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American Jews Outraged By Iraqi Executions; Demand Action By UN, Washington

NEW YORK, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- American Jews today reacted with outrage to the execution Monday of nine Iraqi Jews, and five non-Jews, by the Baghdad Government on charges of spying for Israel. The Jewish Nazi Victims Organization scheduled a mass rally and memorial service, expected to be attended by over 1,000, tomorrow in front of the Iraqi Mission to the United Nations.

Arthur J. Golberg, American Jewish Committee president, urged the United States Government, the UN and all member states, together with non-governmental agencies, to condemn the executions so that "hopefully further executions may be avoided." Expressing "horror and grief," the American Jewish Congress urged the State Department to use "every available diplomatic means" to prevent the executions of 65 persons still to be tried for allegedly spying for Israel. AJCongress president Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld in a telegram to Secretary of State William P. Rogers said that the executions were "all the more monstrous because Iraq's 3,000 to 4,000 Jews have been held in house arrest since June, 1967, have been subjected to close surveillance and have been absolutely limited in movement and communication. The fact that it was clearly impossible for Jews in Iraq to have engaged in the alleged subversive plot has in no way deterred the savagery and barbarism of the blood-thirsty court." The AJCongress added that "everyone with concern for justice--Jew and non-Jews-- should communicate immediately with President Nixon and Secretary Rogers imploring that every step be taken to prevent the murder of those still to be tried."

Dr. Emanuel Neumann, chairman of the Jewish Agency-American Section, urged in a telegram to President Nixon that Washington intervene through diplomatic channels to forestall further "political assassinations." He said, "If Iraq wants to be 'Judenrein,' it should permit its Jews to leave peacefully for Israel and other lands. Only thus can Iraq preserve whatever it may still possess of humanity and decency."

State Department Expresses 'Concern' But Cites Lack Of Diplomatic Ties

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- The executions are a matter of "genuine concern" to the United States Government, State Department sources said today. They added that the U.S. did not have the facts of the case at first hand because America has no functioning embassy in Iraq. Diplomatic relations were severed by the Iraqis in June, 1967, as a result of the Six-Day War. Officials said the prevailing Iraqi attitude toward the U.S. was such that it might do other persons facing execution more harm than good for Washington to attempt overt diplomatic pressures in their behalf.

U Thant Voices 'Regret' And Foresees Damage To Mideast Peace Efforts

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Secretary-General U Thant expressed "regret and concern" today at the announcement of the sentencing and hanging in Iraq. He expressed fears that "the repercussions from this unhappy development will also be likely to impede efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict situation in the Middle East. A statement issued by a UN spokesman noted that "in the view of the Secretary-General, mass trials and executions are always to be deplored and are particularly abhorrent and dangerous when they are carried out in such a way as to inflame the emotions of the populace." The statement pointed out that as soon as Mr. Thant had learned Jan. 13 of the trials, he "asked the permanent representative of Iraq to convey to his Government the Secretary-General's deep concern about them, and particularly about the impact they would have on public opinion both inside and outside of Iraq." The statement said that "in the exercise of his good offices on humanitarian grounds the Secretary-General did not question the right of the Government of Iraq to put on trial any of its own citizens, as were apparently all of those convicted, nor could he attempt to appraise the validity of the charges." Representatives of Israel and Iraq were scheduled to meet with Mr. Thant today, and it was expected that Israel would file a protest note with him.

Eshkol Outraged, Denounces Hangings, And Denies Iraqi Jews Were Israeli Spies

JERUSALEM, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, shaking with anger, appeared before a grim Parliament today to denounce the pre-dawn hanging of nine Jews as "genocide" that will be stopped by Israel if it is not halted from outside. Mr. Eshkol, whose face reflected the rage felt by Israelis when they learned of the hangings from their newspapers and radios early today, quoted scripture in what some interpreted as a threat of reprisal against Iraq. "Oh, daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that repayeth thee as thou has served us. The Lord shall avenge their blood," Mr. Eshkol said. He declared further, "Between the design of genocide and its perpetration, there stands the State of Israel alone--Israel and its strength." The scriptural reference was appropriate since Iraq is located on the site of Babylon, an enemy of Israel in ancient times. (Reports from Baghdad said that Iraq has placed its armed forces on the alert in anticipation of an Israeli reprisal.)

