

## **Verbundkatalog Kalliope**

**Berlin.**

**Mann, Erika**

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What was once Berlin - a European capital among others - is today the most unreal place you could possibly imagine. In taking you around I'd like you to look at Berlin from three angles. HHHH You are going to see

- 1.) The city itself;
- 2.) Its German inhabitants;
- 3.) Its conquerors.

Even realm number one - Berlin's physical appearance - is not easily pictured. We had known that the place was wrecked and we had seen many another town in ruins. But never before had we come across such gigantic havoc. Were it not for a number of landmarks which, though partly demolished, remain recognizable, one might well get lost in the once familiar streets. The West in particular, the Center and the East have been turned into a moon landscape of sorts - a sea of destruction, shoreless and infinite.

Faced by the remnants of the Kaiser Wilhelm's Memorial Church, you identify Tauntzien Street and Kurfuerstendamm, the most fashionable boulevards of the West. Passing through Brandenburg gate you behold the famous Unter den Linden. Since this is the Canal, this must be Lutzowplatz. The water smells foul and sweetish. How many dead may be buried under these ruins?

You see live people aplenty. There are rows of women, elderly, most of them, clearing the square of debris, passing the buck filled with trash and broken bricks. Well dressed gentlemen carrying briefcases climb busily over small heaps of rubble. German girls on bicycles smile at American G.I.'s. And a Russian soldier, his Asiatic peasant's face all smiles and pride, consults his newly "liberated" wrist watch.

There is music in the air - an old Prussian tune, gay and militant. As you follow the sound, you approach what must have been a large apartment house. It is totally destroyed. That anyone should live here and that he or she should feel like playing a march on a mysteriously salvaged piano, is hard to believe. Berlin is hard to believe. It is a nightmare the like of which has never been dreamed.

What is it that makes this city so unreal? The ruins themselves are but the predictable result of months of allied bombing and weeks of Russian shelling. One might say that they are also the physical expression of a moral decay without parallel. There is something very just, something grimly logical about the sight of Berlin.

And what about its people? Do they fit into the picture? Do their faces and voices harmonize with the looks of their city?

They do not and it is this very discrepancy which causes your nightmare.

Berliners, to begin with, are well clad and on the whole fairly well fed. They move briskly, talk loudly and do not betray any embarrassment, let alone the faintest feeling of guilt. Since Hitler lost the war, <sup>many</sup> ~~many~~ of them <sup>take exception to</sup> ~~are not~~ Hitler. But ~~nevertheless~~ <sup>anybody</sup> ~~they don't~~ <sup>take exception to</sup> expect ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~anticipate~~ them. On the contrary: yesterday's enemies are hoped to be tomorrow's most generous friends. The Western allies at least have been assigned the task of putting Berlin back on its feet. They will send food - loads of it; they will help repair what they have damaged and they will protect Germany from the Russians. Goebbels' favorite promise has not even now been discarded and the average Berliner joyfully anticipates a break in our relations with the Soviets.

If the latter could be removed from the scene, all would be well. For, as one Berliner put it: The French will hate us, but the French don't count. The British will ignore us, but that doesn't hurt. The Americans, however, will help us and that is decisive.

Even now a great deal of fun may be had in Berlin. Considering the small number of inhabitable buildings, the amount of entertainment offered is prodigious. Three theaters, a score of cabarets and innumerable bars have re-opened and are always crowded. There are concerts and floor shows. soon there will be opera as well.

While only a tiny fraction of the city's 2 750 000 inhabitants (pre war population four million and a half) can afford such pleasures, the majority does not seem to mind. "After so much suffering", they observe, "it is normal that people should want to relax."

They also say that a lot of waiters, barmen, musicians and cooks make a decent living in these places of entertainment which incidentally serve as so many centers for the black market.

Everybody here is involved in black market activities. If you are very rich you figure as a straight buyer. Otherwise you sell first and buy <sup>after</sup> ~~then~~. A few clothing coupons are transfigured into a few thousand marks which may be changed into a few pounds of butter, sugar and meat. The Mark has been officially devaluated and rates at present ten invasion cents. But domestically its alleged buying power is that of 41 cents.

Here are some of the prices paid at present for black market goods:

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Butter, 1000 Marks pro pound; Sugar, 175; Coffee, 500; Tea, 600.

As for American cigarettes, they were priced at 30 Marks a piece, when our troops moved in.

"And then, can you imagine what happened?" one black marketeer asked exasperatedly; "This very afternoon I saw some of your boys throwing them away for five and six Marks a piece. While I am sure that they won't do it again, I cannot today offer you more than 10 Marks a piece."

