

KASTNER CASE

learned well the lesson of the Warsaw ghetto uprising and knew that the Zionists comprised the element most to be feared. It was, therefore, in the seduction of Kastner that Eichman saw a solution to his problem of how to get the Jews to go passively and quietly to Auschwitz.

For Kastner, on his part, the temptation was great. He had failed in his negotiations to save the bulk of the Jews, but here was an opportunity to retrieve himself and at the same time save all those who were nearest and dearest to him and those whom he considered most worthy of rescue. And at the price demanded by the Nazis, the offer was a veritable gift.

ON MAY 2, 1944 — the day on which Kastner reached an agreement about the 600 with Krumei — there had been two alternatives before him: either to continue with the rescue of Jews by means of the escape route to Rumania and warn them against allowing themselves to be deported to the gas-chamber, or to avail himself of the Nazis' offer to save 600 selected Jews and keep silent about the certain fate to which

the rest were headed (for that was the significance of the pledge of silence which Krumei exacted from Kastner). In accepting the gift of the select 600, he inevitably sacrificed the masses.

What was clear was that the Nazis were against any large-scale escape movement. They might have turned a blind eye to isolated instances of passport forgeries and border-jumping in order not to frighten off the Rescue Committee. But they would not have tolerated any organized rescue work. Kastner, therefore, could not have worked on two fronts: he could not have accepted the gift of the 600 and at the same time continue with the rescue work on other fronts. Eichman was not one to be cheated or double-crossed.

If Kastner hoped to succeed in saving the 600, who later grew to 1200 and then 1684, he had to concentrate on keeping the masses calm and quiet and he had to stop all organized efforts at escape to the Rumanian border. His first trial was Cluj. If he failed to get the 20,000 Jews of Cluj to board the deportation trains without any fuss, then the whole scheme would

fall through.

Among the selected few whom he placed on the list of those to be saved in Cluj were members of his own family, his friends and the leaders of the community.

He succeeded in persuading them to leave Cluj and to discontinue their rescue work by hiding from them (or at least from most of them) the fact that the rest of the community were headed for Auschwitz.

While the leaders of Cluj, then, had unwittingly collaborated with the Nazis, Kastner had done so consciously and deliberately.

The Pioneer Organization had, at the risk of their lives, tried to warn the Jews of the provinces of the dangers of extermination. They had not succeeded because their warnings had been based on the experiences of those Jews who had escaped from other countries conquered by the Nazis, and the Hungarian Jews refused to believe that their fate would be similar. But Kastner had received concrete details of Nazi plans for the total extermination of the Jews of Hungary in the gas-chambers of Auschwitz. He did not reveal these plans to any of the Jewish communities in the provinces, and so give them the chance of deciding for themselves what course of action to take.

Kastner had been appointed by the Jewish Agency to a position of trust in the Rescue Committee, an appointment which he had accepted of his own free will. It is Judge Halevi's contention that this position of trust had laid a sacred obligation on Kastner to do all in his power to rescue the Jews of Hungary without favor or discrimination, and in particular to warn all those with whom he came in contact of the terrible fate in store for them. By keeping silent, he had broken this trust, collaborated with the Nazis and paved the way for the mass murder of 500,000 Jews.

The judge concluded that two accusations leveled against Kastner by Greenwald were therefore true.

So ended the most fantastic trial in the annals of legal history in modern Palestine. Anyone reading the remarkable decision must be impressed by the honesty, sincerity and courage of the judge and by the fact that he had been strongly influenced by two outstanding features of the case: the incomprehensible and horrifying fact that half a million people had unresistingly been led to the slaughter by a handful of Nazis, and the fact that Kastner had been so dishonest and unreliable a witness. The judge could not comprehend how a people could possibly have allowed itself to be exterminated without lifting a hand in self-defense, and so he sought a logical and historical explanation for this. And as a man of integrity, he could not forgive the prevarications, the evasions, and the

subterfuges employed by Kastner in order to explain his behavior in that most tragic period of human history.