Mr. Eshkol said the Jews who were executed were not spies for Israel. "Their only crime was that they were Jews." He described the hangings as part of a scheme by the Iraqi Government to direct attention from its internal troubles. "It was a criminal plot," he said, "and demands for the 'liberation of Palestine' are part and parcel of the same design," he said. "The land of Iraq has become one great prison for its Jewish remnant, a gallows for its Jewish citizens." He said that appeals for mercy to the Iraqi leaders from all over the world "failed to muster the necessary determination in this matter and in the matter of Jews in Arab lands in general. "From this rostrum I demand that the entire world should

act....in order to avert further acts of murder, to save the families and to protect the Jewish remnant." He said the hangings were an example of what the Arab governments would do to their native Jews if left to their own devices.

Israeli newspapers echoed demands for revenge and chided world opinion for not reacting when it was learned that Iraqi Jews had been sentenced to death. Yediot Achronot wrote, "The enlightened world is as low as the Iraqis are. It went out of its mind when a few planes in Beirut were hit but not it is nowhere to be seen or heard."

Israelis were infuriated over the public hangings of those convicted in secret by a military tribunal. A spokesman for Iraqi Jews in Israel, Shlomo Bechori, a former lawyer, said that his experience with Iraqi courts, particularly military tribunals, convinced him that the charges brought against the accused were "false from A to Z" and a prelude to more executions, probably of political opponents to the regime of President Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr. News of the hangings was broadcast by Baghdad radio today against a background of cheering and clapping by throngs who poured into Baghdad's Liberation Square to view 11 bodies swinging from scaffolds. Three other executions were carried out in the Persian Gulf oil port of Basra, reputed center of the alleged spy plot. The Jewish victims were identified as Izra Naji Zilkha, a Baghdad merchant and alleged leader of the spy ring, Albert Habib Tomac, Fuad Gabbu, Jamal Hakim, Daoud Baruch, Daoud Ghali, Albert Aleh and Sabah Ayoub. The name of the ninth was not reported.

Although the spy trials had been widely publicized, it was generally believed that the prosecutor had demanded death sentences for only four Jews. The sentences were passed on nine Jews on Jan. 12 and 15 but were announced by Baghdad Radio only yesterday. Baghdad Radio said that further trials on similar charges would be held. Unconfirmed reports said the number of accused awaiting trial was more than 60. The 14 executed today were said by Baghdad to have been part of a group of 19 sentenced, two of whom were still at large. A later report from Baghdad put the figure at 21 with three still at large. The trials were conducted by a three-man military tribunal. The accused were alleged to have plotted to overthrow Iraq's Baathist regime with the intention of setting up a Government that would make peace with Israel. They were charged with receiving training in sabotage in the Iranian city of Abadan. Ex-Premier Abdel Rahman Bazzaz and former Defense Minister Abdel Aziz Okeili allegedly took part in the plot. It was not clear whether they were among the five Moslems executed today or if they were under sentence of death. Last Dec. 5, President al-Bakr accused Israel, the U.S. and "fifth columnists" of fomenting a plot against Iraq. He spoke during massive demonstrations against an Israeli air strike on Iraqi troop concentrations in Jordan. Shortly afterwards there were reports of sweeping arrests in Iraq with scores of persons being jailed and their property confiscated.

Nixon Calls For New American Initiative, Leadership To 'Cool Off' Mideast

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27 (JTA)-- President Richard M. Nixon, at his first press conference, placed considerable emphasis on the question of Arab-Israeli peace, terming the Middle East area a "powder keg" that "needs to be defused." Mr. Nixon first injected the Mideast issue in response to a question pertaining to his position on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and missile talks with the Soviet Union. He said "it would be a mistake, for example, for us to fail to recognize that simply reducing arms through mutual agreement -- failing to recognize that reduction will not, in itself, assure peace. The war which occurred in the Mideast in 1967 was a clear indication of that."

