

Congo. Dag Hammarskjöld's
strictly personal
correspondence: Congo. Dag
Hamm...

HS L 179:141



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Dag Hammarskjöld's saul.

Congo - 1960

18 - 23 Sept. (personal)

a.) Ben-Gurion, David (Prime Minister of Israel)

- 1 letter to D.H. (via M. Conway, Perm. Represent. of Israel to the U.N.)

b.) - 1 letter from D.H.



מדינת ישראל

ISRAEL

PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

11 EAST 70TH STREET
NEW YORK 21, NEW YORK
TRAFALGAR 9-7600

20 September 1960.

Dear Mr. Hammarskjold,

The enclosed personal and confidential letter from the Prime Minister, Mr. Ben-Gurion, reached me this morning with instructions to hand it to you as soon as possible. Since you are presumably completely occupied this morning with the opening of the Assembly, I am sending it to you.

Sincerely,

Michael Comay
Permanent Representative

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold,
The Secretary-General,
The United Nations,
New York, N.Y.

ראש הממשלה
THE PRIME MINISTER

Jerusalem, September 18, 1960.

Dear Mr. Hammarskjold,

I am well aware of the heavy responsibility that rests upon you, especially in these days, and the disturbed situation in the Congo, which may complicate the relations between all the peoples of Africa and increase the tension between the two blocs. For this reason I have refrained during the past few days from dealing with the arguments you used to Mr. Comay against the Government and myself. Now, it appears, the situation in the Congo has improved somewhat - in any case, the great majority of the Security Council stands firmly behind you. We have vitally important contacts with the African countries, and we are no less interested than any other nation in the peaceful development of the Congo. Ehud Avriel, who has done useful work during the past three years as our representative in Ghana, and has won the confidence of Dr. Nkruma and other African leaders, is now returning to Leopoldville as our Ambassador to the Congo. He will certainly maintain close contact with the U.N. representative there, and will do whatever

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he can to contribute to the improvement of the situation in that unhappy country. It seems to me, therefore, that the time has come to clarify a number of misunderstandings that have arisen between you and Dr. Bunche on the one hand, and our people in the Congo on the other.

At the beginning of this month Mr. Comay cabled us that you had expressed grave disappointment at my first message to you and accused us of a lack of perspective, because of our "obsession with Nasser". As one of your admirers, and knowing as I do how deep is your knowledge of the Middle East and how penetrating is your perception in international affairs, I must express my astonishment at this criticism. I cannot accept the assumption that we have an obsession with Nasser. I am well aware of his personal charm and his ability to adapt his way of speech to the person with whom he is talking. But I live in this part of the world, and every day I hear over Radio Cairo (and in Cairo Nasser holds personal sway over all means of expression, including the Press, and undoubtedly over the radio, which is an official instrument of the Government) constant advocacy of the destruction of Israel and incitement against the Jews in

the style of Hitler. But it is not only a matter of the radio. I hear Nasser's speeches to his army, and to the masses in Cairo and Alexandria, in which he repeatedly proclaims that Israel will meet its end, as surely as did the Kingdom of the Crusaders. I also hear his broadcasts and speeches denouncing every Arab country that does not accept his domination. I am aware of his close ties with the Soviet Union (in spite of the persecution of the Communists in his own country), of the arms that the Soviet Union sends to Egypt in a ceaseless flow, the hundreds of instructors who are training the Egyptian army, and the thousands of officers who are being trained in the Communist bloc countries. I am aware of the training methods used in the Egyptian army, which are aimed at the destruction of Israel. Perhaps you have seen the greeting that Nasser sent to the conference of the Arab students in the United States - even there he did not forget to mention the great ideal of the destruction of Israel. Just a day or two ago, Fawzi declared in Oslo that Egypt will never make peace with Israel, for she does not recognize the existence of such a state. After all, we are just as much entitled as any other nation in the world to protect our peace and survival. I remember that in the thirties there were many who paid no

heed to what Hitler said in "Mein Kampf" - and paid a heavy price for their simplicity - though a lighter one than we did.

