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Mann, Erika

Pacific Palisades, 1950-01-13

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Erika Mann
1550 San Remo Drive
Pacific Palisades, Calif.

January 13, 1950

PERSONAL

Mr. W. Colston Leigh, President
521 Fifth Avenue
New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Bill:

It is several weeks now that I wrote you an important letter. As you have not answered I am compelled to assume that you do not want to handle me any more - a possibility which I mentioned in my last communication and which you would have surely discarded had it not been for your actual decision to drop me from the list of your "numbers".

In an odd way I feel that your silence honors you, and I much prefer it to any kind of round-about reply that you might have tortured out of yourself. Dear Bill, let me in this parting hour ask you a favor which, I strongly feel, I am morally entitled to ask: Since your inability any longer to do anything for me does obviously not start ~~from~~ next fall but has started quite some time ago - at the very latest with the beginning of the current season - I have to get out of our contract now. The agency has not in actual fact arranged for as much as one engagement since last spring. The only date I thus far had (Berkeley Evening School Forum, November 21st) was ~~undoubtedly~~ the result of the Forum's own initiative and not of any effort on the part of the Pacific Coast Office. The Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Nelson, told me that, having heard me in Bakersfield some years ago he had made up his mind to get me for Berkeley, and that it was he or his representative who approached the agency. The second engagement which is the only one now on the horizon resulted from the first. Asked whether they wanted another lecture series early next spring, a large number of listeners declared themselves willing to attend such a series if only I opened it.

Considering the kindness and enthusiasm with which I was received at Berkeley, I find it doubly painful to have to disappoint both Dr. Nelson and my Berkeley audience. However, I feel as confident that they will understand as I am sure that you will appreciate my position. Obviously, - if perhaps only temporarily - I am through here. Consequently I have to earn some kind of a living somewhere else. I am rather well known in Europe and have an offer to go to Switzerland in the fairly near future. It is virtually certain that I shall go sometime in February and that I could not therefore appear in Berkeley on March 6th. Moreover, even if by some remote chance, I should still be around at that time, I could not possibly afford to prepare an entirely new lecture on the world situation just for that one occasion. I am, as you know, a conscientious worker and whatever I do I wish to do as well as I can. I would have to work for at least three weeks to knock that lecture into satisfactory shape, and all I would get would be \$100 less my expenses for taxis, hotel, food, etc. And following my appearance I should have to throw my lecture straight into the garbage can. Now that would be awfully silly, wouldn't it?

It has been a great and - at times - profitable pleasure to work with you. Also, I've always been on the friendliest terms with both Mrs. MacClave and George Lacher. If neither the head office nor the other two can now book me any longer, I am sure this is due to factors beyond their control. Just let's recognize and acknowledge these factors and call it quits, now. Perhaps the day will come when a changed situation may cause you to remember me. If so, I shall always be happy to come back.

Kindly let me have that formal release (effective immediately) just as soon as you can get yourself to dictate two lines.

Yours sadly but as ever

Cordially

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Leigh,
January 13th,
50
[asking for release, -
2 copies]

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