He added that he wanted to see to it that "we have strategic arms talks in a way and at a time that will promote, if possible, progress on outstanding political problems in which the United States and the Soviet Union, acting together, can serve the cause of peace."

The President was then asked if he had any plan outside the United Nations for achieving Middle East peace. Mr. Nixon replied that "the suggestion had been made that we have Four-Power talks. The suggestion has also been made that we use the United Nations as the primary forum for such talks. And it has also been suggested that the United States and the Soviet Union bilaterally should have talks on the Middle East. In addition to that, of course, the problem finally should be settled by the parties in the area."

He continued: "We are going to devote the whole day on Saturday to the Mideast problem, just as we devoted the whole day this last Saturday on the problem of Vietnam. We will consider on the occasion of the meeting the entire range of options that we have. I shall simply say at this time that I believe we need new initiatives and new leadership on the part of the United States in order to cool off the situation in the Mideast. I consider it a powder keg, very explosive. It needs to be defused. I am open to any suggestions that may cool it off and reduce the possibility of another explosion, because the next explosion in the Mideast, I think, could involve very well a confrontation between the nuclear powers, which we want to avoid."

In Cairo, the newspaper Al Ahran, asserted today that the Egyptian Government has received word from President Nixon that an Arab-Israeli solution must be found by the parties directly involved in the conflict. The newspaper, controlled by the Egyptian Government, reported that a message from President Nixon held that a "permanent Mideast peace cannot be achieved except with the approval of concerned parties and no solution can be imposed from outside."

(Al Ahran said the message was conveyed through Donald Bergus, ranking U.S. diplomat in Cairo. The paper said that the reported Nixon position amounted to depreciation of the French proposal for Big Four talks on the Middle East.)

West German Legal Authorities Explain Government Position On Rightist Newspaper

BONN, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Legal authorities here said today that the West German Government had few avenues of recourse open to it in bringing action against the right-wing Deutsche-Soldaten-Zeitung und National Zeitung for its attacks on the State of Israel because the constitutional provisions against incitement to racial hatred permit only individuals who believe themselves aggrieved to initiate action. It was pointed out that a number of individuals have filed suit against the paper and its editor, Dr. Gerhard Frey. Spokesmen for the Ministry of Interior, answering questions in the Bundestag about the affair, have stressed the legal difficulties of Government action but insisted that the Government was investigating what courses of action were open to it.

Meanwhile, suits have been brought against the paper and Dr. Frey by individuals who considered themselves injured by the paper and it was believed that the state prosecutor will have to take action. The Federal Government does not have the right to ban a newspaper but it can ask the Constitutional Court to take action on the grounds that the paper and its editor were guilty of racial incitement.

The Government has not yet decided whether to ask the Constitutional Court to outlaw the National Democratic Party, a neo-Nazi organization. That group has now decided to continue its activities in West Berlin despite the decision of the Berlin NDP branch to dissolve after the West Berlin city authorities had asked the Allied occupation authorities to order the party's dissolution in Berlin. The party will hold a special congress in Bayreuth on Feb. 22-23 and will hold its sessions in the Bayreuth City Hall. The city government had sought unsuccessfully to deny use of the facilities to the NPD.

In Goettingen, today, large swastikas were smeared on the wall of a newspaper building by unidentified vandals.

Belgian Bishops' Unit Adopts Program To Strengthen Jewish Relations, Fight Bigotry

BRUSSELS, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- A sub-commission on Christian-Jewish relations, established by the Conference of Belgian Bishops, informed the Belgian Jewish community today that it had adopted a sweeping action program to strengthen Catholic-Jewish relations and combat anti-Semitism. The chairman of the sub-commission is Prime Minister Gaston Eyskens. He presided last week at sessions of the sub-commission at which its program was ratified. Members of the sub-commission met today at the headquarters of the Central Jewish Consistory of Belgium, the central representative organization of Belgian Jewry, with Jewish community leaders to inform them of the program the Catholic group had adopted.

