

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

An exchange of letters.

Mann, Erika

1947-03-04

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

AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS.

Germany
U.S. Zone,
March 4th, 1947

Dear Erika.

..... If only I were able to report that things had not changed since you and I last told each other how bad they were. They are worse now and my wishful gaze fails to discover any silver-lining on the teutonic horizon. I keep covering the news in that straight, unquestioning fashion prescribed from above and though I suppose that the sum of all I write might eventually furnish a stubbornly faithful, frantically curious and profoundly enlightened public with a fair likeness of the German picture, I rather doubt that such a public exists ~~chez nous~~ or anywhere else. ~~Nonetheless I think that~~ And even if it did ~~(exist)~~ how could it possibly grasp the significance, or whatever the boss has seen fit to cut ² ~~out~~ and how could I tell my readers that ~~any contradiction between a~~ ^{similarity} story's sensational heading and its sober contents is ^{probably coming} ~~due to the~~ ^{'s} ~~Foreign editor's~~ ^{dumb + low foreign editor's} pardonable desire to impress? For a while I thought of switching over to magazine work, if merely to secure for myself certain inalienable rights such as space, liberty and the pursuit of truthfulness. But then honest Bob F. went ahead the other day and filed what most of us here considered a courageous peach - a candid and comprehensive 3000- words analysis of conditions in our zone. The congratulatory cable consequently received from the home office read as follows:

"Roundup ungood suitable profew political highbrows only stop want

human interest outfind how Germans buy toilet paper get children etc. "

He's still trying to "outfind" while I've sort of dropped the magazine idea. See?

Want to know what's wrong~~x~~ with the occupation? ~~Answer~~
~~Answer~~ I'll tell you anyway - strictly for my own amzeement
and in the forlorn hope to antagonize you into frging a reply. ~~Unless a~~
seasoned defender of M.G. such as yourself ~~should fail~~
effectively ~~refuse~~ to refute my accusations I should have ~~had~~ to
~~pronounce~~ pronounce our German venture a well deserved flop.

What, then, have been our major blunders?

1.) ~~the policy of the occupation~~
as ~~While the Germans may be short of a lot of things~~, we are short
of the one thing that we ought to be amply supplied with : a consistent

policy. Ramember the proud dispatches you and I filed ~~when our brave engineers had blown up the " Fabrik Kaufbeuern" ?~~
"The destruction of this ~~very last in 45~~

German war plant" we cabled "constitutes the first step towards the
final abolition of the German war potential. ~~Additional steps have~~

~~been agreed upon and will be taken in short succession....."~~
~~just didn't, even a~~

Well, they ~~never~~, although no decision to

the contrary was ever officially announced. Do we or do we not mean
~~to~~ ~~abolish~~, ~~or~~ severely to reduce, or ~~or~~ to ~~reduce at all~~ the

German industrial apparatus. I don't think we know and the German

don't think so either.

~~They are having a lot of fun, all of which comes somehow~~ under the

heading of "Lack of U.S. Policy". I prefer, ~~however~~, to enumerate

certain important points rather than to see them drowned in the
muddy ocean of our general inconsistency.

2.) De-nazification. ~~That's what the British did~~ Here we've been particularly luckless, ~~especially~~ ^{especially} ~~muddle-headed~~, signally unsuccessful. At first we sincerely believed that we wanted completely to denazify this nation and that we'd be able to do so. Then we found ~~that it simply couldn't be done.~~ that it simply couldn't be done. There were too many nazis. If, according to our own de-nazification scheme, M.G. dismissed them all, the entire machinery of life was thrown out of gear. What was it that good old Burke said regarding the revolutionary French: ? " You can't indict a whole nation!" Well, I don't know that you can't. But when it comes to firing a whole nation, that's another story. Even so, all would have been comparatively well, if only we had continued to do our best. We might have ~~changed~~ ^{modified} our de-nazification laws so as to ~~increase their practicality~~ ^{make them practicable.} ~~belated~~ ^{belated} And had it not been for the discovery that we didn't really want the Germans to become throughly de-nazified, that's probably what we would have done. ~~There were~~ There were - we found - a great many Nazis whom we liked; in fact most of the Germans we liked had been mixed up ^{with} in the Hitler business and were not even now above suspicion. All the "better people", the richer and ^{the} ~~more~~ successful ones; ~~and~~ those who spoke ~~good english~~ ^{good english}, possessed handsome castles and hunting lodges; gave lovely parties; and ~~harbored~~ ^{harbored} heartwarminglly anti-Russian feelings ~~had been~~ on friendly terms with the late regime. What of it? We much preferred them to that bunch of anti nazi paupers who were not only far less pleasant ~~company~~ ^{even} company, but who must ~~be suspected of~~ ^{be suspected of} ~~leftist leanings.~~ ^{liberal or socialist} Professionally, too, these ~~were~~ ^{concentration camp chaps} weren't up to the standards of their Nazi competitors. And we did want capable people on the job. ~~Natch!~~

