

9.9.70

Dear Ruth,

Forgive me if this is only a brief, interim reply to your letter of 19 August, which arrived yesterday. It is either feast or famine, as the saying goes, and after a fairly relaxed four weeks of vacation (spent partly in a visit to Dallas, and partly at home) I returned to work on the 1st of this month, to be immediately overwhelmed with a multiplicity of duties, reports, meetings, and heaps of documents to study. At the same time, there was a sudden eruption of correspondence and urgent inquiries on the assassination, instead of the mere trickle of the last few months.

Which is to explain why this will be only a hasty, partial reply, written during my lunch-hour since I do not wish to delay unduly a response to the specific question you raised.

First, as to the silence of Pearl and/or others in your family--Frankly, I have not been in touch with Pearl for quite a long time. We used to speak fairly often in the weeks just after your last departure for Israel, but gradually the phonecalls got more and more infrequent and then petered out, for lack of new "news". So far as I know, as of the last conversation with Pearl, she seemed to feel the same affection and concern for you as always; certainly there was no suggestion of any washing-of-the-hands or calling it quits. I don't have a clue to explain her failure to write to you, and I hesitate to become an intermediary between the two of you, out of the fear that in the end you will both wind up angry with me. However, if I do hear from Pearl again, and if she seems to be receptive, I will if you wish me to mention your disappointment and concern about not hearing from her.

Now, to the main question: I am really unhappy to learn that M. once again, even after the abortive "returns" he has already made, is thinking of coming back to this country. Not really too surprised, knowing as I do his enormous vanity and need to be a great "star" and not a mere part of the populace--but unhappy, at the thought that he might resume his wheeling-and-dealing here. (I loved your expression, "Nothing is too good for the proletariat." How perfectly it describes his self-love!) The main dilemma is that there is a real moral imperative to warn those past and future victims whom he may again seek to part from their money. I fully and strongly agree with you that they should be warned, even if "anonymously," which is not the most effective way, or one that does not present some ethical conflict. But there is no doubt whatever that you cannot possibly use your own name, and that there would seem to be no alternative to anonymity. It would be a lesser evil than keeping silent while M. solicits money on false pretenses and takes advantage of the good faith of his victims. If I can help in the mechanics, I would certainly agree to do it--that is, to type and mail out from an innocuous location any "warnings" to those concerned. But you would have to provide the names and addresses and preferably the text, or the points you would wish to include in the text. I hope that this is the kind of thing that you had in mind when you asked if I was willing to help. If you have any different or additional suggestions, just let me know and if I can do what you ask, you can be sure that I will. Again, my excuses, but I must rush now for a quick sandwich and then to a committee. I hope this is intelligible in spite of my haste and distraction. My fond regards to Varda and Eli (if that is possible) and of course to you, dear Ruth. Love,