

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Our war, our victory, our peace.

Mann, Erika

1941

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

Erika Mann

OUR WAR, OUR VICTORY, OUR PEACE.

Ladies and gentlemen,-

I am happy to be with you again; in fact I have been here so frequently, that, when I left New York for this trip, my agent kissed me goodbye ^{saying} and said "and so, my dear I am sending you home to Pittsburgh".

My subject ~~for this morning~~ ^{within 55 minutes} is vast indeed; ^{in order} fully to cover it (a person would have to be a genius, a prophet and a magician. Unfortunately, I am neither; so I shall simply try to give you the picture as I see it, with its background ^{dull, dark and foggy,} ~~with~~ ^{with} its ~~scenery~~ ^{scenery} flooded by blood and tears, ~~its~~ ^{with} its sky covered by clouds beyond which, however, the sun can be clearly felt. In fact, ~~we've seen her(?) quite a few times, even during the past rainy months; General MacArthur's heroic figure stands out in bright sunshine and so do~~ ^{afflicting terrible losses to the enemy, destroying the Russian armies, advancing steadily, recapturing bit by bit division after division of ~~their~~ troops, while at the same time destroying the scorched and frozen earth of their invaded country.} ~~the myth of his invincibility.~~ Elsewhere the skies ~~darkened~~ ^{remained}; darkness rules over the Pacific, ^{the} darkness rules over the entire continent of Europe; and even ^{the} angry fires, lit by the enslaved peoples of the continent are, still, too small and too scattered as to penetrate the night.

Why, then, you may ask me, - why on earth did you give such a bright, such an optimistic and self-assured ^d ^{name} ~~name~~ to your all but happy picture. Why ~~are~~ ^{when} are you talking about "our victory" and "our peace", ~~when~~ ^{when} there seem to be plenty of chances that we might not win, ~~quite obviously, "our war" might be lost?~~ ^{Core "our war" 12}

Our war.... Isn't it strange in a way that we should ~~not~~ without pride
^{refer to} ~~call~~ ^{as} this war ours, - we who hate the very idea of war, - we who, as
a matter of fact, ^{up to} hated the idea of this war so intensely that we
refused to prepare for it ~~until~~ ^{up to} the last, the very last moment?
How did this war ever become ours? ~~what~~ ^{unavoidable} ~~was it that made this~~
~~war which the vast majority of men did not want?~~

History, it is said, doesn't repeat itself. Yet, during the
years preceding the outbreak of hostilities on the continent, history
^{did} ~~was repeating~~ ^{self} it in the most astounding way. ~~There were moments when~~
~~individuals~~
like myself, while watching the repetition of events, felt as one does
certain ^{haunting} in ~~a~~ nightmares; ~~and~~ ~~from which one cannot escape.~~
What's this? One asks, - I've seen, - I've felt, - I've experienced ^{all} this
before, - it has tortured me before, - where was that, when and why have
I got to go through this agony again?

Let me tell you how ^{in my particular case} the nightmare started and how it repeated
itself ~~time and again~~. Needless to say that
it, ^{neither} ~~nor~~ my ~~particular case~~ ^{nor} my own personal dreams
I consider to be at all important; ~~but I believe that,~~
by giving you a bit of "personal history" ^{revive and illustrate} I may be able to ~~show~~
you the events and developments which preceded the outbreak of this
war and finally made this war "ours".

I was 24 years old when, in 1931, a ^{peace} ~~peace~~ society of
my hometown Munich invited me, ^{just} ~~to~~ appear at one of their meetings and
to recite a pacifist poem. Though I ~~was~~ ^{nothing but} ~~was~~ a young actress
~~person, with body and soul and naturally~~ ^{uninterested}
in politics and ignorant of politics to which I, like most of my
artistic friends, considered to be none of our business, I accepted.

Of course one had to be against war, even though
there wouldn't ever ^{again} ^{be} another war anyway. War was something humanity had
finally overcome; in a sense it was silly to preach against an evil
which belonged to the past; yet, since those friendly pacifists insis-
ted on fighting windmills why shouldn't one help them in their harmless
well-meant enterprise? ^{As this yet} ^{advice} Hitler was already the head of
an important party and ^{with} his followers represented something
far more threatening than windmills. But I and most people I knew remained aloof.
Those Nazis were fools, we thought, - rather noisy and disgusting, but too barbaric
too inferior in every respect as to be taken serious.

