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Mann, Klaus

o.O., 1945-05-24

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6th Army Group Press Camp (Bavaria),

May 24

Ma très chère,

Just a few hasty words, mostly about poor Mimi and Goschi. As I cabled already to the mainly-concerned person (namely, Uncle Heinerle), I found the two old girls when visiting Prague this week. As for details, I must refer to a lengthy letter which I just composed to mon oncle, and also to an article which I have up my sleeves. For it so happened that I visited the sinister place, Theresienstadt near Prague, where my deplorable auntie (I am really rather fond of her) had to spend the past years. The place has to be described, and Mimi's drama too will be immortalized. Right now however there are two minor nuisances.

First, la pauvre tante begs you to send her a big, voluminous package (via Red Cross, or otherwise) -- containing not only coffee, sweets, and other nourishing and stimulating things (sausages are of secondary importance as they have a charitable butcher), but also, and above all, clothes, linnen, stockings, and such as that. They have absolutely niente. Old things (maybe some of Aunt Marta's robes?) will be as welcome as new ones. If you buy any skirts or blouses, keep in mind that both mother and daughter have become as thin as all of us would like to be -- but in the right kind of way. Mimi looks now somewhat like Frau Fischer -- much more Jewish than she used to. That's one of the things the ghetto has done to her. It's all very sad.

Second, as I wanted to leave some money with them and had no currency valid in Russian-occupied Czechoslovakia, I made a very profitable financial arrangement with a generous banker whom I happened to meet. He gave Mimi 5000 Kronen, which is much too much for the 50 \$ which he expects in return. The 50 \$ should be paid to the following address:

Messrs Kenneth Brown Baker Baker, Essex House, Essex Street,
Strand, London W.C.2.

on behalf of Dr. Z. KONECNY ("to keep there until he comes to London! Not to be notified of receipt!")... Will you take care of that?

Prague was very pleasant. I had a long interview with Benesh, as the first correspondent to be received after the liberation! Among the many distinguished personalities I met was -- "die P.",

Cousin Milka, rather pretty-looking, mother of two illegitimate children (was not allowed to become her lover's wife, as he Aryan, she "Mischling"), living in Prague with -- Tante Lalla (whom I did not see: there are limits!). I told her in so many words that I knew all about her sordid past, but she denied that he has ever been anything like a spy. I remained reserved; yet I gave her a letter, To whom it may concern, confirming that she is my cousin, Uncle Kläuschens daughter, and the Magician's niece, and that she therefore deserves the consideration of Czech authorities. If she is really "die P.", it won't help her that I recognize our relationship (although it will com-promise all of us a little). Incidentally, she had no news whatever from her Dad.

Well, it seems the day-after-tomorrow or so I'll start on my trip ~~to German~~ through Germany, together with Curtie dear. (The excursion to CSR I made in the company of a rather nice Stars & Stripes colleague.) After this journey, I intend to return to Rome, and then to request my discharge from the Army. It seems that according to new regulations men of 38 are available for discharge. I think I have done my share. So maybe I'll drop by at San-Remi before the leaves turn.

Is old Sis with you? My love to her and to Dad. Did you have a nice little birthday celebration? (It will be all over at the times this reaches you.) Did the dear septuagenary get my long letter in time? He is very popular in Czechoslovakia; various generals and ministers asked me to remember them to him. The Peppermill, too, was frequently and warmly remembered. What a family!

I have NOT made any SERIOUS efforts to come in contact with Uncles Heinz and Vicko. Not out of rigid principles, but simply because both are bores.

I am very pessimistic as far as the future of the world is concerned. It doesn't look good AT ALL. Fortunately, Fridolin will still be too young to fight in the Third World War.

Otherwise quite gaily,

Old

K.

27/7/56