

24 October 1968

Dear Menachem,

No, my dear, I am not at all surprised that you are back in Israel. When I called Ruth about two weeks ago to see if she had any news of you, and she told me that you were en route to Europe, I immediately felt convinced that you would find your way somehow to Israel. It has been apparent since you returned that you have an elemental, urgent need to be there; I can only hope, with great and genuine solicitude, that you find the solace and the peace of mind, and the reconciliation of your self with yourself, that you seek.

Certainly you should possess interior tranquillity in order to reach sound decisions at what appears to be a critical juncture in your life and TMO's. It is surely unnecessary for me to say how dismayed and bitterly disappointed I feel on learning that your mission to Florence was a fiasco. I had hesitated, when you recently told me about this prospect, to throw too much cold water on your hopes --I am afraid that I tend to throw cold water too often as it is--but it did seem from what you related that this man had no real intention at any time of really helping TMO. What I cannot understand is how he could encourage you by cable to come personally to see him, and then withhold the support for which you came.

I can understand your sense of defeat and bitterness, but you know very well that the ten years of TMO have not been wasted. To the extent that there is now a vigorous resistance to the Vietnam war and to the corrupt and cruel system in power here, and it is a real and courageous resistance, TMO has undoubtedly helped in its birth and its growth. Nor has the response been "weak" if you think about it: many, many of your readers have responded promptly and with memorable letters which greatly lifted your spirits and proved to you that TMO did, indeed, have enormous value and importance to its public. The weakness was in the financial capacity of your readers, not in their moral and intellectual commitment to what TMO represents and what it has been--a beacon in this darkness in which we live here, which has given courage and inspiration and a sense of solidarity to many who would otherwise have given way to bitter passivity. I am not saying these things in any attempt to pour sympathy and reassurance over you for, despite the empathy I feel and my anxiety, I think you need tough and toughening words far more than enervating commiseration.

You have known all along that you were engaged in a race against time and a gamble. Those things which are at stake surely justified risk. But when you gamble, you have to have contingency plans for losing, so that you do not suffer the shock of finding suddenly that you have not only lost that which you risked but feel that it is the end of the world. If it should turn out that you decide that you cannot continue this really super-human struggle and sacrifice, you will have lost a channel of expression but not one iota of the intellectual and moral power which you gave through TMO to people who are irrevocably the better for it. I would not discourage you from giving your very life if that would save humanity; but I do certainly refuse to encourage you to do so when it will save no one and serve no purpose. Therefore I do not like your reference to "reaching for the gun." There is, in that, perhaps the vanity and impertinence you mention later in your letter, and it is not the Arnoni that I know who thinks in such terms.

You are in no state now to make the many large and small decisions that need to be made, and I hope that you will not try. I suspect that it is not only TMO that is agonizing you but also other uncertainties and upheavals, interplaying with each other and sapping at your decisiveness and sureness of direction. I can only repeat my hope that you will resolve the internal stresses and not leave yourself for too long floating in a sea of inner conflict and disorientation. I am concerned but confident that you will recover your morale and your energy, so that you will accept that you owe some duty to yourself and to your family as well as to society at large and not impose upon yourself those heroic and superhuman challenges and risks which are so exhilarating when they succeed, but cost <sup>you</sup> so much when they fail. Be of good heart, you are no stranger to adversity, and you shall overcome. Yours as ever,