~~"The black market was fed from two main sources. 75 % of the goods were supplied by the Gestapo, the Wehrmacht and the Foreign Office who were bartering their European loot. The remaining 25 % came from German factories and ware houses."~~

During the war the black market was fed from two main sources. 75 % of the goods were supplied ~~by~~ by the Gestapo, the Wehrmacht and the Foreign Office who were bartering their European loot. *Consisted of undeclared stocks furnished by* The remaining 25% ~~came from~~ German factories and ware houses.

"And who", I asked, "did the actual selling?"

"Fugitives", I learned; "slave workers, escaped from labour camps; Jews, wanted for extermination; deserters; criminals; a motley crowd; the new underworld. Many were decent by nature. But illegality is expensive. It takes the black market to pay for it. My own black market rent was never less than 1000 Marks a month."

With German trade and industry at a virtual standstill and European booty no longer available, black market stocks are beginning to run low. Goods for sale now were stolen just before the end, when chaos reigned supreme and looting was the order of the day.

"Decency", said my favorite black marketeer, a pale Belgian youth, "has left Berlin, but Berlin doesn't know."

"They don't know;" said Johannes R. Becher, the German poet and patriot who returned from Moscow in the wake of the Red Army. "Neither do they realize the magnitude of the disaster that

has befallen Germany, nor do they understand its causes. Hitler, they say, may be guilty. But we, the people, are not."

"Was the average German", I inquired, "fully aware of the crimes committed in his name?"

He nodded.

"Our people", he said, "are morally derailed - civilians and soldiers alike. I wish ~~as~~ I could tell you that it was the <sup>trained</sup> Gestapo on the one hand and a clique of degenerate Junkers on the other who murdered in Russia. But I've seen the Wehrmacht at work; I've talked to them and I've read what they wrote. Take this, for instance and take it for what it is: a typical example. The boy in question, a first lieutenant, well educated, devoted to his parents, a sentimental rather than a brutal type, made these two entries into his diary - made them, mind you, on two opposite pages and under the same date. One was a poem by Goethe which he knew by heart and did not wish to forget. The other read as follows: 'It's an odd thing. The first Russian woman I shot in the back gave me the shivers. By now I don't feel right unless I shoot ten a day. Every time I pull the trigger, something warm and pleasant hhh creeps down my spine.'"

He paused.

"What we shall have to overcome," he said finally, "is not only the Nazi infection, but also the pre-disposition which <sup>rendered</sup> ~~made~~ the nation so receptive to Hitler's poison. We must make them aware of this fatal disposition - or, in less clinical terms, we must convince Germany of her historical guilt."

I left him in amazement. Here was a German <sup>communist</sup> ~~weird~~ <sup>hhhhhhh</sup>. Nor was he - as I soon discovered - who spoke like Lord Vansittart the only specimen of his kind.

Meet Herr Hans Mahle, Intendant of the Berlin radio, who arrived here by parachute in August 1944. After the July 20th attempt on Hitler's life, it was felt in Moscow that the time had come for a number of trained resistance leaders to heat the German masses into revolutionary action. ~~from~~ Russian-schooled Mr. Mahle was among those picked for the job.

"It could have been done", he told me, "had it not been for the inertia of our people."

"And now", I said, "do you blame them - all of them - for what has happened?"

"Our entire educational program is based on the maxim of Germany's guilt - a maxim, painful to many of our listeners. They keep writing letters of disapproval to the more significant of which we reply on the air."

He showed me a number of transcripts. The following was broadcast on June 16th, 1945.

"Berlin calling! Our special program 'You ask, we answer'. Herr Willi Lehmann, metal printer of Neukoelln, Bergstrasse 52/53 brands as unjust our assertion that the German workers are co-responsible for the deeds of the Hitler regime. Was it not - he asks - precisely the working classes who suffered most heavily in their fight against fascism? We answer: *Deeply conscious, though ~~we~~ we are of* the sacrifices made by the workers of Germany in their struggle against the Nazis, we maintain nevertheless that the vast majority failed to resist. Passively they let Hitler rule and jubilantly they welcomed his military victories.

