

4 February 1969

Dear Ruth,

You may believe that my heart aches for you and Varda, after reading your letter of January 30th, which arrived tonight. There are more than enough grounds for heartache in the contents and the tone of your letter; but my distress is particularly great because I am fearful that in this letter, I will add to your pain, and perhaps alienate you greatly. But I too have been going through torment and emotional shock and I know of no way to conceal my state of mind. I want you to hear what I have to say direct from me, and not through whatever version M. may give you if he is, indeed, now en route to New York.

I did not know what to think last week when on Tuesday I got a message saying M. would be in New York "next week" and then on Thursday I got your special delivery letter saying that the decision was to stay there. I did not dare write to you then, in case M. intercepted the letter and was angered with you for having written to me secretly. Now--unless the decision has been changed still another time--I think it is safe to write to you. It is also one of the most wretched and unhappy letters I have ever had to write.

Let me come to the point without further delay. The blunt fact is that my friendship for your husband is ended, absolutely and finally. My disappointment and indignation at his treatment of you should have served as a warning but somehow it did not, and I never felt any doubt about M's political, moral, or financial scrupulousness. In opening the forwarded mail after you left, it was thrust on me--and literally I could not believe my eyes at first--that M. has savings accounts stuffed with money, and that he is therefore a sham, a hypocrite, and a swindler.

In July 1967 I gave M. a check for four thousand dollars. My savings at that time, after 20 years in my job, came to a grand total of \$13,000. Because he sounded desperate, almost suicidal, about his "financial emergency," I made M. a gift of almost one-third of my savings. That he accepted that check, while he had savings far in excess of my own and while pretending to be on the verge of ruin and loss of TMO, means that he is a swindler and a treacherous person who does not shrink from deceiving and cheating even his most trusting friends.

It is not the four thousand dollars alone, but also the hypocrisy of his last letter appealing for funds--in which he said that he would keep only enough "for an airplane ticket for somewhere." The hypocrisy of his editorial attacking Lord Russell in the July/August 1967 TMO--just about the time he was accepting my check for four thousand dollars. The staggering bills he has run up, left unpaid. His holier-than-thou attitude, his contempt for the weakness and imperfections of others, his denunciations of Americans for their greed and dishonesty, his pretense on his goodbye visit of anguish at leaving debts behind, and so many other lies. It is beyond my ability to describe the shock and horror I felt when everything fell into place. I have been disoriented and ill, unable to see, hear, sleep, function, do my work. I stopped any further duties as typist, bookkeeper, and shipping clerk; I have just been dumping the mail into a carton, except for watching for your pharmacy bill (mailed this morning) and for the check from the Germans (it has not yet come). I suppose that M. will arrive and call me before you even receive this letter.

All I want from him is to re-route TMO mail somewhere else and to have his 8 or 9 cartons of books and TMO materials taken away, the first possible moment. After that I never want to speak to him or have anything whatever to do with him. But, Ruth, I do not blame you in any way whatever, and I care for you even more, now that it seems clear that the last six months were not just a passing aberration but a far more serious revelation of character. I will understand if you are offended and estranged by this letter--I do not ask you or expect you to share my opinion of M. But I wanted you to know how I feel, and why I am as bitter and harsh as I am. I would have staked my life that M., at least, was incorruptible. The disappointment is unendurable. I think I will never again permit myself to trust or care for another human being. And I am sorry beyond words or tears to send you this terrible letter--forgive me, if you can, for increasing your worries and unhappiness, but I just do not know any way out except to tell you the truth. I hope that you will write; I will understand, if you do not. You and the children still have my friendship and love, always.

*Leslie*

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**VIA AIR MAIL**