

GERMAN FAMILY BRINGS EX-NAZIS TO TRIAL

BY JANET MENDELSON

Opening the volumes of history, a German-born Protestant and her French Jewish husband have focused the world's attention on Nazi activities in France from 1942-44. Culminating ten years of research and the collection of evidence, Beate and Serge Klarsfeld await the long overdue trial of three men who were responsible for the deportation of over 80,000 Jews from France. And since October 23, in Cologne, West Germany, Kurt Lishka, Herbert-Martin Hagen and Ernst Heinrichsohn are at last standing trial for the war crimes they perpetrated over 35 years ago.

The scenario is too elaborate for a movie, and the heroes themselves, the Klarsfelds, are more occupied with hard work and research than theatrics. French attorney Serge Klarsfeld, whose father was murdered at Auschwitz, has compiled and published documents proving the guilt of the Nazis in their implementation of the "Final Solution" in France. In 1978, he published a monumental work entitled "Le Memorial de la Deportation des Juifs de France," in which he listed the 82,000 Jews deported from France, of whom 76,000 were murdered, as well as a history of each convoy. Documentation also contains signatures of the three accused, which reveal their guilt and full knowledge of the crimes which they perpetrated.

On a recent visit to Israel, Klarsfeld noted that the trials of Lishka, Hagen and Heinrichsohn are possible the most important since Eichmann faced the courts in 1962. They are also unprecedented in that the evidence will not be in the testimony of witnesses (the majority of whom were victims of the Holocaust), but instead, documents will help to convict the men.

"If witnesses are involved, trials can sometimes be protracted," noted Serge Klarsfeld, "but in these cases, the evidence against Hagen and Lishka are the very documents they signed, ordering the deportations."

Lishka (70) was Gestapo chief in Cologne, with responsibility in the Paris area for internment camps, execution of hostages and the deportation of Jews. Hagen (66) once had Adolf Intelligence unit, dealing with Jews. Later he advised the Supreme Commander of the S.S. in France on Jewish affairs. Heinrichsohn (59), at present the mayor of his German town of Burgstadt, has been exposed for his major role in the deportation of children. Like the other defendants, however, he denies knowledge of the future that awaited those that he deported. "I thought the children would be able to join their parents," he has been quoted as saying. This is the man who terrorized young children in the camps, and personally selected hospi-

talized Jews, the old and the sick, for deportation and death.

Klarsfeld points out that this defense should not be able to stand up in court as these men held high ranks before and during the war. "Where does responsibility lie if the chief of the Nazi police did not know?" he queries.

Even though it is documentary evidence which will probably convict the accused men, actions spoke louder than words during pre-trial publicity. As far back as 1968, Beate Klarsfeld (nee Kunzel) attracted world attention by a well photographed slap at the face of the former German Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger. For months she had tried to publicize his background as a Nazi propagandist, but it was the slap whose sting was felt around the world.

"It was a slap in the face of the Nazis by the younger generation of Germans," according to Serge Klarsfeld. Beate, a Protestant from Berlin, has waged a tireless fight against Nazi war criminals ever since her political education began after meeting Serge in Paris when she was 21.

"German society does not consider men like Lishka, Hagen and Heinrichsohn criminals because they have been living quietly since 1945," says Beate. The three men have all lived as upstanding citizens in Germany even though they were sentenced "in absentia" in France after World War II (Heinrichsohn was sentenced to death whereas the other two received life imprisonment).

In a dramatic attempt to bring Kurt Lishka to justice in 1974, Beate and several supporters attempted to kidnap this former head of the Gestapo in France. The abortive skirmish resulted in Beate's imprisonment while Lishka remained free. Repercussions of the trial, however, forced the German Parliament to ratify the Franco-German accord for the trial of Nazi criminals in Germany. This ratification helped to plug the loophole which has enabled criminals to remain at large in Germany.

Now that their impunity has been ended, Lishka, Hagen and Heinrichsohn will face a court, after three decades. Serge Klarsfeld calls on world Jewry to show active support and interest in bringing these criminals to justice. "The trial will stretch through January of 1980, and it is important to have a representation of justice - seeking Jews and non-Jews alike in Cologne," he says.

LETTERS

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER
(Special to Las Vegas Israelite)

Dear Mr. President:

I have a suggestion re: the hostage crisis. Communicate with Pope John Paul II and propose to join him in a trip to Iran to seek the release of our captives.

I doubt whether the Ayatollah, in all his stubbornness, will refuse to see you.

If he does refuse, world opinion will be more intensified in its revulsion for what he is doing. After all, Mr. President, Khomeini is banking on your religious scruples in holding our people. He knows that you could smash his entire country before anyone could say, "Death to Carter." But he relies upon your sense of morality and therefore defies the U.S.

In Judaism we are told that he who saves one life is like one who saves the world. If you can save human life the mission with the Pope would be justified.

Sincerely,
Rabbi Samuel M. Silver

N.Y. Has Dial A Chanukah Story

Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, has many interesting stories and facts surrounding its celebration. Here are a few you may not have heard, courtesy of the Dial Hanukkah Program, sponsored by the New York Telephone Company in cooperation with the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York. Via Dial Hanukkah, families in Greater New York can call (212) 999-2929 each day of the holiday, and hear a different message about Hanukkah recorded by noted stage and screen star, Mala Powers.

Dial Hanukkah asks us: Did you know that at West Point Military Academy, there is a picture of Judah the Maccabee in a display of Great War Heroes of History? Did you know that Hanukkah always begins on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev because it was resolved that the Temple in Jerusalem be rededicated on the exact day it had been defiled by the Syrians some years before?

The Dial Hanukkah Program also tells us a story about George Washington and the Hanukkah candle. It was the winter of 1776 in Valley Forge. Simon, a lonely Jewish soldier, sat huddled in the icy cold. In spite of his hardship and hunger, he was grateful to have escaped the terrible persecutions in Poland. As he lit the candle on his small Hanukkah menorah, Simon felt a hand on his shoulder. He looked up into the eyes of General George Washington. "Tell me about the candlestick," the General said gently.

Simon poured out the story of Hanukkah, of his prayers for freedom, and of his faith in Washington's victory. "You are a Jew, a son of the prophets," the General said, "if you predict we will win, we shall win."

Years later Simon met Washington again. President Washington said, "I've never forgotten that little Hanukkah candle, and that your words brought renewed hope into my heart that fateful night."

If you'd like to hear more stories, fact, and legends about Hanukkah, then Dial Hanukkah, at (212) 999 - 2929, from December 14 through December 21. The charge is just one message unit when dialing from a 212, 516, or 914 area code.

MEXICO CITY (WNS) -- Tribuna Israelita, a bi-monthly published in Spanish by the Central Jewish Committee, observed its 35th anniversary with a party attended by prominent Mexican political figures, intellectuals and writers.

PARIS (WNS) -- A French committee for the safeguarding of Falasha Jews in Ethiopia has called for protecting their security and for international steps to enable them to leave Ethiopia for Israel, as most want to do.

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