

At Campbell's Funeral Parlor, Madison Avenue and 81st Street, N.Y., N.Y.

FUNERAL SERVICE FOR MRS. ANNA MANDEL (88 years)

Speech by LEO KATZ

March 24, 1972

Mrs. ANNA MANDEL, your mother and senior member of the family and our friend, reached the end of her physical life in her sleep. It was perhaps the kindest fate one can hope for at that age.

As the oldest in the circle of friends I accepted the request and privilege of expressing a last message of deeply felt devotion.

My memory goes back to the time when I was a young boy - growing up and going to school in Prossnitz, a small town in Austria, in a section which now belongs to Czechoslovakia. My sister was a school friend of Helene, who was Anna's younger sister. Strangely, the most lasting impression of that time was the memory of the most perfect complexion of the two young ladies - a pure white skin - soft and silky with an almost ethereal breeze of transparent rose-pink on the cheeks. Later I had opportunities to paint portraits of ladies, famous for their beauty. I never found the equal of that complexion anywhere.

About the life in that small town of Prossnitz I can only mention that it was one hundred percent provincial. There was an occasional lecture or a stage play by a travelling theater group, perhaps sometimes a concert. All this was long before automobiles, radio and television offered their wide stimulations.

This peaceful, provincial atmosphere was suddenly disturbed for the ladies. One day a young man arrived from Vienna to be director of the M. & I. MANDEL

factory of man's clothing. To many people in Prossnitz and especially to the young ladies he appeared like a real picturebook prince. He was seen riding on a beautiful charger with the cavalry officers - his manners had a polite refinement - he was fond of serious music, - played the violin like a professional - he was slim and very good looking and since Mrs. Pollak, Anna's mother, was an accomplished pianist, Erich Mandel became a steady guest - to play sonatas - and Anna became Mrs. Mandel.

When they were married, Anna had to adjust to an entirely different life - of course.- But, there was an extraordinary man living in Prossnitz. If you will permit me I would like to remind you that we are thoroughly brainwashed to believe that the finest people - the most intelligent people and the most important people are the ones who are written about in newspapers, magazines or mentioned on the radio, and who have the publicity, yet I knew scientists and doctors of world fame - with or without Nobel Prize - I found among the very famous - people with very limited development and among unknown people you can sometimes find unforgettable individuals like Edmund Heilig in Prossnitz, - one of the rarest types of a thoroughly human personality, a unique combination of intellect, scientific and cultural interests, great love of nature, full of kindness to people and animals, great personal charm and magnetism. He had a lasting influence on Mr. and Mrs. Mandel and myself and on everybody who came in contact with him.

The Mandel couple moved into the same house and there developed a very fine relationship between the families and also with myself when I was in town. I had to move to Vienna to study at the Academy of Fine Arts - and after a certain time Mr. and Mrs. Mandel also moved to Vienna because Erich had to take over the directorship of the offices, factories and businesses under

that name of M. & I. Mandel. It was a very difficult period, especially for Mr. Mandel, and a great deal of adjustment had to be made. Very few people would have been able to adjust to that new atmosphere as perfectly as Anna did. It was particularly difficult because Erich was not only brought up like a prince - he was also born with a creative artistic nature. Psychology is still very far behind in such matters and does not know too much about what we are doing to the invisible anatomy of people. I mean to the invisible psychological anatomy. They don't understand that many people - maybe most people are born with creativeness and artistic needs which have to be killed or choked through education, the family, business or other matters. It can be done in many cases but when it is very strong there develop terrific conflicts and those conflicts are not easy to handle. I made a portrait of Mr. Mandel at a time when he was in a critical state, but in spite of all those inner difficulties, Mr. and Mrs. Mandel moved into the big city in which there was probably the last real cultural cluster which Europe has been able to produce. We don't learn much about this in the schools. They tell us mostly what happened in France, especially in Paris where impressionism and several interesting individuals lead a life and produced their personal style of painting and all that makes very good reading. But the real essential revolution that the European race was in need of, in the mental and cultural sphere - happened in Vienna before the first world war. A few of the names are very famous now but one does not realize that Sigmund Freud, for example, was just one of the figures representing the psychological or psychiatric research. There were other figures who were just as capable and busy seeking the new directions and ideas that were to come. There was Peter Altenberg who, already 70 years ago, wrote what we would call today Pop-Art Poetry. There were other men like

Kokoschka who, when he exhibited in the Kunstschau, made everybody in Vienna convinced that the world could not last longer than 48 hours. There was Arnold Schoenberg who, when his "Verklaerte Nacht" was performed in the Boesendorfer Hall, that place which had the most musically educated audience in the world - where Schubert, Brahms and other great masters used to perform, and when that audience heard the "Verklaerte Nacht", which to us today sounds so sweet and so romantic - well, at that time it was all so new and the beginning of an entirely new approach - so that people became so confused and upset - they did not know what to do - they got up in the aisles and slapped each other's faces, whether they knew each other or not. ~~Yet, all these people and also~~ Adolf Loos who was really the man who started the new idea in architecture. He wrote the book: "Ornament und Verbrechen" (Ornamentation and Crime) in which for the first time a real protest against that overwhelming ornamentation in the search for beauty by stealing details from other periods instead of applying "Functional Honesty", the functional qualities of the material as the only source for architectural beauty of the future.

Now, of course, it is hard to understand how terrific the impact was when those ideas were new - when we see on Sixth Avenue and Madison Avenue and all over South America in the big cities - all over the world - skyscrapers built with purely functional forms without ornamentation.