~~our~~ Labour, says Herr Lehmann, had been robbed of its leadership and

Goebbels' propaganda machine was all-powerful. But - we reply - could Hitler ever have come to power, if those who warned against him prior to 1933 had been backed by a united and determined working class? Many - says Herr Lehmann - fell victim to Hitler's promises. Perhaps they did, in the very beginning. Soon, however, they were bound to realize that Hitler prepared for war. For, surely, they knew what they themselves produced in the armament factories. And when war had come? Was it not the German worker who continued to forge Hitler's arms and who fought, weapon in hand, for his gangster-cause? Were not parcels received by countless workers' families - packages containing goods stolen in foreign lands?.... Many assert today that nothing could have been done. This is entirely untrue. Never before had the nation been so thoroughly armed as in the years just past. But although some few courageous sons of our people have proved that resistance was possible, an overwhelming majority collaborated until the last. They kept doing so even at a time when the Nazi machinery of terror had become utterly disorganized and would have collapsed in the face of determined opposition. Look at the Italian workers of Turin who struck as early as in 1943; at the workers of little Denmark who blew up one Nazi installation after another; at the workers of France who suffered terrible losses while fighting for their liberation. No! we have to confess <sup>it</sup> clearly and openly: our people, including the working classes, permitted themselves to be made Hitler's tool. Only if we recognize this, our guilt, can we learn the lessons of the past and draw the right conclusions for the future."

The broadcast - one <sup>among</sup> many of its kind - made <sup>perplexing</sup> ~~unpleasant~~ reading. What it upheld with such ardent eloquence was Vansittartism pure and simple. The German hhhhhhhhh programs transmitted by the American Army seemed tame in comparison.

"But essentially", said Mr. Mahke, "your approach and ours are the same. It is only the methods that differ. Where we offer a lot of entertainment along with our educational material, you refrain from amusing your hhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh listeners. And where we have Germans talk <sup>in 8</sup> to Germans, you put Americans in charge."

This ~~XXXXX~~ definition of the difference between the Russian attitude towards Germany on the one hand and the Anglo-American on the other applies not only to radio shows. Nor is it actually merely the "methods" that differ. Our original policy, as distinguished from the Russian, asserts: ~~wecc~~

The Germans have proved that they cannot govern themselves. For the time being at least the German show must be run by the occupying <sup>armies.</sup> hhhhhhh While certain administrative powers may be lent to certain Germans, it is up to the allies to guide the cultural and spiritual life of the nation. As for German politics, there must be none whatever. In the American hhh as well as in the British sectors press and radio are in the hands of the respective armies. One daily newspaper per city is all that's granted. Actually the inhabitants of neighbouring towns are often given the same paper, if under hhhhhhh different names. The selection of foreign, domestic and local news it contains is presented in an objective, unpropagandistic way. Owing to its origin rather hhhh than to its character it is nevertheless considered "Allied propaganda" by many Germans. As for the schools, they have re-opened wherever enough pre-Hitler books could be found to guarantee a de-nazified hhhhhhh curriculum. New books have not yet been issued and even those among the old teachers who were found acceptable are not entrusted with improvising their own teachings. Germans may go to church, but they may not otherwise gather in public places. Nor may they form any political groups or

parties. Allied personnel will be entertained by German performers. Germans will not be entertained at all. Theaters and movie houses are hhhhh closed in our areas, though restaurants, bars and beer cellars are open. The Russians, on the other hand, argue as follows:

If the Germans have proved that they cannot govern themselves, they must now learn to do so. All democratic, anti fascist forces are encouraged actively to participate in the de-nazification of the country. For the sake of national unity no more than four political parties can be admitted. In the newly established "United Front", ~~hmmmmmmmm~~ <sup>Communists</sup> and social democrats are called upon to cooperate with members of both the Christian Democratic Union (the hhhh former Catholic Center Party) and the moderately rightist Liberal Party (the former democratic party). The United Front is headed by Wilhelm Pieck, hhhhhh chairman of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party. The Berlin press, though strictly Russian controlled, is German made and supposedly reflects all admissible political opinions, just as the Berlin radio, though run by Herr Mahle, is meant - in principle, at least, - to be representative of all.

Both paper and transportation are scarce in Berlin. Not once during a ten days' stay did I succeed in buying a newspaper on the street. You may pick one up in an office, or else join the crowd hhhhhhhh ~~waiting~~ before the nearest blackboard. If you wish to listen to the radio, you may have to walk even further. Receivers that escaped destruction rarely escaped the attention of the Red Army. The latter hhhhhh is eager for you to inform yourself, but expects you to do so under your own steam. Children must go to school whether books are available or not.

"Where there are no books", I learned from Herr Otto Winzer 45 years old, Russian trained, communist commissioner for education in the Berlin city council, "entire school classes are taken out by their teachers

to help clear the streets. And they are told why this needs to be done; why Berlin had to be destroyed; and why they themselves - the former Hitler Youth - have to dig her out."

"How many years", I inquired, "will it take to re-model the German mind?"

"Our hair", he said, "may turn white over the job

and we may not even live to see it completed. All we know is that it has to be done and that we are here to do it...."

