas of World War II. This penetrating biography follows Varian Fry through his adult life--from his beginnings in the 1930s as a Harvard graduate and political journalist to his arrival in Marseille in 1940 where he managed to spirit away thousands of Europe's cultural elite by falsifying passports, creating new identities, and always resorting to subterfuge. The list of those saved includes: Hannah Arendt, Andre Breton, Franz Werfel and his wife

Alma Mahler, Heinrich Mann, Marc Chagall, Jacques Lipchitz, Andre Masson, and Max Ernst among others. *A Quiet American* is an effort to extensively examine the life of a genuine American hero whose political and cultural influence is still largely unacknowledged. What bookish, young Harvard man Varian Fry described as his "own little war" involved no small ambition: working under the nose of the Nazis through the early years of World War II, Fry set out almost single-handedly to rescue a hefty portion of Europe's cultural and intellectual capital. Literally boatloads of Europe's best and brightest minds--poets, scientists, philosophers, musicians, painters--found safe haven with Fry and safe passage from Europe, eluding the ubiquitous Gestapo plainclothesmen ("the green fedoras") and the street-by-street raids by their Vichy cronies. Writer Andrew Marino (*Herschel: The Boy Who Started World War II*), thanks in no small part to the earlier research of editor Donald Carroll, details the war years of this man, dubbed "America's Oskar Schindler" and the New York-based Emergency Rescue Committee that he helped found to fund his work. Reading like a cross between *Casablanca* and *A Year in Provence*, *A Quiet American* follows Varian Fry from his tumultuous beginnings convincing (among others) Eleanor Roosevelt of the necessity of his mission to his work with gangsters and gun-runners in the streets of Marseilles in order to secure the safety of Europe's intelligentsia, including such luminaries as Marc Chagall, Heinrich Mann, Enrico Fermi, and Hannah Arendt. The comparison to Oskar Schindler is apt and well deserved, but Fry's tale is all the better for his unique transformation: while Schindler was something of an opportunist-made-good, Fry was an effete, preppy intellectual, sincerely inspired by idealistic notions, whose secret work shaped him into a scrappy, resourceful hero. --Paul Hughes.com

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