(447)

Even so
Bb Since, however, we could ill afford to abandon "De-Nazification"
all together, we ~~we~~ simply turned the whole thing over to the Germans.
There are those who maintain that we sincerely expected the ~~German~~ *German*
"Spruckammern" (De-nazification Boards) to ~~face ahead~~ *face ahead*
and ~~purge~~ purge the nation of Hitlerites. ~~But~~ *But*
~~what~~ If we did, we were sadly disappointed. Within
less than a year after they'd taken over the Germans had ~~made it plain~~
~~our~~ *our* ~~that~~ *that* ~~the~~ *the* ~~way~~ *way* ~~of~~ *of* ~~handling~~ *handling*
~~turned~~ turned "de-nazification" into a farcical
shambles. ~~Persons~~ Persons who had been close to the party and
had actually belonged to one or several of its affiliated organisations
were given clean bills of health by other persons in the same position ~~precarious~~
who in turn relied on their proteges for ~~redemption~~ redemption. ~~Once~~
~~again~~ again Germany was inflation ridden but it was a new kind
of inflation that had become rampant : an inflation of witnesses.
~~An~~ An unending stream of Nazis kept ~~testifying~~ *testifying*
~~in favour of~~ *for* another unending stream of Nazis and pretty soon four
five ~~out of every~~ *five* job holders who'd been fired under M.G. ~~were~~
~~were~~ *both* exonerated and re-installed. ~~Today~~ "Re-nazification is doing nicely"
as honest Bob put it in that "ungood roundup" of his. ~~He~~ He
might have added that ~~in~~ *in* ~~at least~~ *at least* ~~nothing~~ *nothing* ~~could~~ *could*
~~be~~ *German* ~~damaging to any employee~~ many a University professor
or high school teacher ~~in~~ *in* ~~Germany~~ has come to dread one thing
and one thing ~~alone~~ alone : the detection by his superiors,
colleagues or students of his modeartely anti-nazi past. Lady, what a
mess!

3. How black is your market? When in Germany it couldn't be any blacker. Allegedly, the most stringent measures are being applied to end the scandal. But Actually, not even the most obvious step has been taken. Now, as ever, ~~business minded Americans~~ ^{business minded} Americans ~~ciagarets~~ ^{cigaretts} will buy everything from paintings to wedding rings and from ~~the family's~~ ^{grandma's} jewels to the family's every day china. Now as ever business minded Americans exchange millions of cigarets for tens of thousands of more or less valuable objects while the population of the U.S. Zone see their belongings go up in U.S. smoke. In explaining his reluctance recently to ~~prohibit~~ ^{bar private} tobacco imports from the United States ~~to~~ General Clay asserted that ~~American~~ not all brands of American cigarettes were available at the Army Post exchanges and that American personnel could not be expected to smoke anything but their favorite brand. ~~Thus, while~~ ^{private} Tobacco shipments from home would have to be somewhat curtailed, they could not ~~be~~ ^{be} halted. This pronouncement of our ^{Deputy} Military Governor ~~was~~ ^{was} all the more ~~startling~~ ^{startling} since it served as an answer to ~~the~~ ^{an official M. G.} committee report ~~which~~ ^{accused} the black tobacco trade ~~which~~ ^{according to which} ~~was~~ ^{fatally affected} Germany's entire economy. ~~Whatever~~ ^{in God's own time,} ~~prohibitive~~ ^{measures} had been taken to protect the ~~German~~ ^{Mark} ~~currency~~ ^{a vastly superior} became illusory when ~~a~~ ^{with} rival currency was permitted to exist ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~poor~~ ^{paper} ~~value of which~~ ^{Mark} ~~had proved~~ ^{had proved} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~unable to~~ ^{unable to} ~~compete~~ ^{compete}. ~~And~~ ^{And} ~~verily~~ ^{verily} ~~no~~ ^{no} ~~Heini~~ ^{Heini} in his senses will lift a finger to repair your car or clean your boots

