

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Readers' Almanac.

Mann, Klaus

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1. BOWER: Autobiography is a form that has not often been presented to you Almanac listeners, especially this year when we have shifted our emphasis chiefly to books about the war. But recently there appeared from the publishing firm of L.B. Fischer an important book that combines these two emphases. That book was THE TURNING POINT, by Klaus Mann. It is much more than just the autobiography of a comparatively young man, as the subjects of autobiographies go. It is a study of growing up in a world that was feverish with a war and its aftermath, a recession of the fever for a brief time, and then its breaking out again in a vastly more virulent form. Mr. Mann is a member of a distinguished German family, now happily an American family. He is the author of many novels originally published in German, and more lately of such works as ESCAPE TO LIFE, written with his sister Erika. He has also been an editor--of the magazine Decision--and a lecturer, but I want to introduce him to you as writer, particularly as the author of the current THE TURNING POINT. Our listeners, Mr. Mann, will be interested to know the significance of that title.
2. MANN:
3. BOWER: You have often written on what might be called the psychology of exile. You studied it factually in ESCAPE TO LIFE. You have experienced it yourself. I'd like to have you talk about exile for a bit. In your case it was voluntary, wasn't it? I mean that you saw far enough ahead to make your escape safely.
5. BOWER: Will you describe briefly the conditions in Germany, and particularly in the literary and theatrical circles in which you moved, that made you decide to leave?
7. BOWER: You did not come directly to the United States?
9. BOWER: But you have been here now--how many years?
11. BOWER: Is America in any sense at all home to you now? Is our national scene now a familiar one to you?
13. BOWER: But I want to return to that idea of exile. What does an exile feel about his home country, even while it is in the grip of what drove him from it?
15. BOWER: And how much of a difficulty is the need to change languages, at least to acquire a new one. With you, it must have been a great one, since a mere working knowledge of English would not be enough to enable you to write in it. You do write in English now?
17. BOWER: And what are you at work on now? I have heard you are writing a biography of Andre Gide. I hope that's true?
19. BOWER: But I keep leading you off the subject I wish you'd talk on. What hopes have you for the German people after the war? Can they--in time, of course--be won over to democracy? Or to something quite different from Nazism?
21. BOWER: I don't want to throw a phrase like "the real nature of the Germans" at you and demand an explanation, but you have dealt with that topic in THE OTHER GERMANY. Perhaps you can sum up its thesis for us?

23. BOWER: Will a process of re-education of the German people--don't ask me for any description of the process--be likely to be effective at all after the war?
25. BOWER: Or are there enough Germans, perhaps within Germany, who have the potentiality of becoming leaders in the new Germany? I suppose perhaps outside, ~~I'm asking you your opinion of Mr. Louis Adamic's idea in TWO-WAY PASSAGE, in part, at least?~~
27. BOWER: Thank you, Mr. Mann, for coming down here this afternoon and answering my questions. We may not have talked very directly about your book THE TURNING POINT, but what you have said will recommend your book to our thoughtful listeners, I am very sure. I do want to add my own recommendation of a singularly interesting and significant autobiography that is also a sensitive report upon the moral and political atmosphere of Germany in the pre-Hitler and early Hitler days there.

Radio Interview

2.)

The title of my book has a double meaning. ~~first,~~ It refers to a juncture in my personal life, the beginning of a new phase in my literary career, and also, or above all, to the general situation. ~~for this is my first book to be written in English,~~ a determined effort to liberate myself, even as an artist, from my German past. ~~that is, from the influence of German literature and art, or rather, Spain's~~ Evidently, the historical hour we are passing through is one of pivotal ~~importance~~ ^{gravity}. One thing is certain at least, in the midst of so many staggering uncertainties: the next step will carry us into new land with landscapes and conditions as they have never been seen before. Nobody can foretell whether things will be worse or better in this transformed world to come. The horizons which, from now on, will surround our lives may be brighter or darker than the ~~lives~~ ^{skies} we knew. But surely the light will alter.

4.)

We left Germany as soon as Hitler came to power, in ~~March~~ 1933 - voluntarily, or rather forced away by our own disgust, our horror, our forebodings. We left because we knew Hitler and because we knew the Germans. We left because we could not breathe the air in Nazi Germany. The fear of suffocation is a plain, cogent reason for exile - isn't it?

