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15 Av.Theophile Gautier Paris in

15th Dec.I948•

Dear Arthur,

In the interval between the end of the session and my embarcation on a

brief holiday - quite a revolutionary departure, due entirely to Sipporah1 $

initiative - I a® trying to catch up with some arrears Of correspondence, hence this epistle to you, and perhaps a few more to follow.

The subject will be JfA. 1 have before m your letters to Walter of October 24th and to me of Movesaber 15th. The former deals with the general question of our relationship with the JTA, while the second concentrates on a specific proposal with regard to a visit by a prominent American journalist to the major Arab centres in the Middle East. To dispose of the second first, I am prepared to take up the Idea with ay advisers as soon as I rwfcurn to Hakirya, so here is a promissory note.

As regards the general subject X fully agree with you that the system of cooperation had better be worked out in Israel. I have had talks wn the subject with Yehuda Heilman who is returning to Mew York and with Mahum who volunteered to take a hand in the business, in a preliminary way, with a view to placing our rel&tiansliip with the JTA on a proper footing.

The idea is that the JTA should agree fully to accept our guidance in all

matters pertaining to Israel. There is no question of their becoming a mere channel for-the transmission of official new bulletins handed down from the Foreign Ministry, but what we would expect them to do, if they agreed to cooperate, would be to accept our■ line (or .angle, or whatever other geometrical tern you might find,appropriate} with .regard to the coverage of current, events and Government policies\* $e would.teXX them what to play up and what io play down, what complexion to put Upon this'or that development, occasionally what to suppress for reasons of high State interests, what rumours to dismiss as completely untrue and therefore undeserving ׳any mention whatsoever so ־as act tqhconfuse the public mind, what statea ent to run i& full and, An the event of a mere summary being cabled, what passages to include or underscore, in the - summary,' etc.etc. . For our part■ we would undertake to arrange that a responsible person should’ always be accessible to the JTA representative for' consultation and that eveny effort will be made on our part to supply them with our information as expeditiously as possible.

The arrangement should be entered into on an experimental basis for a period of several months. At the end of it we should be able to judge. whether it had Worked satisfactorily and, if not, What are the defects to be remedied. Should we reach the conclusion that the system cannot be made to function properly we would have to consider the resumption of Palcor as a full-scale service.

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As regards personnel, we would not take upon ourselves to press from the outset for a complete overhaul of the present setup but would proceed to judge by performance, on the UMerai&ndAhg that from time to time we might draw attention to certain organic deficiencies, if there he any, which call for reshuffling or even for a removal. ! ;־

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Our approach to the problem will not be governed by a desire to turn the JTA into an official or Government-controlled news series, but rather to ensure its functioning as a responsible public news agency of the widest possible scope, by exercising a guiding influence on it did by keeping it out of that kind of mischief of which it might sometimes make itself guilty through sheer lack of knowledge or forethought or by unwittingly becoming an instrument of nefarious influences.

There is a considerable volume of technical arrangements to be gone into, such as contacts in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the network in Europe and other parts of the world, contacts between our Legations and the local .JTA offices or correspondents, etc ־etc. All this definitely calls for the despatch by the JTA of an authoritative representative: to Hakirya who would have to arrive at a complete agreement on all relevant points with the heads of our Information Service. On the basis of the agreement thus to be reached Instructions would then be issued to «ל י local offices and agencies by the Ministry and the JTA headquarters respectively.

Hahura\*s idea was to have preliminary talks with Landau, Swope, Backer, etc, in Mew fork as a result of which someone - perhaps landau himself - might proceed to Israel with a view to arriving at a definitive accord. It would be a good thing if you could be a party to these conversations, both as a steadying factor and as a source of information to Bakirya. You would have to bear in mind JCenen's connection with the subject and keep him informed.

This brings me to a complaint voiced by Landau in his conversation with you as reported on the second page of your letter of October 24th. I was amazed at the version that had reached him. Mot only had I never suggested to my JTA corresponded t that his despatches on 0.1. be shown to me prior to transmission, but I had not oven spoken to my member of the JTA. staff in Paris - save by talking to them &b press conferences along with the rest - until the very last few days when ל: had my talks with Yehuda Heilman. What happened was that very early in the session 1 drew Kenen\*s attention to the need of watching the JTA and making sure that they cabled the right kind of stuff. I did not suggest that he should insist on every despatch being shown to him, let alone to me, and 1 am sure that 01 did not formulate his request to the JTA &nk!ch a clumsy manner\* ■ \*•••«

Incidentally, a personal point arises in connection with Heilman. He had got it into his head that ho was not a persona gratissima with the Foreign Ministry. It is true that his past associations with our work while he 1was in Beirut did not endear him to some of our people, but personally X have absolutely nothing against him and wish him rather well in the new job he has undertaken.

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I believe him to be intelligent and ‘keen\* 1$ regards Hebrew and Palestinian background, he is certainly vastly' superior to ©any, mf not to most, members oil the JTA staff. Bellman complained, bitterly to me about Kenen’S unco- operative attitude. 1 promised Ms to talk to Kenen and to instruct all concerned to help him in hie work. On talking to Eeneu, however, I found that he had the ■worst possible opinion of him as a Journalist and reporter - he did not, according to Si, concentrate on the Job and as far 4S he did he showed a lamentable lack of elementary understanding of the reporting technics. It is certainly not for m to pass־ Judgment on Heilman\*a abilities as a newspaperman, 80 here is a problem for Jacob landau to pussle out.

I will be looking forward to hearing from you of further developments in this matter.

Tours ever,

Mr.Arthur Lourie,

16 East 66th Street, Mew York City.