I shall never forget the moment when the nightmare entered my life for the first time. I was reciting the poem given me
by the pacifist sponsors of that meeting and by no means written by
myself. But hardly had I begun to read ^{25.10.41} ~~and had~~, in the words of the
author, ~~asserted~~ that war was a crime, unworthy of civilized humanity,
when a large group of frenzied brown-shirts interrupted me. "Stop"
they howled, - "stop insulting our glorious soldiers, - how dare you
call our heroes criminals, - for you've called them criminals haven't
you?" Some courageous members of the audience ^{the rowdies} tried to quiet ~~them~~, -
to no avail. Chairs were flying through the air women screamed, everything
went chaotic while I myself increased the noise by ^{senselessly} shouting the
peace-loving lines of my little poem, until I was hit by some
piece of furniture and had to give up. One of the Nazis ^{stood right} ^{in front of me}, his face distorted by
hatred and fury, his low forehead ^{he} stared at me with undescribable
fury and contempt. "Traitor" he said "dirty international pacifist!"

we'll do away with you and your kind, ~~WHENEVER WE CAN~~
you'll be taken care off!'/ Don't worry!

It was then that I started worrying, then that I began to realize the horrifyingly irrational character of the danger which confronted us, it was then that, for the first time, I knew that something had to be done and that it would need all of our concerted efforts to ~~WHENEVER~~ do it. What, however, - just what could I do?

^{those of}
I called on my friends who belonged, either, to one of the existing democratic parties or were affiliated with ^{some} ~~any~~ political organisation I knew to be important, and invited them to a comprehensive discussion of the situation. It was some sort of youth-war-council I had in mind. I must ^{inform} ~~WHEN~~ my friends ^{of} ~~WHEN~~ my experiences and warn them against the danger in the face of which we must unite regardless of any difference of opinion which ^{had} ~~WHENEVER~~ separated us so far. As for myself I didn't have any political opinions; all I had was the conviction that nothing short of a united ^{democratic} front could save us. Of course I realized that my friends and I couldn't possibly create ^{any} ~~such~~ united front. Nevertheless we might ~~WHENEVER~~ arrive at certain decisions which subsequently might be accepted by the various groups represented by my friends. ~~WHENEVER WE CAN~~
Whether ^{we} ~~WHEN~~ were social democrats, or catholics, ^{pacifists} ~~nationalists~~ ~~WHENEVER~~ members of the leftists ~~or~~ independent youth-movements, or, like myself, just unpolitical liberals, we must find a common platform now, when ~~WHENEVER~~ violence, ~~WHEN~~ insanity ~~WHENEVER~~ the most uncanny shrewdness ~~WHEN~~ had ~~WHEN~~ decided to do away with Democracy.

^{with my friends turned out to be}
The meeting ~~was~~ a great disappointment to me. What I had planned as some sort of war-council, became one of those ~~democratic~~ discussions in which everyone has ^{his} ~~its~~ say but which lead nowhere.

No

Oceanas of time!

But during ^{the} 6 short years ^{to follow} Nazi-Germany had robbed the victors of the First world war of the fruits of their victory, just as the Nazi-party had robbed the victors of the German revolutions of 1918 of theirs. Even before the outbreak of the second world war ^{in 1939} Nazi-Germany had conquered Europe ~~by the same means by which~~ ^{by the same means} by which the Nazi-party had conquered Germany. And the leaders of the various European countries had made exactly the same mistakes, committed exactly the same crimes of omission, we in Germany had committed some years earlier. History repeated itself, - the nightmare continued.

There had been many reasons for which the various political parties in Germany had refused to cooperate against the common foe and there were many reasons for which the Democracies of Europe refused to do so. ^{in my opinion} However, there was but one decisive reason ~~and it~~ ^{which} was the same on the European as on the German scene. The short-sighted egotism out of which people kept on pretending that what happened in their neighbour's courtyard was none of their business, ~~and~~ ^{merely concerned a few} had a rather handsome name: it was called the principle of non-intervention. ~~Under the protection of~~ ^{Under the protection of} Non Intervention Nazi-Germany was free to do what she pleased and it was nothing but ~~robberies~~ ^{robberies} that pleased her. Up to 1936 when Nazi-troups marched into and fortified the Rhineland it would have been easy to stop Hitler ~~who, ever since 1933 had committed one crime after another; yet~~ ^{those who could have stopped} him ~~him~~ didn't care, as long as they themselves hadn't been attacked. Their attitude was not only stupid, - though I wouldn't call it intelligent either, - ~~it was~~ ^{all it was} above ~~morally~~ ^{deliberately} irresponsible; ~~they~~ In those days people were wont to close their eyes in the face of any and every Nazi-misdeed, - ~~not merely because they~~ ^{because,}