Rosh Hashonah Thoughts

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conclusion, he reviewed the history of his own education . . . the familiar background of greatness. Jewish youth destined for greatness. Adolescence, he remarked, was accompanied by an awakening of the deepest human emotions, "of the inevitable contradictions of our nature, and of passionate strivings towards completeness and harmony."

At this period the adolescent is both tender and brutal, the greatest of sinners and most virtuous of mortals." To enter into relations with this youth, to have an educational influence on them, requires great finesse, he cautioned.

Of his own youth, Greenberg recalls that this rapport and finesse were lacking, both at home, and especially at Russian government schools where teachers were almost gendarmes.

In schools, the youth learned useless 'subjects.' But the "distinction between the true and false, beautiful and ugly, moral and immoral"

was learned in youth "circles" established by "suspected underground persons, travelling with false passports."

"Triumphant revolutionary struggle led our youth away from the 'straight path,'" says Greenberg.

Life in Canada and America is far different from pre-revolutionary Russia. Jewish homes here are receptive to the unconventional ideas of contemporary youth. Teachers are not bankrupt, uniformed gendarmes. All the "mishigasim" adolescents are catered to and indulged in.

Still, there is wisdom to the path that the path of Jewish education away from that straight path which as Greenberg remarked, "in America is even straighter than elsewhere" is handy, enticing, and well travelled. But it is only through running the risks involved in making a courageous, lonely detour, that we dare hope for a new form of the Jewish revolution and the Jewish rejuvenation. Like an ocean gale, this will rip us from our calm moorings along familiar coasts, and send us scudding over stormy seas to new and exciting shores.

The stereotypes of conventional comfortable, middle-class living are a thin heritage to bequeathed to children. Habits and instincts simplify the problems of living . . .

This characteristic of the Jewish New Year is also expressed in the excerpts from the Torah and the Prophets that we read by rabbinical prescription on Rosh Hashonah. The first day shows us a very old couple, Sarah and Abraham, who now at last have received their long prayed-for son: Isaac. But Sarah is so jealous of Ishmael, Abraham's son by the Egyptian maid Hagar — whose name points etymologically to *hagira*, *hegira*, to wandering and flight — that she forces Abraham to drive them forth, and even God gives his consent. But now the suffering and distress of the fleeing mother are de-

The Birthday of the World

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pected, as her son is threatened with death by thirst in the desert. She goes a bowshot's length away from him because she cannot bear to watch him die. But an angel of God comforts her from heaven, and God opens her eyes and shows her a nearby well, "for God heard the voice of the lad wherever he was" (Gen. 21). So God heard the voice of a suffering child then, and leaned down to the heart of a tortured mother, even though she was "only" a fugitive Egyptian.

The Prophetic text for the same day, the first chapter of the First Book of Samuel, takes up the same purely human motif of the primal relationship between parents and children, and carries it further. Elkanah has two wives, the childless Hannah, and Peninnah, the "pearl," the fruitful one. It is Hannah whom he loves more, but she endures one humiliation after another from her fortunate rival, as Hagar, the maid, did from Sarah, the "princess." But whereas in the Torah passage, despite all the sympathy shown to Hagar, the final victory goes to Sarah, in the Prophetic text the situation is reversed. We hear no more of Peninnah, but

Hannah, whose name is related to *chen*, mercy, finally wins divine mercy by her mute prayer in which "only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard," and which laid the religious-legal foundation for the recently spoken Shmona Esrai, the recital of the Eighteen Benedictions.

However, Eli, the priest, who is the official superintendent of the ritual and the highest representative of "religion," misinterprets Hannah's mute prayer as the behavior of a drunkard, and must learn the truth of her religious intoxication from her. The simple woman conquers the priest's skepticism. . . . And so Judaism begins every new year with this victory of the mother over the institution and its soul-dead representatives. Hagar the Egyptian, the mother of Ishmael, the ancestor of the Arabs, and Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, join hands as sisters in maternal suffering and maternal consolation.

