

CENTURY NEWS

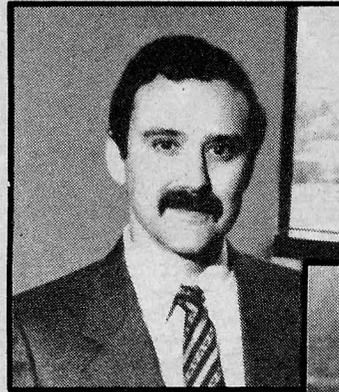
Lawrence Kohn— Century City Lawyer

Before he joined the Century City firm this year, attorney Jeffrey N. Mausner devoted six and a half years to a fascinating and unusual legal pursuit—the tracking down and prosecution of suspected Nazi war criminals living in the U.S. Mausner did this as a trial attorney for the Office of Special Investigations, a special unit established in 1979 in the U.S. Justice Department's Criminal Division.

Mausner says he applied for the job because he "always has had very strong feelings about the Holocaust and a belief that the people who perpetrated it should be brought to justice." During his stint with the agency, proceedings were initiated against about 45 alleged Nazi war criminals. Of those, about 20 now have been stripped of their U.S. citizenship and about 11 have been deported. Mausner worked on many of the cases, interviewing defendants and witnesses here and abroad, and seeing the time-consuming cases through the courts.

U.S. law does not allow for criminal prosecution of alleged Nazi war criminals in this country so OSI attorneys proceed against them in civil court under the immigration laws. First they seek to strip the alleged criminals of their citizenship and then to have them deported. Occasionally, another country requests extradition of a suspected Nazi. Mausner thinks it is a shame that the Germans do not seek more extraditions, since they are much speedier and since Germany is "the country responsible for the Holocaust."

Why did the federal government wait until 1979 to begin a concerted effort to hunt down and deport Nazis? Mausner explains that much key evidence was unavailable because Eastern Bloc nations were unwilling to cooperate with the U.S. In addition, he says, U.S. officials until recent years had tended to accept the claims of Nazis that they were merely refugees from Com-



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munist, and the public had not grasped the magnitude of Nazi atrocities during World War II.

Mausner says the cross-examination skills he developed during his years at the Justice Department serve him well in his new position as head of litigation for the firm of Berman and Blanchard. The firm has several attorneys and specializes in litigation in the areas of securities, tax, copyright and trademark, wrongful termination, unfair competition and entertainment.

"At the Justice Department," Mausner says, "I did a great deal of trial work in federal courts. In most of our cases, it was important to get the defendant to admit certain facts—that he had served in a certain position during the war, that certain documents were authentic, or that he had been involved in persecution of civilians. The defendant knew that if he admitted those things, it was more likely he would lose his citizenship and be deported. Nevertheless, through careful cross-examination, it was often possible to get the defendant to admit the facts."

For example, Mausner continued, "I cross examined one individual who admitted that he had

served as a concentration camp guard and that he had guarded Jews who were to be murdered. There were several cases I tried against Nazis where the most crucial evidence against them were admissions that they made at their deposition or at the trial. In comparison, cross-examining a business person in a civil case to get him to admit certain facts is relatively easy."

The Justice Department's effort to locate and deport Nazi war criminals is continuing, Mausner says, but is "getting harder all the time." Most of the suspects and witnesses still alive are in their seventies or eighties, and the civil procedures can take years.

Another problem Mausner faced as a Nazi hunter was the effort of some groups in this country to discredit evidence (documents and videotaped testimony) obtained from the Soviets. "I have seen many witnesses in the Soviet Union testify and I believe that most of them are telling the truth," Mausner says. He thinks the Soviets are willing to cooperate honestly with U.S. efforts to prosecute Nazis because the Soviets "suffered very greatly when the Nazis controlled parts of the Soviet Union, and they want to bring the Nazis who murdered their people—whether Jewish or not Jews—to justice."

Mausner continued his anti-Nazi work by providing legal assistance to scholars associated with the Simon Wiesenthal Center in L.A. The center works closely with the Justice Department to track down war criminals and maintains a Holocaust Museum.

Mausner says he enjoyed working with Washington, D.C. but prefers L.A. He graduated from Cornell Law School. As an undergraduate at Brown University, he majored in political science and minored in physics. The physics, he says, provided "a good rigorous training for the mind."



If you have any information regarding Century City lawyers, please let us know by contacting Mr. Kohn at 652-1442.

Lawrence M. Kohn is a marketing consultant, producer/host of the radio program, "It's Your Business," on KIEV Radio 87 AM, Monday nights at 6 p.m., and owner of Keep in Touch, the newsletter service.