legation of Israel London, צירות ישראל

19th June, 1950\*

ZL/MRK/30275 ,

CONFIDENTIAL ,

To: Mr. Walter Eytan, Hakirya

From: 15# R. Kidron.

Philip Toynbee'3 Story in THE OBSERVER of June 11th ,

The attached, documents are:

A cutting of Toynbee’s story;

׳. The original .version of my letter to the

Editor of The Observer, sent in on

Friday morning, June 16;

1. A shortened version of the same letter,

.sent in on Friday night, June 16th; ,

1. \*A cutting of the letter as printed .on

Sunday, June 18;

1. A cutting of a paragraph in the Comment

column of The Observer of the same date.

Items 1, 4 and 5 have been cabled#

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I must confess that when I read Toynbee’s story י / .last Sunday morning,, I had no idea that the public out- / / cry would be so strong# Heron’s two pieces in The Times the previous week (7th and 9th June) had not gi- ven rise to any reaction, possibly due to the delibera- tely dampening effect of Rushbrooke Williams’ leader of ל=• June 9th, written after a talk with Comay the previous day# Toynbee’s story, with its accusations of Nazi me- / / thods and general overtones of atrocity propaganda, was a horse of another colour#

״ The onslaught began first thing on Monday morning with a telephone call from the Marchioness of Reading, who told me how horrf. fled her house party had been# There ■=־ were further telephone calls to Yapou and myself throughout ^ that day and for the rest of the week# Letters started

coming in on the morrow. Those received at the Lega- tion were all from Jews - some, to my fury, from people like the Henriaues who have fought us tooth and nail for generations. Later in the week Easterman of the World Jewish Congress called to ask what he should do about the thirty odd le־tters (one third from Gentiles) which they had received. A number of his correspondents had suggested, with some logic, that if the World Jewish Congress protested to various Governments about the per- secution of Jews, they should -also protest to the Govern- ment of Israel about the persecution of Arabs\* I told Easterman to do as I was doing - hold off the replies until Monday, 19th June, and then send the cutting of my letter to The Observer.

1. It was as a result of this public pressure, and also in the knowledge that Spears and George Haurani were talk- ing of organising a protest meeting, that I sent you my jj two cables. The affair was becoming very damaging and I was particularly worried about the effect it ■would have on our Jerusalem proposals which, as you know, have been very well received here. All I asked for in those cables was a public statement that -an inquiry would be made and the guil-ty, If any, punished. To be absolutely -cynical abovt / it, that would •have been quite enough - if, for internal / j reasons,, our inquiry was not politic, it could have been forgotten. The British public -are, after all, accustomed / / to colonial Incidents of this nature and it is part of the accepted formula for the Government to promise an inquiry

in order to quieten things down and then pigecrihole the whole business. Instead of this statement, however, what we’ got were two long lectures from a military spokes- man which, by their very nature,- were unpublishable, You , cannot counter an atrocity story by (a) giving a disserta- // tion on the rights and duties of sovereignty and (b) say- ing tha.t someone else started the atrocities.

1. I was thus compelled to do something to kill the cam- paign against us. On Wednesday night, 14th June, I was invited by the Poale-Z!on to a reception for Kingsley Martin ־־^ and there, although I was ־.not due to speak and had no in- tention of so doing, gave a short address to which I tacked

on the statement I had been requesting from you, I also gave a short r6sum6 of the background. Unfortunately the only^pressmen there were Jewish, and although the contents of my speech were later given over the teleprinter to the

