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All Israel Shares In The Anguish Of The Families Whose Children Were Killed In Ambush

TEL AVIV, May 24 (JTA)--All Israelis shared the anguish today of the families of eight school children, aged 6 to 14, killed by Arab terrorists in the ambush of a school bus near the Lebanese border Friday morning. Four adults were also killed in the bazooka and small arms attack. Twenty-one other passengers, mostly children, are in hospitals in Haifa and Safad today, eight of them in serious condition. The young victims, five from one family, were buried at Safad late Friday amid scenes of uncontrollable weeping and despair. Thousands of persons from all over Israel attended. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan was at the graveside holding one of the bereaved fathers. Chief of Staff Gen. Haim Bar Lev was there and Deputy Premier Yigal Allon, who quoted the words of Israel's poet laureate, the late Chaim Nahman Bialik, "Even Satan has not yet invented the revenge for the blood of a child." Scores of doctors and nurses were in the crowd administering tranquilizers to the mourning relatives of the slain.

All of the youngsters and two of the adult victims were from Avivim, a settlement in Upper Galilee near the Lebanese border. They were travelling to their district school at nearby Dovev in a bus that picked up children from Avivim and neighboring settlements each morning. The victims were: Yehuda Ohayon, nine, a third grader; Alisa Peretz, 14, an eighth grader; Haviva Biton, seven, first grade; Shimon Biton, her brother aged nine, third grade; Shulamit Biton, seven; Mimon Biton, seven; Hanna Biton, eight; Yaffa Batito, six; Shimon Ezran, 35, a member of the Avivim settlement committee; Mahloul Biton, 25; Rammi Yarkoni, 35, the bus driver; and Esther Avichzer, 20, a teacher. There was no indication of whether Mahloul Biton was related to the Biton children.

According to eye-witnesses the bus was travelling slowly in line with other civilian traffic along a road that skirts the Lebanese border some 500 yards away. The terrorists, lying in ambush, allowed the other cars to pass and then fired four bazooka shells and bursts of small arms fire at the bus. The driver was killed and the bus careened off the road and turned over. Other motorists halted and rushed to the aid of the bus passengers. Helicopters arrived soon to fly the seriously injured to hospitals. Others were rushed to hospitals in private cars. The bus floor was covered with blood and littered with torn school books and lunch kits. Police said the terrorists knew the bus they attacked was filled with school children. It was painted bright yellow, its identity was unmistakable and it passed over the same road every morning at the same hour. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a terrorist group headquartered in Beirut, claimed credit for the attack in a message to President Gamal Abdel Nasser apparently soliciting a commendation from the Egyptian leader. Posters appeared in Beirut Friday announcing that the Popular Front had ambushed the school bus. This is the same group that claimed, but later denied, responsibility for the Feb. 21 explosion of a Swiss airliner that killed all 47 aboard.

Mrs. Meir And Allon Warn Lebanon Must Bear Full Responsibility Of Killings

The bus tragedy was compounded by others. An Israeli police officer combing the area after the ambush had part of his leg blown off when he stepped on a mine. Shortly afterwards five parents of Avivim children were injured, three of them seriously, when their car overturned as they were speeding to the Safad hospital. Premier Golda Meir read Friday night a special Cabinet statement on the ambush attack that Israel placed full responsibility for the outrage on Lebanese government and would not stop demanding that Lebanon exercise its authority to halt "acts of aggression from Lebanese territory." Deputy Premier Yigal Allon, speaking at the funeral in Safad for the dead children, said the "arm of the Israeli army is long enough and Lebanon will not escape with impunity." According to newsmen at the scene, his words were interrupted with shouts of "revenge." He warned in an interview earlier that Lebanese authorities should not succumb to illusions they would always be immune to Israeli punitive measures because the May 12 action was directed exclusively against guerrillas. He said that "it depends on the Beirut government on whether the May 12 raid was the last one or first in a new series. Our forces can inflict heavy punishment on the Lebanese which would eventually force those responsible for the conduct of their policies to weigh once again whether the damage resulting from an Israeli defense reaction is not a great deal heavier than that which might ensue from confrontation with the terrorists."