He stopped, without having lowered his voice and as if silenced, suddenly, by the enormity of the task. His confidence, though desperately sincere, was that of a man charged with draining the ocean.

There is nothing desperate about the confidence displayed by the allied rulers of Berlin, although they, too, are far from under-estimating the <sup>complexity</sup> ~~magnitude~~ of their mission. Berlin, they know, is the Germany must be governed from here. And ability to agree on Germany is the measure testing ground. ~~of all inter-allied cooperation.~~ ~~of all inter-allied cooperation.~~

When the Western occupation forces moved into Berlin, they were faced by a number of Russian fait accomplis which left their commanders in a somewhat difficult position. Take this, for instance: According to our original policy neither theatrical performances, nor political activities were permissible in our zones. But had they actually been forbidden, pleasure seeking, politically minded Berliners would have crowded the Russian sector and rather less than nothing would have been gained. Although both sides are bent on a policy of give and take and neither wishes to compete with the other, the Soviets may be said to enjoy the following advantages:

- 1.) Their presence here nine weeks prior to our arrival.
- 2.) A long range policy designed to make friends as well as to influence people.
- 3.) Their hold on a large number of local agents, German communists, who are certain not merely to accept, but passionately to promote any Russian proposal.

While the Berlin administration, as set up by the Soviets, was formed on a broad, democratic, anti fascist basis, most political and educational key positions are occupied by trusted comrades. Other important jobs ~~in the city government and elsewhere are held by~~ ~~known non-communists.~~ well known non-communists. Thus the Oberbürgermeister, 63 year old Dr. Arthur Werner, is a man without a party. His secretary is a social democrat. Dr. Andreas Hermes, ~~former Catholic member of the Reichstag~~ <sup>Agriculture</sup> ~~minister of~~ under the Weimar Republic and last surviving political ring leader of the ~~generals' conspiracy against the "Fuehrer",~~ has been made commissioner of food. <sup>Even in</sup> ~~the~~ "Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund" (Free German Labour Movement) all major tendencies will be represented. An Initiating Committee for Greater Berlin has already been formed and 230 000 Berlin workers have applied for admission. Although three of the committee's members (including its acting ~~secretary~~ <sup>secretary</sup>) belong to the communist party, the remaining five (among them its 75 year old President) <sup>serve as</sup> ~~then~~ <sup>clear</sup> proof of its genuinely democratic composition.

With the Russians occupying the center of Berlin (Berlin Mitte) they are in control of the city's old administrative district. Whatever central offices happened to be located in our sectors have been moved to the horribly battered Soviet zone.

In the interest of a technically smooth performance, as well as for the sake of inter-allied unity the Western Allies have left the Greater Berlin setup largely intact. Soviet-appointed officials in our areas are neither blindly accepted, nor arbitrarily dismissed.

"We treat them", I was told by Colonel <sup>FRANK L.</sup> ~~Howley~~ Howley, A merican G.5 (Military Government) officer of Berlin District HQ, "as we'd treat any well recommended applicant. If, having been duly

screened and investigated, they seem to suit our purposes - alright. Otherwise - out they go."

Allied Military Government functions on five levels.

Of the city's 21 Verwaltungsbezirke (administrative districts), 6 are American occupied. Each has its own Burgermeister (Mayor), its own legal and <sup>police</sup> offices and its own specific problems. Wherever possible such problems are dealt with locally by emissaries <sup>from</sup> the second, or G. 5 level. Assisted by a staff of specialists and equipped with sector-wide powers, Colonel <sup>F. L.</sup> Howley lists and attacks every difficulty arising in our zone. Moreover, since a big city is an organic body none of whose limbs can live separately, the colonel meets regularly with his British, Russian <sup>and</sup> French opposite numbers. Questions that cannot be decided on the G. 5 level are referred to the Berlin Zone Commanders - Major General Parks (for the Americans), Major General Lyne (for the British), Colonel General Gorbachev (for the Russians) and Major General Koenig (for the French). Like their executive officers of G. 5 the four military governors are in constant touch with each other.

on the fourth level  
High up ~~unofficially~~ <sup>tackled</sup> major matters of policy are ~~handled~~ <sup>tackled</sup> by the Control Council for occupied Germany. Its members, Allied ~~unofficially~~ <sup>generals Eisenhower, Montgomery, Zhukov and de Lattre</sup> are responsible only to their respective national governments.

Thus the gigantic tree in whose shadow all Germans must learn to live, reaches from the ruins of Berlin into the skies over Paris, London Moscow and Washington.

6/1/19  
RECEIVED  
MAY 1919

London about 34,000  
Bordeaux 69,300  
Sydney 24,000

Berlin