There was also Karl Kraus, the thunderer, probably the most powerful orator since Savonarola, all those pioneers found a home where Mr. and Mrs. Mandel lived. There are very few people who can grasp what that means. I have spent half a century trying to educate people in this country. I gave the first courses on Modern Art and the first courses on LIVING AMERICAN ART and even one of my most devoted pupils, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim admitted that she originally joined my classes because she wanted to prove to her family and

friends that even Leo Katz at the Metropolitan Museum could not convert her to Modern Art. Later, when a Museum of Modern Art was built, she became the most generous sponsor of it. And I remember how we had to work for years - inch by inch, how difficult it was for everybody, everywhere, all over, in this new country - to make the step from a provincial, old fashioned, conservative view toward inevitable new changes which I tried to explain to them. To find that a friend of mine, who came from the same provincial place as I have, and was able to step right into the center in Vienna and her house became the home for those great pioneers. You have to realize that this was not a general revolution or a Viennese culture. The Emperor Franz Josef did not care and was not interested, the great aristocracy was not sympathetic and did not understand, the great intellectuals who attracted doctors and scientists from all over the world - yet, when it came to understanding the new cultural concepts - they were as helpless as anyone else. Even his "Magnificence" the Rector of the University of Vienna, after somebody managed to have Gustav Klimt paint remarkable revolutionary murals for the University - revolutionary not in the political sense but because he painted human figures in space without wings, for example. People in Vienna were against anything new and his Magnificence the rector said: "I don't know Klimt, I don't know his work but I hate modern art so much and the paintings have to be removed." And the paintings were removed, stored in a basement where they were destroyed when our bombers flew over Vienna in 1945. That was the general situation. The public, in general, was ignorant and passive. There was just this cluster of painters, writers, Klimt and Schiele and Kokoschka, Adolf Loos and others I have not mentioned. To me, who had such a struggle with hundred thousands of people - trying to make them see what was coming - and when I think of my mural at the Century of Progress Exposition in

Chicago - I painted and said everything that Lewis Mumford is saying now on T.V. only I said it and painted it in 1932 when people were not ready to hear or to understand. To find a person, practically unknown to the world, yet that she was almost a mother to those pioneers in the struggle towards the future - is an extraordinary event.

Later, Erich and Anna had to leave Vienna because Hitler marched in and he took away everything they possessed and they were lucky to get away with their naked life. They came to America and they had the guts and ability to start from scratch and to adjust themselves to an entirely new world. Mind you - each time - judging from the way most other people responded, it was like a landing on a new planet. Yes - it was really something which I, with my experience, had to admire tremendously.

Now came the time -- now is another change, as far as I try to understand it. We no longer can say that we know what life and death is, that we know what the world is. When we went to school- long ago- we were taught that there is a real truth which is scientific and that science tells us: "THERE IS ONLY ONE WORLD", the world which we can see, which we can touch, which we can buy and do something with. It was up to religious and mystical preachers to talk about another invisible world. Today the situation has radically changed, although millions of people are not conscious of it. But - it is true that the clergymen of the different religions are trying desperately to adjust themselves to the factualities of this life in this world while the scientists are spending billions of dollars every year, finding new ways of research and investigation into the other worlds they are speaking of. Anyone who ~~comes~~ today ~~and~~ says "there is only one world" - to modern scientists this is "ancient superstition for old women" as they used to call it. In newspapers, magazines or on T.V.

we are getting information about those incredible "BLACK HOLES" and the "WHITE HOLES", connections with other universes and about "trachions" which are so much faster than light and the quaisars which are supposed to be outside of our universe and the neutrinos which go through you and this building and through this earthglobe without touching anything..- because the solidity and the "reality" which we believed in and which was called scientific truth, is only an illusion brought about by our primitive crudness of our sense-perception. Therefore - I can no longer say that somebody has lived, that this was all of reality and that it is all over.

Mrs. Mandel mentioned, not long ago, in a conversation about another friend - the son of Mr. Heilig who is a doctor in India, that he used to call her "ANUSCHKA" and that she liked it so much. I don't see any reason why I should not talk to Anuschka now. We don't see her but what do we see? I never believed that stuff that only the form that you can see, touch and measure is real. I was always interested in people and their character, their thoughts, their feelings, their longings and frustrations and also their faith and all that was invisible before and after Freud made the invisible subconscious so famous, - and all that was invisible - yet, it was the real he or she. Just because we were taught - 60 or 70 years ago that this is a table and that after the table has done its job I ^{can} take an ax and destroy that table, it is no longer a table and that is that. Today, we all know we have radios and television receivers in our homes and hundred of millions of people have them too. Every child knows now that you can take an ax and you can cut down the T.V. receiver into little pieces until it can not do anything and is as dead as any machine can be dead - yet, you have not touched or injured any of the concerts, or any of the messages or any of the ideas and images which have been presented

and are still all around us floating in space, waiting for someone to turn on another receiver. Thus, I have to look at things in a modern way according to our modern experiences.

When Hitler took away from the Mandels their material possessions Erich cried on my shoulder and told me how happy he was and how grateful he was that all the burdens and the slavery of business had been taken away from him. He would have understood the young people of today.

When I remember all the times before, with your ability to adjust to new situations I am not worried about you, ANUSCHKA, maybe you too are grateful and relieved from the limitation and slavery of material existence. If you have to travel now through cosmic clouds of neutrinos or trachions, faster than light - I don't worry. You will know what to do and when you meet out there invisible Cherubim and Seraphim - I know - you will make them feel at home!!!

LEO KATZ
1125 Grand Concourse
Bronx, N.Y. 10452

Tel: 537-6756