After the ambush of the bus Mr. Allon said the Lebanese government can "no longer consider itself immune to an Israeli reaction as soon as we decide how, when and where to act." He denounced last week's Security Council resolution of censure against Israel asserting that the murder of the children on the bus might have resulted from it. He said it was no longer a Security Council but an "insecurity council." Mrs. Meir said that the Security Council was convened at the initiative of Lebanon and that instead of condemning the murderers and the authorities who gave them cover, it condemned Israel for "having exercised our right of self-defense." On Thursday, hours before the attack, Minister-Without-Portfolio Israel Galili warned that the government "will not be able to remain indifferent to the dangerous infiltration of Syrians into Southern Lebanon and the anti-Israeli activity of the Damascus and Beirut authorities." Speaking at the dedication of a new frontier settlement, he called the Security Council resolution "a distortion of elementary justice."

Nixon Urged To Call On UN To Condemn Ambush; UN Asked To Investigate Arab Terror

NEW YORK, May 24 (JTA)--Shock, horror and revulsion was expressed this weekend by Jewish and non-Jewish leaders throughout the nation at the wanton attack by Arab guerrillas on an Israeli school bus. A United Nations spokesman issued a statement yesterday on behalf of Secretary General U Thant in which Mr. Thant declared that this "deplorable attack" by "Arab irregulars, presumably Palestinian refugees" has provided an "especially ominous warning as to what the future may hold if decisive steps toward ending the Middle East conflict are not soon taken." Yosef Tekoah, Israel's ambassador to the UN, sent a letter to Security Council President Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet of France declaring that the tragedy came only two days after the Council, by a vote of 11-0 and four abstentions, adopted a "grossly one-sided resolution" that condemned Israel for its incursion into Lebanon but "ignored" Lebanese terrorism. Mr. Tekoah labelled the bus attack a "grave act of aggression" by a "terror squad."

The B'nai B'rith, Anti-Defamation League and National Council of Jewish Women issued statements yesterday denouncing the ambush. Rabbi Jay Kaufman, executive vice-president of B'nai B'rith, said "deliberate slaughter of innocents and the twisted mentalities of those who flaunt such actions must surely overwhelm conscience of civilized people everywhere." Rabbi Kaufman said that the Council resolution "must surely be interpreted by the terrorists as a sanction of their wretched activities. It is a question as to who is to be blamed more, the terrorists or the diplomats who speak for them." Mrs. Leonora Weiner president of the National Council of Jewish Women said the deliberate choice of the school children by terrorists is "a measure of the kind of barbarism being fostered in the Middle East by supposedly civilized governments." Declaring that there was a direct connection between the increasing boldness of Arab terrorists and Soviet support to Arab nations, she said American and world opinion must be mobilized "to dissuade the Soviet Union from pursuing its policy of divisiveness in the Middle East." She also urged President Nixon to speak out against the brutal bus attack and to lead the U.S. in calling for UN condemnation of Lebanon.

The ADL said such Arab attacks "make mandatory major UN investigation into the extent of support given such actions by Arab member nations." ADL asked the U.S. to introduce a UN resolution for immediate inquiry. The ADL called the attack on the bus a cold blooded act of murder, "in effect precipitated and encouraged by the one-sided attitude of the Security Council" which "always closes its eyes to Arab terrorist aggression that claims the lives of innocent victims." Arthur J. Goldberg, Democratic Party nominee for New York State governor and former United Nations ambassador, said only the implementation of the UN's November 1967 resolution can lead to a halt of terrorism. He said the Security Council had repeatedly censured Israel but when the United States tried to get the Council to condemn Arab attacks, the Soviet Union vetoed the resolution. Mr. Goldberg charged that the Council was using a double standard to judge events in Israel.

Ambush Termed 'Unspeakable Barbarity,' 'Barbaric Savagery,' 'Ghastly Attack'

Mrs. Max Schenk, national president of Hadassah, sent telegrams to President Nixon, UN Secretary General U Thant and United States UN Ambassador Charles W. Yost deploring the "tragic deaths" and "critical injuries." Mrs. Schenk said Hadassah was "outraged at the unspeakable barbarity of those who slaughter little children and teachers in the name of liberation." She said "civilized nations must share our anguish and indignation" over the incident and "devise measures to prevent further shedding of innocent blood." She asserted that "responsibility for this heinous deed must be placed at the door of Arab governments who aid and abet reckless Arab terrorists." The Hadassah leader deplored the "apparent condoning" of Arab terrorism by the UN in resolutions such as that passed last week by the Security Council, which she said "can only serve to encourage such unconscionable deeds."

