

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Mann, Klaus

o.O., 1945-05-16

Nutzungsbedingungen

Bei zahlreichen Dokumenten auf monacensia-digital.de sind die Urheberrechte bereits abgelaufen. Sie sind gemeinfrei und dürfen ohne weitere Rücksprache mit der Monacensia weiterverwendet werden. Bei den Dokumenten, bei denen noch Urheberrechte bestehen, müssen für eine Weiterverwendung stets die Rechteinhaber*innen angefragt werden sowie eine Publikationsgenehmigung der Monacensia eingeholt werden. Das Zitatrecht bleibt hiervon unberührt.

Zur Erteilung einer Publikationserlaubnis wenden Sie sich bitte an:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus
Literaturarchiv
Adresse: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

Terms of use

The copyrights for numerous documents on monacensia-digital.de have already expired. They are in the public domain and may be reused without further consultation with Monacensia. In the case of documents for which copyrights still exist, the copyright holders must always be contacted for further use and publication permission must be obtained from the Monacensia. The right to quote under copyright law remains unaffected by this. To obtain permission for publication, please contact:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus:
Literaturarchiv
Address: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

Bavaria, May 16, 1945

Dear Magician-Dad,

Well, so this is the solemn occasion, and these are my solemnly moved wishes; it seems meaningful and appropriate that I can send them to you from this country, almost directly from Munich.

I arrived here about a week ago, after a delightful trip over the Brenner Pass and short visits to Innsbruck, Salzburg and Berchtesgaden. I have seen so much, and written so much about it, that I can hardly give another detailed account of my various impressions. As soon as I have returned to my Italian base -- which will be in four weeks or so -- I will send you a little collection of newspaper clippings, including stories about my interview with Hermann Göring (how dreamlike and fantastic all this is!), my meeting with Pastor Niemöller's family (the Pastor himself not yet being available, at this point), and my conversation with Richard Strauss. As for the last, I and Curt Riess and I went to see him yesterday, at Garmisch. It was one of the most amazing hours I have ever passed in my life. His selfishness and naiveté are absolutely staggering -- and in fact rather disgusting. The astounding part about it is that a man of such extraordinary talent can be of such moral obtuseness and ~~cool~~ callousness. He does not even have the excuse of senility, for he appears remarkably well-preserved and agile. It's just that he happens to be about the most rotten character one can possibly imagine -- ignorant, complacent, greedy, vain, abysmally egotistic, completely lacking in the most fundamental human impulses of shame and decency. I suppose I'll have to write about this sad case too -- but not for The Stars & Stripes; it may be rather something for The Nation. I'll send it to Horch, to whom I have incidentally just mailed a long piece about Munich in general and our house in particular. I guess some big magazine "back in the States" may be interested in this material.

Yes, our poor, mutilated, polluted house! By now you'll probably know all about its fantastic and ugly story -- thanks to that speedy, nosy reporter, Curt, the man around town. It was a pity that he managed to get there before I did; yet I suppose that my story will have a certain personal touch which is missing in his dispatch. His discovery about the SS baby factory established in our home seems to be correct. Although none of the neighbours was quite positive about it, their stories rather confirmed that something of the kind must have taken actually place. The SS occupied the house during the first years after our departure. Later one Ministerialrat Siebert moved in -- he should be ashamed of himself! The inside looks, however, as if several families had lived there. There is a number of

"L. G. B. G. A. G."

2)

new walls and doors; all the rooms have become much smaller. Half of our dining room has been transformed into a kitchen. The only thing I found unchanged downstairs was the fireplace in the lobby. As for the lobby itself, a new wall has been built, separating it from the staircase. It is all rather dreary. The house is completely empty -- having been evacuated after a heavy bombardment. Most of the inside is altogether destroyed, but the outside structure has remained fairly well intact, as I said in my cable. We could reconstruct the place, if we cared to do so. As it is now, I thought it would be impossible to get up to the upper floors. Just before leaving, however, I discovered that the balcony in front of my room was occupied by a girl -- a bombed-out stenotypist, as I found out, who had no other place to stay and had therefore taken shelter in the ruined building. It was all very ~~curious~~ curious and romantic; but you will read the whole story in my article.

Our house has had particularly bad luck; for in general the district is not too badly damaged. The Guddenberg villa, for instance, is completely all right, as is the Hallgarten house, now requisitioned by Allied forces. The Walter-Frank house looks a little messy, but is in excellent shape compared with ours. Dirschl's inn and Bartl's grocery store have not changed a bit. I dropped by there and stirred quite a sensation. The first one to recognize me was old Herr Bartl himself, although he has become quite deaf and half-blind and I have never had much intellectual contact with him. But as soon as he saw me he cried out, "Ja, der Klaus -- ja, vom Herzogspark!" He seemed terribly pleased to see me and to hear all about the dear old "Herrschaften" whom they had been missing so much. We were then joined by the Bartl daughter -- the same who occupied Mielein's bedroom together with Fräulein Kurz, during the first weeks after our departure. Herr Dirschl is dead but his son who is now running the establishment looks exactly like him, so it doesn't make too much difference. Fritz Bremer was there, too -- the son of Frau Bremer who used to type your manuscripts. Frau Bremer who is a Jewess (which I had never known) has been sent to one of the awful camps in Poland or Czechoslovakia. Fritz Bremer said you would be shocked to hear this. He rather resented my not having been aware of his mother's racial particularity, and was positive that you knew all along about it.

