

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Mann, Erika

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Erika Mann

June 7, 1951

Mr. Victor Jacobs
Galef and Jacobs, Law Offices
22 East 40th Street
New York 16, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Jacobs:

You will have received my telegram, and know by now how glad I was to learn that you were not angry with me. Actually, as I wrote you, I never thought you were.

I enclose the only "official communication", presently in my possession. Initially, I received a mere notification saying that my application had arrived and that I should hear about it in due time. Then the enclosed made its appearance and caused me to call the L.A. "authorities" to inform them that I was en route (by ambulance and airplane) to Billings Hospital, Chicago, and could not, consequently, drop in for the proposed "interview". One Mr. Jorgensen was very kind; promised to call me back; did so, and let me know that - owing to my impending departure - "everything" had been transferred to New York.

No sooner had I learned that "New York" knew of nothing than I called the "authorities" once more, and this time talked to one superior to the since fired Mr. Jorgensen who, having checked carefully, gave me a return ring, ascertaining that "everything" had most definitely been sent to the District Director of Immigration and Naturalization, New York City, N.Y. And very much puzzled he was by my swift question: "Would that be dear Mr. Shaughnessy?" - Never mind.

What I do mind - if only a trifle - is your formulation about my having "capitulated to Senator McCarthy". I have not. There is a German saying (pardon my referring to those people!) the English equivalent of which would be something like "where none exists, even the Emperor has lost his right". So there.

I had heard about, and read Andy Logan's Ellis Island piece before you mentioned it. Goodish, though

it certainly is, - simply as a piece of documentary reporting, - I was somewhat disappointed in it, - shall we say from a human point of view? What occurs in the article -- not once but at least three or four times, - does not, to my dulled mind, speak of courage or even of any outspoken sincerity. Take the following bit, just for instance: "In so melodramatic a setting, it was necessary to take firm hold on the knowledge that of all the thousands of newcomers who thankfully spill onto American shores each year, the unhappy people on the other side of the grille - the temporary or permanent rejects - represented only a tiny percentage, and that about each of these there must be, in the minds of competent judges, (underlining mine) a reasonable doubt." What follows immediately, is a reference to "these dubious pilgrims" that could not possibly have pleased me either. Nor am I quite capable of understanding why on God's green earth good old George should have "stuck it" for ten and a half months, when he could have gone back to both Paris and a reasonable job. I for one would have "capitulated to McCarthy" and departed - but post haste, muttering, - as all my choice compatriots seem to do, - : "This is the absolute end... I'll never put myself in the hands of such people again."

Which brings us to my problem of "weighing the risk" involved in the re-entry permit which you are so kindly engaged in trying to obtain for me. If I were on my own, so to speak, I would have left long ago with no intention ever to return. Since, however, the friendliest chains bind me to my parents, I have to consider their plans and wishes. At this point, nothing is certain as far as the oldsters are concerned. Neither do they know whether they want to go to Europe this summer, nor do they seem to have any idea as to whether or when they should like to come back. But should they decide on a summer voyage, I would have to accompany them and would have to endeavour to accompany them back as well. Which is why I should be most grateful to you if you'd once again face, and go through, the ordeal of securing that bleeding document on my behalf. Needless to say I would neither fly in via Ellis Island nor - as matters now stand - via Canada, but should probably choose the Panama Canal, Mexico or God knows what. There is, I strongly feel, still some hope regarding the mess and untidiness of it all.

The very kindest regards. I am really glad about our "reconciliation", - although no "row" (even in the subtlest sense) had actually taken place.

Yours as ever cordially ;

Erika Mann.



P.S. How is your child doing?

Moreover, it just occurs to me that-in spite of all your confidence in me-you may yet be harboring certain faint doubts as to my actual political attitude. I therefore enclose copy of a letter I felt compelled sometime ago to write to Freda Kirchwey. In itself, neither the occasion nor my reaction to it is very important. It ought, however, conclusively to prove- - and definitely convince you of-my "non-and against party-line"-position. Perhaps you'd return the sheet to me when you feel like it.

Handwritten notes and markings on the left side of the page, including a large 'L' shape, the number '21', a checkmark, and the number '2000'.

