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Mann, Klaus

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Klaus Mann
Paulus Potterstraat 16/II
AMSTERDAM,

5th September, 1948

To,
Mr. J. van Zaayen
GRONINGEN

Dear Sir,

This is to acknowledge, with my best thanks, the receipt of your letter of September 28.

The remarks about Mr. van der Pas in my Van Meegeren story are based on information I obtained from usually reliable sources. After getting your letter, I consulted some other Dutch friends who more or less confirmed what I had been told before: that Mr. van der Pas used to be a member of the "Kulturkammer" and, in general, on good terms with the Nazis; that he gave frequent recitals at the time of the German occupation but did not appear in public for some time after the Liberation. My investigations continue. So far, I have no reason to believe that my statements concerning Mr. van der Pas are essentially incorrect or unjust.

But even if you could prove to me that some of the things I wrote are erroneous -- what would you want or expect me to do about it? To apologize to Mr. van der Pas? This I would gladly do if I had evidence that he was not a member of the Nazi "Kulturkammer," did not give recitals under the Nazi occupation, in short, is not the kind of man as which he has been described to me by unbiased observers. Or do you think it would be a good idea to have a "dementi" printed in TOWN & COUNTRY, L'AGE NOUVEAU, and the other periodicals where my story appeared? I suppose that would look a little awkward -- a year after publication of my article! Or a "declaration" in the daily press -- here, in the U.S., in France, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, and all the other countries where my Van Meegeren piece may have been published? Wouldn't that be "trop de bruit pour une omelette"? Wouldn't such a solemn "declaration" rather be apt to publicize the whole affair in a manner that can hardly be in Mr. van der Pas's interest? Besides, the wording

of that "declaration" (if there is to be any!) would entirely depend on the outcome of the pending investigation. I am afraid I should not be able to couch my "dementi" in terms very complimentary to Mr. van der Pas, unless I have clear proof of his anti-Nazi record.

Of course, I want to be as fair as possible about the whole affair -- especially so as I am most favourably impressed by the courtesy and moderation of your letter. If you really think it desirable or necessary to have a talk with me about the case -- I am at your disposal. Frankly, I don't quite see what kind of practical result such a conversation could have; but it will be a pleasure to meet you and hear your suggestions. Just let me know when you will be in town and ready to see me here, in my modest furnished room -- I will always be able to spare half-an-hour for you, preferably in the afternoon.

But please don't bring Mr. van der Pas along! That would be embarrassing.

Yours sincerely,