The New York Times said editorially yesterday that the "heroes of the Palestine liberation" had committed an act of "barbaric savagery" in "cowardly attack" on the school bus. The Times said this "sickening action" by a left wing fringe of the guerrilla movement "can only revolt civilized men everywhere and further discredit the entire Palestinian cause." The editorial asked how Palestinians and Arab supporters could expect to win sympathy for legitimate rights when "they fail to control--or even condemn--the beasts among them who would murder children under the banner of Palestinian liberation." The editorial added that "Israel's instant retaliation against Lebanese villages" also could not be condemned.

The Synagogue Council of America expressed "grief and horror" over the "deliberate and cold-blooded murder." Rabbi Solomon J. Sharfman, SCA president, said in the statement that "if there has ever been any doubt, it surely must be clear now to everyone that the terms 'liberation movement' and 'freedom fighters' have been used as euphemisms for the acts of cowardly criminals who are engaged in a deliberate program of murder of innocent civilians--children, women and men." He declared that the "shocking event" underlined the need of well-meaning "but sadly misguided" religious organizations in the United States and abroad to "re-evaluate their uncritical glorification of the Palestinian terrorists." He said "we call on them to search their consciences whether they have not been giving encouragement, however indirectly, to this gruesome shedding of innocent blood!"

The ambushing of the school bus should be condemned by the entire civilized world, declared Rabbi Harold I. Saperstein, New York Board of Rabbis president. "The United Nations Security Council's unfair condemnation of Israel last week stimulates this kind of barbarism," he said and continued: "It is high time the world realized that encouraging Arab nations that are bent on Israel's destruction will only lead to more unrestrained terrorism and bloodshed of men, women and children. In Washington, the American Jewish Congress today condemned the 'ghastly attack' by Arab terrorists."

Condemnation was contained in a resolution adopted at the close of the AJCongress' biennial national convention here. It called on "all nations to go beyond proclamations and refuse to give sanctuary or immunity to terrorists." It said, "Our outrage and grief can be made manifest effectively and appropriately only by adherence to the processes of reason, persuasion, exhortation and demonstration."

WJCongress Leaders: Civilized World Must Act To Stop Terror, Assure Arab-Israeli Peace

MONTREAL, May 24 (JTA)--Leaders of the Canadian and World Jewish Congress, gathering here today for the opening of the Canadian Jewish Congress, expressed grief and horror at the slaughter of the eight children and four adults and the wounding of 21 other passengers, mostly children in an Arab ambush of an Israeli school bus. Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, termed the incident terrible. He told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "There are no words to describe this senseless murder. I do not know what to say when the Israeli government has not called upon the (UN) Security Council to take action." Dr. Goldmann declared, referring to the fact that Israel has not asked for an emergency meeting of the Council. Monroe Abbey, president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, described the attack as horrifying. "There is no excuse for the attack on innocent children," he said, "We should use all our resources to bring to the attention of the civilized world the enormity of this brutal act in order that a halt should be called to such horrible deeds."

Samuel Bronfman, honorary chairman of the Canadian Jewish Congress and vice-president of the World Jewish Congress, declared: "It was deliberate murder and the worst kind of atrocity. The governments of the world, including Russia, should take steps and fulfill their obligations in order to assure peace for Israelis and Arabs." Charles M. Drury, the representative of the federal government of Canada, president of the Treasury and MP for Westmount (Montreal), said it was shocking. "We should like to see the government take up where the voice of public opinion fails. I don't see any easy way to stop such senseless murders but I hope the civilized world will." Dr. Victor Goldbloom, Associate Minister of Education in Quebec, said: "It is the worst of world tragedies. I think it is incumbent on the world community to redouble its efforts to avoid the repetition of such dastardly murders and find a solution for the peaceful co-existence between neighbors. It is absolutely imperative that women and children not be involved in acts of war."

