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של נחמיה

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מ. שרתוק אל נ. גולדמן (לונדון)
M. Shertok to N. Goldmann (London)

העתק: ארכיון בן-גוריון 1580

[Tel Aviv], 15 June 1948

Dear Nahum,

I am dictating this letter in the nick of time — pressure here is so tremendous that my honest and solemn decision to write to you a good long letter came to naught.

The truce is a fact, overwhelmingly so, despite all sorts of difficulties which inevitably attend its initial stages. The main reason which prevailed for the truce was the military situation, although it is fair to assume that even without the compelling force of that aspect it would have been extremely difficult for us to reject the truce on purely political grounds. On the military side it is not that we were about to cave in and had to forestall an impending disaster. Far from it. What we said publicly on the eve of the truce, that the initiative of offensive warfare was in our hands on all fronts, was the honest truth. Nevertheless, our position was highly precarious for the following reasons:

- 1) All our fronts were extremely tenuously held;
- 2) Those holding them and engaged in night-to-night operations were excessively tired, in many cases to the point of complete exhaustion;
- 3) The above two circumstances were the joint result of the numerical inadequacy of our effective fighting strength to cope with the extension of active warfare — less than one-half of the military personnel so far recruited are trained for battle, the bulk being raw recruits;

4) Our marked inferiority in planes, guns, tanks and heavy armour, made the execution of certain urgent tasks virtually impossible, and the position was that weeks were to pass before we could expect a marked improvement in our heavy equipment. A breathing-spell was therefore imperative, and it was our good fortune that our exploits in the last few weeks have made it for us a truce with honour.

The Count is already out of the practical side of truce implementation and has soared up to the heights of major policy. He is spending today and tomorrow in Cairo, conferring with the Arabs, and promised to come to Tel Aviv on Thursday for a first round of exploratory talks with us. He has set up his headquarters on Rhodes, where he is returning on Saturday, and to Rhodes in all probability we shall have to repair for further rounds. What his approach is going to be none of us knows, but I will indicate briefly the problems with which we shall probably be faced.