The ha\* fall column on its front page by ftoili;\* Toyub®\* , fro\* Seirut,

\*,A Tragic Change of H^le\*^ a«1wriblng the alleged expulsion of the infiltrees into the y\*3«rt sooth of the Ppad Re\*. The m13&1$e r?ado! \*One member of the outcast raoe, s haavy 5נ3רליזי man with dull vacant lojk of Tander Lubbe, had been arrested while Erasing a cow near the stats frontier. The blue uniformed police with almost inaredi- , ble naiwsf, 80 often exhibited by pdliaowm, believed him to be a spy from the other aids, and tw of hi a fingernails '״ere pulled out before they learned batter, A yotrg schoolmaster entered the fixate Illegally in order to bo a^aln with his faiiily. // R• ”as reported to the local police and !־saediately arrested. One old mason, driven desperate by unenroloyraent, tried to gst out of the state with his jjau^tcr. jfe was arrested and the daughter shot dead while trying to escape. About a hundred of then / collected from all parts of the S^ate were concentrated in a central camp. One June nomine about 7 o’clock they were taken fraa the prison csjgp, herded into two motor? trucks! and it was now the JSnny whioh took contml of them, blindfolding them, barking at them and \*caving their rubber coshea, on the long tedious Journey throu^Ji the burning countryside one of the vletixn\* would occasionally try to R«e but was hit over the face or beck with a cosh. At a certain point on the rnute, one of them, \*hen all had long suspected of being an ajjent provocateur, was suddenly released without escort. At last, after many halts, they reached the remotest and most dangerous part of the frontier section. It wee now eight o’clock in the •voning and they had had / nothing to eat and drink all day. A compasslenate captain o rdeked two buckets of water to be brought, but as scon as his back was turned the soldiers spilled the water/ into the dust. The bandages were new taken fraa t heir ayos \*od they were told that three would b» ccunted and anyone net running hard by then would bo shot. They were / also ordered to run 8owth, since northwards the frontier area eaa narrower and sore easily traversed. A, they ran brexj gunfire opened above and between them so that // they wr9 forced to split up into groups of three or four.

"Titis story, I know, is sicken ingly, a )most waarisamely familiar, and it is only

the roles which have been changed. The eutcsst race is not the Jews «nd the State is ■

not the state of hast Germany, The state is the S^ate of I •rael and the f rentier area

is the terrible Wadl Az־aba, south of the Dead Sfta, a desert valley far feelcv sea level

where only !!sards and locusts can live, snd \*here in the gaytlso the \*and scorches

the bare f lesh. Since there ms only moonlight when the prisoners wore released,

nearly all whaum hopelessly lost by the time the sun rC3e t’!M> next morn In«. Tv® / >

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luckiest were picked up on tie second day by friendly 3\*d.ouin« and taken to the lonely/ fortress outpost of the Ar\*h legion at the foot of the mountain an tha Jordan\*tan aide of tiia desert. Others were wandering for four days, eating liaarda and drinking jj stagnant motor or their awn urine before they atuabled at last on the t iny, nearoely Visible i art. J3y the fourth day some 70 out of the 100 hid been |1a ved, but iwwy had stories of others they had been forced to leave dying in the dsoerfc, I interviewed f ן nine or ten of them separately in the fort of KaktuduLeh and their storisa coincided / 7 and givw a bitterly ojnvinaing picture of their previous ^r-atrasnt. I a&w weal\* and Bores oauaod by prison beatings, \*oorchen.1 and atolLen feet, nnd two nlxnoat nailless

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"Thera ia a deplorable wantoness about all this. Three of the deportees were actually arrested inside Jerusalem, ■where it w •uld have been simple and painless to hand them over directly &cro3s the truce lines, probably toe great majority lnl'ringw or at least intended to infringe, the frontier regulations, but nothing can excuse tin inhuman brutality of their treatment, nor the fact that old men and b°y® of nine wore sent out naterlossinto toe desert.

\*\*Do as you would be done by\* will be the tragic motto for the nex State of israe By nature the Jews are surely a profoundly gentle people and !\*nothing could bo sadder than if they begin to cultivate some of the more abominflble gentile vices.

"Hext week there will be joint Jordan Israeli frontier patrols in operation, and these may pul a stop to the incidents of this sort (though this is the ;nost serious of its kind, this is not the first). But the evil lies deeper. It is greatly to be hoped that the Israel d0vemaent will make a thorough inquiry into toe trea.truant of thee® pathetic outcasts by the polioe and the Ariay, and that ssomething will be done about those who have been guilty. It appears that many of toe soldiers were Arabic-speaking Jfcws of Iraq and Lyria, who no doubt had themselves Buffered in their countries of origin. Ko people are in a better position t> saddened and appalled by such behaviau ear than the Jews themselves.\*