Four Soviet Jews Express Horror; Israeli Students Express Shock In Cable To U Thant

JERUSALEM, May 24 (JTA)--A cable signed by four Leningrad Jews was received at the Upper Galilee settlement of Baram today. It expressed horror at the slaying in the terrorist ambush and offered condolences to the victims' families. Baram is the settlement nearest Avivim where most of the victims came from. "Profound shock" over the murder of the school children was expressed in cables sent by the Council of Student and Youth Newspapers here today to Secretary General U Thant of the United Nations and the director general of UNESCO in Geneva. The cable noted that the victims were "our own age and younger." It said, "We hope that the youth the world over and in the neighboring Arab states in particular will publicly voice their horror at this act."

Lindsay, U Thant, AJCongress Condemn Beatings Of Three Arabs By Extremists

NEW YORK, May 24 (JTA)--Mayor John V. Lindsay, United Nations Secretary General U Thant, and the American Jewish Congress condemned yesterday the beating of three Arabs in their offices near the UN on Friday following the Arab guerrilla attack on an Israeli school bus. The Arabs were beaten in an apparent reprisal for the ambush attack. Arab representatives here charged that the attacks were made by members of the Jewish Defense League. Rabbi Meir Kahane, JDL leader declined to confirm or deny the charge. On Friday afternoon, shortly after the tragic event of the ambush was broadcast throughout the world, an unidentified woman called the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and said: "This is the Palestine Liberation Front. We have avenged the death of our Arab children." The caller hung up without answering any questions. Mayor Lindsay called the beatings of the three Arabs "intolerable." Police here reported yesterday they found no evidence to identify the attackers despite assertions by the victims that members of the JDL were responsible. Police details were posted outside Arab UN mission offices, Arab consulates and business offices. One of the victims, Dr. M.T. Mehdi, secretary general of the Action Committee on American-Arab Relations called on the New York District Attorney's office to launch a full scale probe into the JDL. He also warned that the next time anyone tries to assault him he will shoot the assailant.

On Friday afternoon six persons forced their way into the office of the Palestine Liberation Organization in mid-town Manhattan and beat Sadaat Hasan. A few minutes later, six men forced their way into Dr. Mehdi's office a few blocks away and beat him and Ghazi Khankan, a staff member. All three men were hospitalized. Mr. Hasan was reported in satisfactory condition. The other two were not seriously injured. A spokesman at the PLO office said that the introducers left behind mimeographed papers saying in Hebrew and English: "An eye for an eye. The Bible. For murdered Jewish children. Never Again." The JDL uses the phrase "Never Again" in its publicity and public statements. Mr. Thant deplored "the brutal assaults" on the three Arabs. A UN spokesman said Mr. Thant, on learning of the beatings, "immediately approached the United States Mission to the United Nations and has been assured by the Mission that prompt measures have been taken to assure the protection of Arab representatives...against any repetition of such lawless acts." The American Jewish Congress, holding its biennial convention in Washington, D.C., called the actions of Jewish extremists "appalling and reprehensible." It said, "these extremists do not represent us; they constitute a minuscule fraction of the American Jewish community." The resolution did not mention the extremist group by name. One minor mystery in the incidents was a statement by Niamti Jaouni, Hasan's secretary. She said the break-in by the assailants was preceded by a knock at the office door. She said that when she looked through a peephole, she saw a Negro. When she opened the door, she said, six white men surged in and attacked Hasan.

Seven Israeli Soldiers Killed By Egyptian Artillery Shell Fired On Military Mess Hall

TEL AVIV, May 24 (JTA)--Seven Israeli soldiers, including a Major and two lieutenants, were killed yesterday when an Egyptian artillery shell scored a direct hit on a military mess hall on the east bank of the Suez Canal. A military spokesman said that apart from the direct hit, Egyptian shelling was relatively light Friday night and Saturday morning. Israel Air Force jets launched three attacks on Egyptian positions in the canal zone yesterday and returned safely to their bases. A military spokesman said the first attack at noon lasted 45 minutes followed by a 100 minute assault beginning at five p.m. local time and a two hour attack at midnight. Israel Air Force jets attacked Egyptian military targets in the Suez Canal zone intermittently for two and a half hours this afternoon and returned safely to their bases.

