

30 January 1969

Dear Ruth,

I find myself in the ridiculous position of writing you a letter--this letter --although I dare not mail it, at least for the moment. Since your special delivery letter of the night of Monday 1/27/69 was written secretly, so far as your husband is concerned, I do not wish to cause you difficulties by mailing this reply, in case it should be received or read by someone other than yourself. I will therefore hold this letter until such time as it appears safe to mail it to you, and mail it then. It may be that some of the contents that follow will have been overtaken by time and changed circumstances; yet I do want you to know the situation as it appears at this moment, and my feelings as they are at this moment.

By way of further preface, I should like to say also that nothing that follows implies any reproach or resentment towards you personally. On the contrary, I have great warmth toward you, sympathy for the series of ordeals you have been enduring with such cheerful courage, and conviction that even if you were aware of particular circumstances involving me (and I realize that you may not have been at all aware of the situation), it would have been impossible for you to intervene.

Your letter, slipped under my door early this morning, leaves me so perplexed that I cannot even find words to express myself. You write that on Monday at 1.p.m. your husband returned to announce his decision that your family would remain in Israel. But according to a message I received early Tuesday morning here, from someone at Hudson Dispatch in Union City, on that same Monday your husband had telephoned from Tel-Aviv and had asked that I be given the message that I was not to answer any more mail as he was returning to New York "next week" and would see me then. I assumed that this signified a decision that the family would return and that TMO would resume. I do not know how to understand your letter, following as it does that telephone message, since when you wrote it you seemed to have no knowledge of any phone-call to New York or any travel to New York "next week." Indeed, given the time difference, it would seem to me that the phonecall to New York was made within hours of your writing of the letter, although I am not sure whether the call was before your letter but kept secret from you, or after your letter, signifying still another reversal of the decision to remain in Israel. Perhaps I will find a later letter from you when I pick up my mail tonight, clarifying this situation.

Now let me go back in time to the Sunday night when you called me from the airport. Several hours later, I received a long-distance call and was engaged in conversation when the doorbell rang. Your brother and sister were at the door and asked to come in, to use the facilities. I interrupted my phonecall, saying that I would call back, and had a pleasant visit with Pearl and Allan, who told me that you had made the earlier flight. I was sorry that the apartment was in disarray but they did not seem to mind it, so I was glad that they did come in.

I spent several hours, late that evening, finding a place for the various things that Allan had brought, so that they would be out of the way when the painter came the next morning. That morning--Monday--the forwarded mail began to arrive, in rather formidable daily bunches. Little time though I had, in the wake of the painting and after office hours, I did as much as I could to take care of orders for books, now that I had the invoice forms, and to answer or forward incoming correspondence that seemed to require early attention. I had offered, on your husband's farewell visit, to send out letters (using one or another of three form letters he had dictated) to particular individuals who merited effort but I had not expected to take on such a volume of clerical, bookkeeping, and shipping clerk's duties as I carried out that week. Indeed, it weighed on my mind so much that I took time off in order to make space for TMO material, fill

out invoices, wrap and address books, go to the post office, and the like. And I found that I was doing it more out of a sense of duty toward the subscribers, orderers of books, and persons who had written TMO for various other reasons, and in many cases with bewilderment and urgency, than out of any devotion to M.S. Arnoni. I found myself more than ever alienated by the manner in which he had taken himself off, leaving you to cope with the massive work of closing the house and to fall ill alone and dependent on the solicitude of strangers, leaving me to cope with far more TMO business than I had ever agreed to take on and for much of which he had provided no guidance or instructions. And alienated by the series of reversals of the decision to resettle in Israel--reversals which seemed predicated on self-centeredness and disregard for the consequences others would suffer thereby. I certainly found it hard to understand how it was that during all the weeks that passed I did not have the courtesy of so much as a postcard, while coping with so many time-consuming and taxing chores imposed on me in excess of what I had volunteered to do.

I explain all this by way of acknowledging the mood in which I was already developing when, on Thursday 1/23/69 I opened the pile of TMO mail and found a bank report of interest earned in 1968 on a savings account held jointly by you and your husband. From the amount of interest, the magnitude of the savings was immediately and unavoidably apparent. I was jolted with shock, for this was totally irreconcilable with the picture as I had understood it, from your husband's explicit and implicit statements. I will spare you the details of my emotional and even physical reactions to this explosive shock--the shock of realization that your husband may have misrepresented and lied about matters on which he has always claimed the utmost scrupulousness for himself, and constantly denounced others for failing to live up to his own high standards of rectitude and unselfishness.

At the same time, I told myself that I might be leaping to unjustified and unkind conclusions, that there might be a simple and wholly innocent reason. I told myself that these savings might already have been used up to pay TMO's bills; but that left unanswered a different question. In July 1967, A. had told me in terrible depression and despair of a financial emergency and his urgent need for \$8,000. He had seemed almost suicidal. Out of my total savings then of \$13,000, I had made A. an outright gift of \$4,000, or almost one-third of everything I had, taking it for granted from the picture of despair and desperation and from his outright statements that of course he himself had no savings or reserves to draw upon to meet the emergency.

It was on that understanding that I even shared his indignation at another person, who sent him \$1500 marked as a loan. This he returned to the sender, who was then shamed into sending the same sum back as an outright gift, saying that it had been intended as such in the first instance. Was it conceivable that in July 1967, A. actually had savings in excess of the \$8,000 he said he needed urgently, yet accepted contributions predicated on his lack of means to rescue himself? I did not know what to think, and I merely forwarded the bank slip to A. together with other mail.

The next day, or two days later, I am not sure now, I got the real body-blow. There arrived three more slips reporting interest earned in 1968 on other savings accounts. Now it was perfectly clear that A. was a liar, a hypocrite, and a cheat of the most sordid degree--especially in terms of his self-righteous pretensions. His editorial on Bertrand Russell, in the July/August 1967 issue--just a few short weeks before the \$4000 check passed from me to A. The form letter of September 1968 agitating for doubled and tripled contributions from supporters of TMO, to "save" the magazine. The tears and breast-beating at having to leave with unpaid bills behind him. What did fall into place, though, was the frequency

and unconcern of overseas phonecalls; the big bills and lavish tips in restaurants; the paying of Hedley's fare, for the convenience of having him available as a confidante; and the like.

My disgust and contempt are beyond articulation. I have stopped opening the mail. All I want is to rid myself of the 7 or 8 cartons of TMO papers and supplies, as quickly as possible, and to be spared any further contact of any kind with A.