and less ^{ready} willing to bethink itself than at any time since VE Day.
Evidently the general ^{desire} worsening of conditions und the resulting
- and growing - dissatisfaction among Hitler's children is co -
responsible for their ^{unwillingness} disinclination to listen to us. But what
is there to listen to, anyway? Heaven knows and you know that we had -
and have - no educational program. When the schools ^{re-} opened, some
5 months after the German surrender ~~there were virtually no text books~~
there were virtually no text books ^{available} although - ~~allegedly~~ we'd
we had ^{spent} ~~allegedly~~ ^{all summer} ~~preparing ourselves~~. And even now books are so scarce ~~that~~
~~they change hands~~ continually, each child being permitted to keep "his" or "her" copy
for ~~one~~ week ~~or so~~. This state
of affairs, though ^{bad as such} ~~is somewhat~~ ^{mitigated by the}
~~quality of the works in question~~ ^{is somewhat} ~~mitigated by the~~
^{quality of the works in question} ~~These~~ . I for one ~~prefer~~
~~little Fritz to go without his "purged" Nazi~~
reader some of the time and I don't even mind if ^{little Otto} ~~he~~
~~flatly refuses to~~ ever
to let him have that pre-hitlerian history crib of his. Offhand I'd say
that some 50 percent of all ^{current} textbooks ~~are~~ ^{are} of the pre-nazi
"Republican" brand and as ^{and} militaristic, nationalistic ~~and~~ as the
Junkers and the General staff. Another 25 or 30 percent ~~are~~
are Goebbels products, expurgated - and you may well imagine what

they read like. While they're a lot of pages missing (cunningly removed by our specialists) the index is usually intact and ~~new~~ shows just what pictures of Adolf and what masterrace stories have been omitted. To make things ~~even~~ more objectionable, other pages were ~~blotted out~~ fairly transparent "blotted out" by means of a thin sheet of paper that's glued to them. Against the light these pages may be - and are being - read quite easily. The remaining 20 or 25 percent of the books ~~is~~ is made up of genuinely new, German made, American inspired and controlled literature, which would neither hurt a fly nor convert a nazi. *Take care*

Our attempts to "re-educate" the adults have been similarly unspirited, halfhearted and ineffective. There's been no guidance, no spiritual leadership, nothing to stimulate any cultural renaissance. While literary nazi bigwigs have been ~~banned~~ banned, the smaller fry continue to dominate the market, if merely because they seem the only creative minds available. Just why such world renowned ~~German~~ *democrats* leaders of democratic thought and action as Remarque, Stefan Zweig, Franz Werfel, or your good parent Thomas remain "verboten" under M.G. is beyond me. Surely some way could have been found to ~~overcome~~ overcome whatever preventing at least partially technical obstacle may be ~~hindering~~ hindering their works from filling ~~the~~ the vacuum created by the collapse. Be this as it may there is every indication that our authorities do not really believe in the importance of spiritual value. ~~Perhaps~~ Perhaps they'd have to be poor generals to do so.

understand
6.) Even good generals, however, ought to know that no army is better than the sum of all those who compose it
and that the conduct of the average occupation GI leaves
a prodigious lot to be desired. By and large these the ignorant
youngster who's come to typify
he are
and concerned with two things and two things only: the
Black Marketeering and
"Frauleinsiation". Luckily for the boys these, their two sole
interests are tightly interwoven; or, rather, they are one and the same,
Whether it's liquor of Frauleins
you're after, (and mostly
you'll want to combine the two), they'll have to be paid for, just
as