6.)

(was stimulating enough)

~~There was nothing wrong with the~~ literary and theatrical ~~circles~~ in Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, and the other cultural centers of the Weimar Republic. ~~many of the~~ ^{there was a lot of highly gifted men -} those playwright, actors, novelists, painters, and composers, ~~many of them our friends.~~ ^{many of them our friends.} But they lived and worked in a social vacuum - disconnected from the German masses. That is why so many of us ignored or underrated the ~~various developments taking~~

2) gradual increase of the Nazi menace. When we finally realized what was going on, it was already too late to prevent the disaster.

No. 7 first was 8.) to Paris
~~At the first, three or four years of exile, mostly by zig-zagging~~
~~Europe~~ except Germany, of course -
There is hardly one European country where I did not stay for
a while, in ~~that period from 1933 to 1938~~ ^{those first years of exile}. But the center of my activities
was in Amsterdam, Holland, where I edited, for several years, a literary
anti-Nazi magazine, ~~from 1933 to 1938~~

10.)

Six Years - or rather, five, to be more precise. I arrived here in the fall of 1936, but was in Europe twice since, in 1937 and in 1938, ~~and~~
- staying there for about six months each time.

12.)

To tell the truth, I feel more at home in the United States, at this point, than I ever did in Germany. I know this country rather intimately
- having crossed its whole width, from coast to coast, a dozen of times at least. It's very easy for me to imagine a life without Germany; but a life without America?.... Not for me.

16.)

18.)

And if that's true! In fact, the book is almost ready for publication; the Creative Age Press has scheduled its appearance for some date early next year. I enjoyed particularly writing it. For André Gide - undoubtedly the greatest man of letters now living in Europe proper - happens to be one of my oldest literary idols. He is not only a ~~man~~ genius but also

2a/
INSERTION:

16.)

Well, I try to, at least. Five or ten years ago, the idea of writing in a "foreign" language (that is to say, in any idiom except German) would have struck me as utterly absurd. But I came to realize - gradually, under the pressure of circumstances - that one must not cling, with stubborn nostalgia, to one's mother-tongue. The only thing to do, for a man in my position, ~~was, to~~ is, to learn a new idiom to communicate a new identity. It wasn't easy at first; but, then, why should life be easy? ~~I want it rather to be difficult and uncertain and exciting.~~

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a great character, as he proves now, once more, by his unyielding attitude toward Berlin and Vichy. Gide - more than any other French writer of this time - represents indeed the finest French qualities and traditions.

20.)

If I answered your question in the negative, I might as well say that our civilization is doomed altogether. Germany has to be won over to a civilized way of life, or else there is no hope for a lasting peace.

22.)

What I said before, should make it clear that I believe - that I try to believe in the existence of "the Other Germany." ~~but~~, On the other hand, I think it is dangerous ~~to~~, at this point, to overrate the ^{actual} ~~practical~~ ^{influence} ~~importance~~ of ~~the Other Germany~~. ^{The German anti-Nazi opposition} True, the people that produced Goethe and Beethoven ^{must be able, potentially, to become} ~~must have tremendous potentialities of a peaceful, constructive~~ ^(useful members of the family of nations) ~~But~~ the people who have made Hitler their Führer and their ^(first of all) fetish, must be defeated and disarmed. We may stick to the concept of "the Other Germany" as a comforting prospect - something that might become real and relevant in the future. ^{For the time being} ~~At this time~~, however, we ought to beware of wishful thinking. As long as the Germans allow Hitler to be their leader, there is only one Germany - Hitler's.

26.)

^{Such a man} ~~Frankly~~, If there is ~~such a thing as the future German leader~~ - within the Reich or outside - ~~Frankly~~, he must be remarkably discreet and inconspicuous. I do not have the privilege of knowing his name or face. Maybe he has to hide from Hitler's Gestapo. Maybe he is an unknown refugee. Who knows? But whoever and wherever he is, this coming leader of a coming

German democracy - his future and the future of the world depend on
the strength and wisdom of the United Nations: their strength as fighters,
now; their wisdom as victors, tomorrow.