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18, Manchester Square,
London, W.1.
27th March, 1953.

Dear Kimche,

I write under the first impact of the disclosures regarding Bunche's visits to Cairo and Tel-Aviv which you print in to-day's Jewish Observer.

This story of yours is a mixture of truth and guesswork - the latter of varying approximation to reality. I will assume that such facts as are accurate come to you from legitimate sources, and that you were not bound to secrecy. But even this assumption does not affect the fundamental aspects of the matter.

This is not the first time that your weekly - whose liveliness and general reliability I much admire - has taken it upon itself to splash news which the Israel Government considered it essential to keep secret. Nor is this my first letter to you on this subject. As I have had occasion to write to you before, I am fully aware of the deep-seated conflict between journalistic freedom and an editor's responsibility for what he prints. I know of no hard-and-fast rule for solving this problem, and am ready to concede that every case must be judged on its merits, and that even then opinions might well differ. I still hold this opinion, and am far from suggesting that your weekly should wear the cloak of dreary officialdom. But I feel bound to point out that, in my firm conviction, you have to-day decided once more in favour of licence and against responsibility.

I would ask you to consider that, by making public the fact of highly confidential and delicate soundings, which are deliberately shrouded from public knowledge by the utmost secrecy, you may have done untold harm. Nobody can foresee the precise consequences of such a disclosure. The Egyptian Government may feel compelled to issue a public denial of any intention to discuss peace with Israel. Arab public opinion may insist that the conditions which you describe as being acceptable in broad outline to the Egyptian and Israel Governments represent a betrayal of the Arab cause. The Israel Government will certainly deny - and with perfect truth - that the alleged Egyptian suggestions constitute "a satisfactory basis on which to proceed further". A single irresponsible disclosure in print may thus have killed - or at the least seriously injured - one of the few statesmanlike and hopeful
/attempts

Jon Kimche, Esq.,
The Jewish Observer,
140, Salisbury Square House,
Salisbury Square, E.C.4.

attempts to promote peace in the Middle East. At the same time, you have gratuitously told the Arabs that, according to "reports prepared by responsible Government Departments", their blockade costs Israel 50 million dollars a year, (which, to my knowledge, is a gross overstatement), thus presenting them with an additional argument against raising the blockade.

You did not contact the Embassy before publishing this story - perhaps because you expected us to raise objections to its publication - as we certainly should have done. But this is a detail of minor importance. My contention is that, in your fourfold capacity as a responsible journalist, as a leading expert on Middle Eastern policy, as a Jew, and as editor of a weekly published by the Zionist Federation, you were bound to forego the fleeting advantages of a sensational scoop in order not to damage vital common interests.

This is a private letter. As the Ambassador is away, I have had no opportunity of discussing its contents with him; but in view of the serious question of principle involved, I have thought it right to send copies to the following: Mr. Barnett Janner, Mr. Bakstansky, Mr. Sharett, Dr. Rytan, Mr. Comay, Dr. Leo Kohn, and Mr. Theodore Kollek. You may wish to send these gentlemen your side of the case as well.

I feel that the problem of the Jewish Observer must be settled one way or the other: either it remains (or, more correctly, becomes) a Zionist publication, in which case its editorial policy must be directed, first and foremost, to furthering Israel's interests, even when this entails some sacrifice of journalistic "Lebensraum"; or it must become an independent organ bound only by the general rules of journalistic decency. But even in the latter case, the editor's responsibility for the consequences of what he publishes would remain unaffected. Absence of the specific Zionist consideration would not, therefore, materially lessen the objections to this particular story.

Yours sincerely,

A. R.

M. Keren.

מדינת ישראל

~~א.י.ס. ביהמ"ש~~

אל: לכה

מזרח: א.י.

תאריך

כפי שתוכח ברי האמת

חסי

הרר יכול לשמש אישור רשמי

לכל היסטוריה שפירטת קדמי ותעודת כצאת

דוביו - דבר מסובך הוא

שם קר אסוקדא כי האמת לא רק שנסח

תקדמי אלא הסתקיו נטחו להיטל נגד

ואקספטיק.

הפרסום ד- Jewish Observer דא מיינ

זאת טעמי עבר לזונדן ומ.י.י. טען כי

יש לבנות כי טעמי נפגש עם קדמי ודבר

כנראה דאיתי נשא גם עם קרן ומיין

כך דא בטרסום ומיין כך גם נטחו

העבר לטעמי.

מ.י.י. שולח היום מדרך זו הוא מוקד

מקרה אלהים חזיה ורשמיז אר כל האמת

אשר נטחו לאנשים שונים.

א.י.

30.3.53