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about aspirin and what to take for a headache . . . also, at my house. She later became Mrs. Nathan.

These are inconsequential bits of gossip, I'm afraid, of no great help to your collection. But as I say, it was all fifteen and twenty years ago, and my memory is no great shakes.

Cordially,  
*Robert Nathan*



KLAUS MANN AND *DECISION*

By LLOYD FRANKENBERG

OF the Mann family I knew only Klaus, and that rather briefly. *Decision* I had come to know early on, in its all too short existence. I like to think now that I was invited to submit poems for the first issue, but that is perhaps a wish after the fact. A poem of mine did appear in the third number, March 1941, largely through the good offices of Alan Hartman, then an associate, later managing, editor.

The poem was called "The Rain in Spain, the Wind in Finland" and was an attempt to express my almost belligerent pacificism. I took God to task for alternately permitting fascists and communists to prevail.

This was, of course, before the United States became actively involved in the second world war. Even so, it seems quite remarkable now that that poem, and others in similar vein, should have been published in *Decision*. One of them, in fact, appeared on the same page as the concluding paragraph of an article by Alan Hartman attacking the America Firsters and other "appeasement" or isolationist groups.

The distinction may seem trifling today, but at the time it seemed highly significant. I refer to the difference between those who opposed that particular war on political grounds, and those who were against *any* war. Possibly the majority of

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Americans at that time were, at least in their hopes, of the second persuasion. Gradually they became convinced that the menace of Hitler made war inevitable. But there was no joy in it. Even when so convinced, they continued to respect the opinions of those, like myself, who remained all-out pacifists. I feel I owe a debt of gratitude to all those who, like Alan Hartman and Klaus Mann, willingly gave the benefit of *their* doubt. May Sarton and Muriel Rukeyser, whom I used to meet occasionally in the *Decision* offices, also shared their tolerant attitude.

When Klaus Mann took me on as an associate editor, in 1941, it was with full knowledge of my beliefs and predilections. He wanted *Decision* to be a magazine of honest disagreements. As editor, he expressed his own point of view, but he left his contributors free to express theirs.

I remember our meeting in his apartment to discuss possibilities. Alan Hartman, who was relinquishing his editorship, had brought me around to be introduced. It was early evening, but Klaus was (still, or already?) in pajamas and dressing-gown. I doubt that he ever got up before noon, and rarely then. He kept theatrical hours. And indeed there was something quite dramatic about this pale, frail, highly-excitable man, with his passion for ideas. He made a nocturnal impression, as if he were permanently in retreat in his study, debating with the books lining his walls.

The interview was rather one-sided. Klaus did most of the talking. I remember only that I made my point of view plain, as I felt bound to do. Klaus expressed his disagreement, but gently, as if he would have liked not to disagree. He added, "My father is a great pacifist nowadays. During the first world war he was very bloodthirsty." I had gathered from Alan that he felt closer to his uncle Heinrich, the more internationally-minded of the brothers. Then he said, musingly, "I don't quite know why I'm putting you on the board. Maybe it's because you're so quiet."

Inadvertently this quietude set the key. After that first meeting we seldom saw each other again. I had elected (my job being half-time) to work the first half of the day. This was to thwart my own proclivity for late sleeping. If I obliged

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myself to get up in time for the office, I would have the afternoons free for my own work. At least, that was the theory. Since Klaus rarely put in an appearance before two in the afternoon, we were reduced to communicating by memorandum, or by word of mouth via Charles Neider, who, as managing editor, was on a full-time basis. If anything came up that was too complicated to discuss in this roundabout way, Klaus would invite me to lunch. Laughingly he would plead with me to change to an afternoon shift, so that we should get to know each other.

The principal complications had to do with an occupational hazard of "little magazines": an enormous backlog of manuscripts. As an assisting editor, my job was mainly to go through the manuscripts, reject out-of-hand those that seemed hopeless, and hold out the others for Charles and Klaus to consider. No sooner had I begun to familiarize myself with the files than I discovered how bulging they were with manuscripts in various stages of consideration. Many indeed had reached the final stage of "acceptance"; though of course they had not been paid for. Actual payment, as a rule, lagged a month or two after publication. As Neider explained, we were operating on a shoestring, a good deal of *that* contributed by well-wishers. To keep the magazine going at all, the printer had to be paid right away. Then, as small balances accumulated, the editors, and then the contributors, would get their modest checks.

*Decision* was always, then, a month or two in the red. Klaus was convinced that, any minute now, a big distributor was going to take it over, promote it, and sell it like hot-cakes. But of course the distributors worked the other way around; *they* wanted guarantees.

I never got very deeply into the business side and wouldn't have understood it if I had. But I suspect it was just as tangled as the editorial department. I grew used to three or four phone calls in a morning, from irate agents or the equally irate authors themselves, demanding to know what had become of their manuscripts. I would stave them off as tactfully as I could; after all, as a new editor, I could truthfully say the magazine

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was "re-organizing." Then as fast as I could — and as soothingly — I began returning manuscripts left and right.

Even this was not without its risks. "You can't send *that* back," said Neider one day, noticing a manuscript I was slipping into an envelope. "That was accepted three months ago."

"Why hasn't it been printed, then?" I wanted to know.

"Klaus can't abide it! You see," he went on at my look of bewilderment, "Klaus goes to all these cocktail parties. Somebody 'talks a good article' to him and Klaus invites him to write it. Then when it comes in it turns out unusable. So Klaus pops it in a file marked 'Accepted' and forgets all about it."

I found I spent more and more of my mornings dreaming up subterfuges. "We regret that, since we've already printed an article on this subject, we won't be able to return to it for another six months. Feeling that you would prefer to place your excellent article elsewhere —" I began to perceive one of the reasons for that anonymous cloak, the editorial "we." But these troublesome side-effects were more than offset by the occasional discovery, in the mail, of a manuscript to which I could give full and enthusiastic assent. And when these reactions were shared by the others, the editorial "we" took on unsuspected dignity and pleasure.

The time for such pleasure, though, was fast running out. I helped proofread the first issue that was to carry my name on the masthead. Among others, I proofread my own article, a plea to get the antifascist refugees out of Unoccupied France before it should be too late. And suddenly it *was* too late. Pearl Harbor did away with the need for any further *Decision*. The die was cast.