The spokesman for the delegation announced that the sub-commission would seek to coordinate initiatives in Belgium on Christian-Jewish relations; would serve as representative body in a position to intervene against all manifestations of anti-Semitism from the pulpit, in teaching, in the press, radio and television, and would seek to promote relations between Christians and Jews by giving Christians objective information about Judaism and teaching respect of that religion. The delegation also voiced the assurances that it would refrain from any form of proselytism of Jews. Spokesmen for the Consistory expressed gratification over the Catholic action and expressed readiness to work with the sub-commission provided that the collaboration would not be placed within the framework of Christian ecumenism.

Rabin Says El Al 'Will Continue To Fly' Despite Any ICAO Anti-Israel Action

MONTREAL, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Gen. Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, said here yesterday that El Al "will continue to fly" despite any anti-Israel action that might be taken by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

His comment before an Israel Bond Organization dinner at which he was honored here came as the ICAO prepared to resume today its sessions called by Lebanon as a result of the Dec. 28 Israel reprisal raid against the Beirut Airport. Lebanon has demanded sanctions by the UN agency against Israel.

Gen. Rabin told the dinner, at which over \$1.5 million in Bonds was subscribed, that so long as the Arab states do not accept direct negotiations, Israel will not move "one inch" from the occupied territories. He called French President de Gaulle's recent embargo on military equipment and spare parts for Israel "an open invitation to aggression." Samuel Bronfman presided at the dinner.

Socialists Urge ECC Council Of Ministers To Give Israel Equal Treatment

BRUSSELS, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Equal treatment for Israel in any arrangements that the European Economic Community may make with another Mediterranean country was urged on the ECC Council of Ministers today by Socialists attending European Parliament sessions in Strassbourg, France. The Council of Ministers is meeting here and was scheduled to discuss Israel's application for association and preferential tariff arrangements today. The Socialists adopted a resolution warning of dangers to peace posed by the political and military situation in the Middle East. It called on the Council of Ministers not to conclude agreements with Tunisia and Morocco if an agreement was not concluded at the same time with Israel.

Israeli Representatives Seeking Financial Aid, Exchanges In South America

CARACAS, Venezuela, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Representatives of Israeli universities were here recently--and are touring elsewhere in Latin America--to seek financial support for their institutions. Professors Nelson Pilosof of Hebrew University and Eliezer Unger of Bar-Ilan also sought here more student and teachers exchanges with local universities. Committees of friends of both schools were organized to carry on the work. Several months ago Dr. George Wise of Tel Aviv University toured this area for similar reasons.

Lindsay Orders Police Report On Assault On Former N.Y. Board Of Rabbis President

NEW YORK, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Mayor John V. Lindsay ordered an immediate police report today on the Friday night mugging of a 64-year-old Brooklyn rabbi--a former president of the New York Board of Rabbis--who was robbed and beaten by two Negro youths as he arrived for services at Shaare Zedek synagogue in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. Rabbi Max Schenk, who has been rabbi of Shaare Zedek since 1949, suffered a broken arm and other injuries. In a statement from his bed at Swedish Hospital he said of his attack, "I don't believe there was anything racial about the assault. I think they were two young punks who were looking for someone to rob and just picked on me when they saw me enter the temple alone." Mayor Lindsay was reportedly very much disturbed when he got word of the mugging. He phoned Rabbi Schenk at the hospital. Rabbi Schenk said, "The Mayor told me how deeply distressed he was and then assured me that all efforts would be made to apprehend my assailants." Rabbi Schenk said he thanked the Mayor for the call and told him he expected to leave the hospital in a few days.

The assault on the Brooklyn rabbi came as tension continued to grow between the city's Negro and Jewish communities. The situation which has alarmed leaders of all faiths, black and white, stemmed from last year's crippling teachers strike which pitted Negro supporters of school decentralization against the predominantly Jewish United Federation of Teachers. It was escalated recently by anti-Semitic statements made by Negro militants over the radio and at Board of Education hearings on decentralization. Another factor of mounting concern to Jews has been a rash of suspicious fires in synagogues and Hebrew schools in four of the city's five boroughs. A number of juvenile suspects have been arrested, all of them white.

