

2 May 1969

Dear Ruth,

Your long silence got me so worried that I finally phoned your sister Pearl, and am sending this letter in this manner (to your friend Mrs. Peli) on Pearl's advice. I am hesitating and vacillating about writing what I am inclined to say, and if anything that follows seems silly, too bad, but rather than risk staying silent and failing to impress you with the need for vigilance and self-protection.

Your sister and brother Allan and I all seem to have arrived at very similar and worrying conclusions about A. and about the danger of your situation if you are careless and if you fall back into the role of passive victim. My feeling (and I think Pearl and Allan feel somewhat similarly) is that A. is indisputably a swindler who has been capable of sustaining a long-term deception, projecting principles and ideals, scruples and ethical fastidiousness, which were fraudulent and covered a systematic exploitation of friends and supporters, for financial profit. Also quite indisputable is A.'s pathological self-centeredness, cruelty, sadistic vindictiveness, and dishonesty in matters other than money as well as in plain financial fraud. That being so, it would be reckless in the extreme to accept at face-value any account he gives of his actions, motives, or history --including his concentration camp experiences.

I have come to be increasingly sceptical of his supposed sufferings. He has, after all, more in common with the Nazis than with their pitiful victims. He has exploited his alleged martyrdom to make political converts, which might be okay except for the mixed motives which are now recognizable behind his desire for such converts--valued for their cash as well as other forms of support. In plain words--he may be purveying a fictional or semi-fictional story of his incarceration to cover up, perhaps, spying, collaboration, or other dirty secrets involving his years in concentration camps.

If you accept my logic up to this point, then you must also realize that A. may have the capacity for very, very destructive, even homicidal, behavior. Granted, that seems a very remote and far-fetched suspicion, but it cannot be ruled out entirely, and certainly not when you are inherently and potentially an obstacle and a threat to him--to his relations with Varda, to his freedom to commune with Mme.H. or other such madames, and above all to the fruits of his swindling and self-enrichment stuffed into various banks and to all or most of which you could make legal claim if you decide to take your evidence into court. I think he would deliberately destroy your mental and emotional balance, even try to drive you to suicide, or somehow make sure to remove you from his path, if it came to that.

Whether or not you can accept such a hypothesis, nothing will be lost if you exercise the most extreme care at all times and if you get legal counsel without another moment's delay, for the safekeeping of any material items and for a frank narration of everything that has happened and everything that your family and friends fear--let us hope, fear without real foundation. Now, Ruth, I am very, very serious: please do not be complacent, and do not be vulnerable, physically as well as emotionally --do not slip back into what may appear to be renewed domestic felicity but may be in reality something quite different and quite sinister.

As one result of my talk with Pearl, I just became aware for the first time--with such shock and disgust as you cannot imagine--that in addition to swindling me of more than four thousand bucks, A. has implicitly and explicitly created the impression that he was having an affair with me. That is completely false. I have always found him completely resistable--indeed, so did my niece Susan, whom he tried to "court" in my presence. I hope that you never entertained such a thought, Ruth, for it is an absolute and scandalous perversion on A.'s part. I would have thought that my carefully nurtured figure would have protected me from such a slander. Please write soon and fully. All my love to you, also Varda, Seth and Terry.