I do not know who planned the murder of Majali - but I heard of the satisfaction that was expressed in certain quarters, and I still hear Cairo radio's promises that Hussein will meet the same end as Abdulla. There is no need for Nasser to assassinate Hussein with his own hands, or to personally despatch the assassin. His open and public propaganda in favour of such a murder is quite sufficient. I do not know whether the United Nations organs can prevent this or not - certainly not after Nasser obtains a seat on the Security Council.

But when a small nation of two million hears the dictator of a country with a population of 24 million (who is aided by a great world power like the Soviet Union) proclaiming incessantly to his people that Israel must be destroyed, you cannot describe our anxiety as an obsession. Nor can you expect us to applaud the entry of this dictator's forces into the Congo.

I do not expect you to agree implicitly with our view of Nasser, but I am entitled to assume that you will understand our situation and our standpoint, and not regard our anxiety as to the position in the Middle East as a whole, and Nasser's attitude to us in particular, as an "obsession".

I agree entirely with your view that all activities in the Congo under the present conditions should be conducted solely through the United Nations. The strengthening of the United Nations in the Congo is, in my opinion, a vital necessity for the world at this time, and, as I wrote in my last message, I hope that your efforts will succeed. But it was with deep regret that I heard that you are coupling us with the Soviet Union and Ghana as countries not accepting integration with the W.H.O., and that you have been told that Israel has offered Congo direct military assistance.

I admit that I am not happy at the fact that you sent Egyptian forces to the Congo, but for some time I have had to reconcile myself to the differences of opinion between us in the appreciation of Nasser. Only history will

tell which of us is right, and perhaps you yourself will realize one day that Nasser is not the most loyal member of the United Nations, or the most faithful adherent of the Charter and lover of world peace.

We have never offered military aid to the Congo, and as for medical aid, the following are the facts:

On 17 July 1960, the UN representative in Congo, Mr. Linner, said that "medical aid is the first priority". Immediately our Ambassador in Congo cabled us to send a medical team. Of course we did so, and I am glad to note that there was a most praiseworthy response from our best doctors. On our instructions, our Ambassador notified Dr. Bunche accordingly on 19 July, and the next day received a letter of thanks for our speedy response.

On 24 July, a day before the arrival of our team, our Ambassador and his assistant met Dr. Kaul, Deputy Director of W.H.O., Dr. Cambournac and his deputy, Dr. Evans, and gave them particulars of the doctors in our team, so as to enable them to plan its work.

On the same day they also talked to Mr. Linner, who described the chaos and the absence of suitable machinery for housing the doctors on their arrival. Our Ambassador said that he himself would provide food, lodging and transport, at least in the first few days, and Mr. Linner expressed his thanks for our assistance.

The team arrived at Brazzaville on 25 July, and the W.H.O. representative on the spot made the necessary arrangements for transporting it to Leopoldville. On 26 July, a meeting between the leaders of our medical team and the Minister of Health together with Dr. Kaul, Dr. Evans and our Ambassador, was arranged by the W.H.O. Dr. Kaul and the Minister of Health agreed that Matadi and Luluabourg were the places in most urgent need of medical aid, and that our team should be divided between the two.

Our Ambassador immediately agreed. A few hours later Dr. Kaul approached our Ambassador, in an obvious state of embarrassment, and said that Dr. Bunche and General Van Horn had vetoed the despatch of our team to these two towns, because Tunisian and Moroccan troops were stationed there. It was not only our Ambassador who was astonished to hear this;

I must confess that I have not yet got over my own astonishment. Does the invitation of Tunisian and Moroccan forces signify that the Congo has become part of the Arab League, and that Arab armies are in control in that country as in their own? But our people complied with heavy hearts with the decision of the "United Nations representatives" (though I find it difficult to agree that in this matter Dr. Bunche and General Von Horn acted as representatives of the United Nations), and asked Dr. Kaul to explain to the Minister of Health that it was not the Israelis who had withdrawn from the arrangement to send doctors to the two above-mentioned towns.