~~not only~~
~~because~~ by doing so they avoided seeing ~~unpleasant~~ things that were unpleasant to look at, ^{a.)} ~~but also~~ ^{and} because by doing so they dodged ^{their own} ~~the~~ moral responsibility. (6)

Austria fell and there came the days of Munich which will live in infamy as will the day of December the 7th, 1941. Prague fell, Poland was invaded, ^{and} the war that had been going on for a long time was finally officially declared. At ~~the~~ its beginning democracy found itself at a total disadvantage. We were unprepared, both materially and psychologically, but, worse than that we were unprepared, morally. Our foe, the overwhelmingly ~~powerful~~ powerful enemy with whom we were confronted was indebted to us for most of his overwhelming power.

~~What a tragic, what a deeply bewildering situation! Whence should we take the strength needed for the gigantic task ahead of us, when we ourselves had jeopardized our moral superiority over our adversary by our connivance?~~
~~Destroyed our moral position~~

~~Things went badly for the democracies during the first year of the war and I am deeply convinced that they had to go badly, - not merely or even mainly owing to our inferiority in arms and equipment, but also owing to the fact that the people on our side didn't and couldn't really feel ~~that this was their war~~ ^{to be} that this was their war, and that it was being fought for the best cause possible. It was only after the collapse of France and the heroic episode of Dunkirk that England, under the ^{inspired} leadership of Winston Churchill ~~realized~~ realized what this war was about and acted accordingly. The people of England were able to "take" the terrible punishment of the battle of England and the battle of London, not merely because they are a tough and courageous lot who would take lots of things, but also~~

felt this to be

because they ~~knew that this was~~ their chance to show to themselves
and to the world that they were ~~HUMAN~~ willing to die for the cause
of freedom, justice and human decency, even though there had been
a Munich. The late summer and fall of 1940 brought about the great, the
decisive change in Democracy's moral situation. Democracy had failed,
morally, but had paid dearly and generously for this failure. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XX~~
And though things looked all but ~~NIGHT~~ promising in August and September
the streets of London were turned into
of 1940 when ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ashes and ruins under a red and burning
sky, a new cheerfulness could be felt all over the beleaguered isle,
a cheerfulness which had its repercussions wherever one looked.
It ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ conveyed confidence, courage and faith in the cause of democracy,
to the occupied countries of the continent as well as to the worlds
greatest and most powerful Democracy, the United States of America.
Appeasement was over, ~~gone~~ ~~had~~ the period of
the so-called phony ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~, - the nightmare
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ had ~~finally~~ finally been chased away. For although America remained
neutral for another year she had already made up her mind, she knew
what she wanted and what she didn't want, what she'd never permit to
~~reopen~~. There couldn't be any doubt in anybody's mind that America
~~would~~ do her share in the defense of democracy, - that she'd fight
if necessary and fight well, - for this was her war.

This is our war and it will bring about our victory,
and our peace.

Things are not going to be easy. For, while ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ we shall have to produce, to work, to fight and to suffer, we shall also have to make our cause unassailable, we shall ~~XXXX~~ have to convince the whole wide world of the pureness ~~HHH~~ of our purposes and of our willingness and ability ~~HH~~ in all earnest to create a new world order

following over L. Choy

~~after this war~~. Not only shall we have to defend ourselves, we shall also have to become the true liberators of all those ^{4/5 of} our enemy has enslaved. And by no means will our task end with the end of the present struggle.

Yet there still exists a certain etc.

... no American would care to live. America ^{didn't want} ~~didn't want~~ this war, - democracy ~~didn't want~~ didn't want this war, wanted it so little that for a ^{time} ~~time~~ it was on the verge of losing it. That time has passed and the war which we tried so hard to avoid has become ours in the deepest the fullest meaning of the word. And now, since we have ^{it} ~~it~~, - we won't give it up but shall fight on for the sake of our victory, ^{for the sake of} ~~and~~ our peace.

.....