The second day of the holiday brings a further heightening of the same motif. Abraham must lose Isaac, Isaac, the one of his two sons whom he loves wholly. After the suffering, comes active masculine suffering; he must inflict it on himself. The paradox of his loyal readiness to sacrifice his son, understandable only as mystery, is rewarded; as God's angel had reserved a well for Ishmael, so God has reserved something better for Isaac: a sacrificial lamb instead of his own sacrifice. The two half-brothers and foes run the same danger and are saved in similar ways; they too have become brothers, as Hagar and Hannah have become sisters.

But the Pophetic text from the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah lifts one factor in this primarily human motif of the day of Rosh Hashonah — and that perhaps the central one — out of the realm of the personal, although it does not destroy its personal meaning. That is the factor of the mother. Rachel weeps for her children and refuses to be comforted, "ki ennuhu." The two Hebrew words can be translated in different ways, and next to the customary translation — "because they are not" — one might set the bolder one — "as if they were not." This becomes especially clear when one thinks of the only other Biblical parallel in which a man apparently robbed of his child refuses to be comforted: that of Jacob mourning for Joseph (Gen. 37:35). But Joseph is alive, and so are the sons of Rachel, who for Jeremiah's prophetic consciousness was at once mother and ancestress. Thus her children became temporarily the lost and eternally safe tribes of Israel.

But the father motif, too, is capable of a further extension. We learn of it in a prayer that belongs exclusively to the "ten days of returning" from the first to the tenth of Tishri, and in which we call God both "our Father" and "our King."

"Avinu Malkenu," it is He Who, on the birthday of His world, comforts His children and makes them brothers and sisters, all the loving fathers and mothers and their threatened and rescued children. As it always does, here, too, the thing most individual depends on the universal: the world is reborn in the individual human being.

Today the "Days of Awe" are an embarrassment for most of us because we can give them neither a national, a ritual, nor a purely

Edmonton's Mayfair First With Underground Garage

natural meaning. The return they require of us leaves the birthdays of the kings, of the tithes, and of the trees their place and their rights, but it claims the central place for that which Rosh Hashonah always was and always will be — the birthday of the world.

Edmonton — The Mayfair Hotel, conveniently located near the CPR station and the downtown shopping area at 108 street and Jasper avenue, recently opened, was built at a cost of about \$1,650,000, including furnishings. It is believed to be the first hotel in Canada to incorporate an underground parking garage for the convenience of its guests.



The Mayfair's clean, contemporary exterior elevation is designed so as to eliminate the necessity of exterior maintenance, and features terrazzo and masonry construction, Italian marble on the north and east walls, providing a rich contrast to the upper masonry walls, and all-metal windows, screens and storm sash. The door frames, base and window trim are also of metal.

General features throughout include complete air-conditioning, a paging and music "P-A" system, combination manual or fully automatic high-speed elevators, a rich use of quarry tile, terrazzo, marble and hardwood materials, and unique sculpture and other applied ornamentation.

Nothing was neglected even in the parking garage beneath the building. Here are fully automatic glass doors operated by magnetic detectors and electric eyes, a ramp with radiant panel heating to remove ice and snow from the incline in winter, and facilities for the storage of 50 automobiles. A special exhaust system removes the last trace of fumes from the garage area.

One of the most interesting features of the hotel is the kitchen — a chef's delight. Although comparatively small, the kitchen is amazingly compact. Its array of stainless steel equipment is imposing.

The ovens, steam table, pressure cookers and fryers are all thermostatically controlled. A charcoal broiler is just one of the "specials" in the kitchen.

The dining room, which seats 54 persons, features brick and driftwood panelling walls. An unusual lighting effect is produced by special, perforated copper ceiling fixtures. The lunch counter, which adjoins the dining room, has accommodation for 40 persons.

The hotel also includes: A tobacco and magazine stand, is located in the lobby and a drug store and barber occupy rented space.

An overall staff of about 100 persons is required to provide the outstanding services offered by the Mayfair Hotel.

United Nations, N.Y. (JTA) — Japan does not support the Middle East plan proposed ten days ago by United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles but, instead wants Israel to adhere to old United Nations resolutions "in the spirit of the Bandung Conference." Mamoru Shigemitsu, Japanese Foreign Minister, declared here prior to his departure for Tokyo yesterday.

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