Police announced yesterday the arrest of a 17-year-old girl and a 14-year-old boy, both white, in connection with a fire that destroyed the Congregation Tarei Zonov synagogue in The Bronx. The suspects were picked up by members of a special squad set up by Mayor Lindsay to investigate the fires in houses of worship. The girl was identified as Mary Reed of The Bronx. The boy's name was not given because of his age. Police said the pair entered the synagogue with the intention of robbing the poor box. They were said to have used matches for light and some were said to have dropped and started the fire. The girl has been charged with arson, burglary, larceny, malicious mischief and desecration of a house of worship.

Report Sirhan's Lawyers Pondering How Far To Push 'Zionist' Angle In Trial

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Defense lawyers for Sirhan B. Sirhan, accused assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, are pondering how far to push the 'Zionist' angle in the trial of the 24-year-old immigrant from Jordan, Washington Post correspondent George Lardner, Jr., reported from Los Angeles today. "So far the lawyers have said they intend to make Sirhan's experiences as a youth in Palestine a key issue in their effort to save Sirhan from the gas chamber," Mr. Lardner wrote.

"They plan to argue that the young Jordanian immigrant was so scarred and so obsessed by the Arab-Israeli conflict that he was incapable of premeditated, first degree murder when he shot down Sen. Kennedy," Mr. Lardner said. He noted further that "not a few Arabs and Arab-Americans have expressed the view that the trial would be an ideal forum for 'the Arab position' in the Middle East." One of these is Mrs. Mary Sirhan, the defendant's mother.

Mr. Lardner said that Sirhan's defense lawyers, among them Emile Zola Berman, who is Jewish, "insist they will be able to stop short of trying the rights and wrongs of the Arab-Israeli conflict." Chief defense counsel Grant B. Cooper has said, "It might never become an issue" in the case. "Mary Sirhan caught him during a recess. 'Don't say it won't become an issue,' she is said to have told him. 'It has to be,'" Mr. Lardner reported.

Will Mark 25th Annual Jewish Music Festival, Sponsored By National JWB

NEW YORK, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- The 25th annual Jewish Music Festival, to be held from Feb. 1 through April 2, 1969, will celebrate a quarter century of Jewish music in America, the National Jewish Welfare Board, sponsor of the event, announced today.

Rabbi Avraham Soltes, chairman of the JWB's National Jewish Music Council, said the annual celebration of the event stimulated wide interest in Jewish music and kept alive "appreciation for works which are part of the Jewish heritage." He said that during the festival Jewish music programs will be presented by hundreds of American Jewish community centers, synagogues, Hillel foundations, Hadassah chapters, lodges of B'nai B'rith and chapters of the National Council of Jewish Women.

Minnesota Jewish Community Relations Council Protests Embargo To Ambassador

MINNEAPOLIS, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- The Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota disclosed today it had telegraphed a protest to the French Ambassador in Washington against the embargo imposed by President de Gaulle on military equipment and materiel for Israel. The Council's message to Ambassador Charles Lucet said the Minnesota Jewish community was "shocked and dismayed" by President de Gaulle's action.

It said it was "unbelievable" that France "should lend herself to being a party toward helping destroy a little nation which has come into being only through blood, sweat and tears, and now, with the help of France, may be totally destroyed."

Simon Buchbinder, Internationally Known Artist, Dies In The Hague At 69

AMSTERDAM, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Simon Buchbinder, an internationally prominent artist, died in The Hague today at 69. Mr. Buchbinder was born in Cracow, Poland, and lived in Antwerp, Belgium, during World War I. He won the Antwerp Municipality's Grand Prix at the age of 15. He later moved to Holland. His paintings were exhibited in New York, Paris, Brussels and Tel Aviv. His last painting was inspired by Israel's Six-Day War.