I had intended to come in contact with some other friends, but it is practically impossible to locate anybody. The destruction is beyond description. While the suburbs (Bogenhausen, etc) have been only half destroyed, the whole center and Schwabing are absolutely shattered. There is literally not one building left intact -- except, curiously, the new block of government offices in the Arcisstrasse, replacing the old Arcissi. But the Brown House too is in pieces, as is everything else -- the Hauptbahnhof, the Stachus, the Opera House, the Post Office, Zechbauer, Jaffé, the Regina Palast Hotel, the Four Seasons, the Bayrische Hof, the Siegestor, the University, the Residence, the Hofgarten, in short the entire city.

One of those I tried to see was Christa Hatvany, whose house has been

spared destruction. But she herself is in the South of France, so I had only a chat with her lady friend now occupying the place. Bert Fischel was another name on my list, but he has moved to Dresden and is reported killed in an air raid. When still alive, he got married to a State-Theater actress and was very popular with his landlord who insisted that poor Herr Fischel had been "ein patenter Mann." Magnus Henning seems to be around, somewhere in the country. I found his name, Henning M., in the phone book, but when I went to the place in the Liebigstrasse it turned out to be a Fräulein Maria Henning who was not even a relative of his but happened to know him quite well. She characterized him as "ein grosser Pussierer" and promised to bring me in contact with him. As for Valentin Heins, he does not seem available at all, with both his office and residence utterly demolished. Curt reminded me of the fact that he, Heins, refused some years ago to part with your manuscripts which he was supposed to hand over to Rolf Nürnberg. I think Curt intends to get Heins arrested.

The only old acquaintance I actually succeeded in contacting was Dwarf Hörschelmann. I found him in Feldaing where he has been living for the past ten years. Needless to say, he appreciated my visit tremendously -- "he took it great," as I would say if I were writing to Sister E --, and showed me immediately all the new items of his collection -- including the story about you in LIFE Magazine and other Mann relics which he has been treasuring throughout the 12 years of disgrace. He was indeed rather cute and touching in his own little way -- and certainly he is, and has always been, enthusiastically anti-Nazi. But still, it sounds somehow odd when he says that as late as 1936 or 1937 he believed that Hitler would promote "good German art" and that it was only when the Nazis threw out all the good paintings from the galleries that he recognized the evilness of the regime. Also he excuses such people as Otto Falckenberg who has been made "Intendant" and publicly praised by the Fuehrer but, according to Hörschl, has remained essentially unchanged -- interested only in his art, in saving certain cultural values, fanatically loyal to his theater, etc. In similar terms he spoke about W. E. Süskind, who is also somewhere on the Lake of Starnberg -- married, father of two children. His last job was that of a literary editor on the "Krakauer Zeitung" in Poland, under the auspices of the notorious Governor Frank. Yet Hörschl ~~swears~~ swears that W. E. S., too, is all right -- interested only in his art, and so forth. What can you say? What can you do? Hörschl says we are not in a position to judge. They have suffered, they have run risks, they have desperately tried to save at least certain vestiges of the great German tradition, they have made as few compromises as possible, they belonged to a secret, always endangered circle of not-nazified intellectuals. All this may be so; in any case, so far I have refused to see Süskind or Falckenberg. As for Preetorius, even the forgiving Hörschl admits that he is "ein Schwein von oben bis unten." He must have been one of the most



shameless opportunists, on intimate terms with Göbbels, etc.

It's all very confusing and somewhat depressing, even though fascinating. I am only happy that I am not with P.W.B. anymore and don't have to stay here and become an editor of the revived Münchener Neuesten Nachrichten. I prefer The Stars & Stripes. As their correspondent, I may make an extensive trip from here up to Hamburg or Holland. It could be that I will attach myself somehow to master reporter Curt for the duration of this journey. This would have certain technical advantages as my own car had to return to Italy and it is difficult to get transportation. Besides Riess has his rather stimulating and nice qualities, for all his irritating vanity and bad manners. But he is much better here than he used to be in New York; without wife, telephone and secretaries, he becomes almost human. Well, I'll try it anyway; maybe we'll quarrel on the ruins of Nürnberg or Bremen, and I'll have to make my way back all alone.

What a letter! Almost too long to be polite. Yet I could go on and on telling stories. But I have to see Dr. Scharnagl, the new Lord Mayor of Munich.

You This fragmentary chronicle is meant for Bruno-Liesl, too, and of course for chère Maman and old E. But it was to you that I had to address my report; first of all, because you are my father, and, second, because *you* are seventy year old and deserve to be honored. Incidentally, almost everybody I have seen in these parts has listened to your BBC talks; they have made quite an impression. Yet I feel now more definitely than ever that it would be a very grave mistake on your part to return to this country and play any kind of political role here. Not that I believe you were harbouring any projects or aspirations of this kind. But just in case that any tempting proposition should ever be made to you (which seems hardly probably, for the time being), my little advice is that you remain impervious, adamant. Conditions here are too sad. All your efforts to improve them would be hopelessly wasted. In the end you would be blamed for the country's well-deserved, inevitable misery. More likely than not, you would be assassinated. It will take years or decades to reconstruct these cities. This deplorable, terrible nation will remain physically and morally mutilated, crippled, for generations to come. You will contribute much more to the slow process of Germany's spiritual rehabilitation if you conclude your lifework somewhere between Pacific Palisades and Küsnacht, than you would by accepting any hopeless and thankless ~~public mission or~~ political mission or position. You would know what I mean, if you had seen the ruins of Munich with me. But I am sure you know, anyway.

More wishes, and much love,

faithful odd son, KLAUS

PS Will you please tell Eri, de ma part, that I have a very nice idea for a drama which I may want to write with her. I'll send her an outline before long. It's a good film idea, too. Why shouldn't we both make some real cash, for a change??