On 27 July, there was a further meeting with the Minister and the W.H.O. representatives, at which it was decided that the team would work in the Central Hospital in Leopoldville. Both Government and W.H.O. representatives expressed their appreciation of its work.

On August 1, 1960, the W.H.O. representative asked for the team to be transferred to Stanleyville. Dr. McKenzie Pollock, the new W.H.O. representative, told

our people that the Minister of Health and the U.N. representatives had agreed to send the Israeli team to a place occupied by Ethiopian troops. The two leaders of our team immediately set out for Stanleyville, contacted Dr. Dufour and Major Gustafson, the United Nations representatives on the spot, and discussed the details of the work with them. On 5 August, they returned to Leopoldville and reported to a meeting, at which Dr. Kaul, Dr. McKenzie Pollock, Dr. Solomon of Egypt (who had also visited Stanleyville) and our Ambassador were present. Our team went out to Stanleyville and started work in the places determined by the U.N. representatives on the spot.

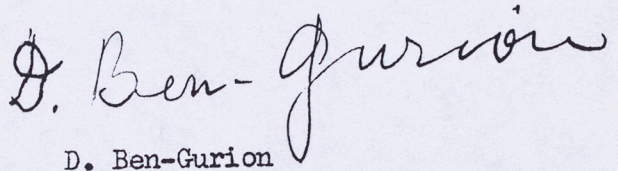
I find it difficult to grasp what "crime" we are supposed to have committed in the Congo. I am glad of the fact that "crimes" of this nature are quite numerous in a number of Asian and African countries. It may be that they are not to the liking of the Egyptian dictator, but I am sure that you are as well aware as I am that Nasser's dictatorship does not apply to us, or to the United Nations either.

I am sorry that I have had to inflict on you such a long letter, but I am confident that you are interested in knowing the facts as they are, and I must express my astonishment at my friend Dr. Bunche's omission in his report to mention Israel's medical aid in the Congo.

Finally, I should like once again to express my earnest hope that the policy you have adopted on the major issue of the Congo will be successful. I know that in the grave conflict between the Soviet Union and the West in regard to this question we cannot, to our regret, exert any influence, but I am a great believer in the new world that is arising before our eyes as the peoples of Asia and Africa achieve their liberation, and the State of Israel will do anything that is within its modest power to help in the advancement of these peoples, as she has done up till now. I am confident that ultimately - though perhaps not without difficult birthpangs, which may yet last some time -

the unity of the human race will be strengthened, and we shall see a true United Nations, without the word "united" having to be placed in quotation marks. Whatever you do in the service of this exalted aim will receive the wholehearted support of Israel.

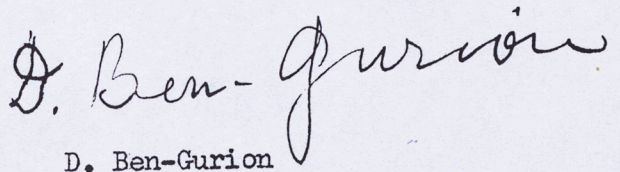
Yours very sincerely,


D. Ben-Gurion

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold,
Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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Yours very sincerely,

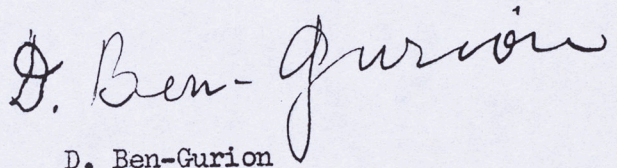
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D. Ben-Gurion

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold,
Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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Yours very sincerely,

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D. Ben-Gurion

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold,
Secretary-General of the United Nations.

23 September 1960

Dear Mr. Ben-Gurion,

Your letter of 18 September has been transmitted to me by Mr. Comay.

I thank you for setting forth so fully your views on the opinions I expressed in the course of my talk with Mr. Comay some time ago. They have been carefully noted. May I also express my appreciation of your good wishes on our Congo effort.

Sincerely yours,

Dag Hammarskjold
Secretary-General

His Excellency
Mr. D. Ben-Gurion
The Prime Minister
Israel