The heavy death toll in the canal zone following Friday's ambush slaying made this one of the blackest week-ends in Israel's history. Four other Israeli soldiers were wounded. A military spokesman identified the dead as Major Dan Shani, 34, of Moshav Asheret; Lieutenants Pinhas Teitelbaum, 24, of Givatayim and David Eisen, 21, of Haifa; Corp. Shmuel Itzkowitz, 21, of Haifa; Corp. David Sasson, of Ofakim; Corp. Shlomo Ossen, of Moshav Gilat and Lance Corp. Yehuda Shitrit, 19, of Yeruham village. Maj. Shani was cited for bravery during the Six-Day War and was inscribed in the Book of Heroes issued by the Society of Bergen Belsen Survivors. Corp. Ossen was the son of a former Deputy Minister of Agriculture. Arab guerrillas fired a Katyusha rocket barrage at Nahal Meshura north of the Dead Sea last night but caused no casualties or damage, a military spokesman said.

McGovern Urges Planes For Israel; Six Other Senators Urge Nixon To Help Israel

WASHINGTON, May 24 (JTA)--Sen. George McGovern, South Dakota Democrat, declared here last night that President Nixon could impress the world with United States willingness to defend freedom "not by wasting American blood and treasure on a corrupt regime in Saigon but by permitting Israel to purchase the planes needed to preserve freedom in the Middle East." The Senator, a co-sponsor of a Senate bill calling for withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Viet Nam by June, 1971, told the biennial convention of the American Jewish Congress that the outlines of a reasonable U.S. policy in both Southeast Asia and the Middle East were similar. "In the Middle East," he said, "it means providing a free nation with the tools to defend itself and negotiate with its enemies." He added "In Asia, it means withdrawing our own forces while continuing reasonable assistance to those nations who are desirous of building a society worthy of the respect and support of their own people. That is an even-handed policy that I believe most Americans will support and the rest of the world will respect," he added.

Sen. McGovern also accused the White House of making it "difficult" for many Americans opposed to the war in Asia to argue for aid to Israel. The Nixon administration, he charged, "uses Israel's legitimate needs as a club to combat opponents of the misguided involvement in Viet Nam. It intimates some who feel strongly against the war in Asia and for aid to Israel, demanding their respect for the war in exchange for a sympathetic ear for Israel." He added the Nixon administration "uses the phony argument that if Israel is worthy of support, then certainly the Saigon government is worthy as well. But calling the Their-Ky military clique the equal of the democratic government of Israel does not make it equal and calling Thieu and Ky great democratic leaders does not make them anything except what they are--dictators propped up by American power." He declared that an Administration decision to sell Israel the Phantoms would mean "that we do not intend to let Israel slip desperately to the razor's edge of survival and that we mean to exercise our influence in that vital area of the world."

Sen. McGovern also disclosed that seven anti-Vietnam war Senators urged yesterday the Nixon administration to recognize the "fundamental differences" between Indo-China and Israel by withdrawing from Southeast Asia while providing Israel necessary weapons and planes for its defense. The seven senators were Charles Goodell, New York Republican; Allan Cranston, California Democrat; Harold Hughes, Iowa Democrat; Stephen M. Young, Ohio Democrat; Philip A. Hart, Michigan Democrat; Thomas S. Eagleton, Missouri Democrat; and McGovern. In their letter to Pres. Nixon, the senators declared: "We are joining in this statement to make plain our deep conviction that our vital national interests are indeed involved in preserving the balance of power in the Middle East, pending a final settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute." The statement added that in providing Israel weapons to retain the balance of power the U.S. would be fulfilling Pres. Nixon's call for a more responsible participation by our foreign friends in their own defense. "So we urge that you (Nixon) make available to Israel the aircraft she needs," the statement said. "We also urge that you take whatever steps are appropriate to demonstrate both our willingness to work for peace in the Middle East and the firmness of our support for Israel and for those moderate Arab governments also threatened by the Soviet expansion. We urge you to consult with NATO and other allies in an attempt to restore a ceasefire as a first step toward a stable peace in the Middle East. These steps would demonstrate to the Soviet Union that we shall not abdicate our responsibilities in the Middle East, as well as our earnest desire for peace."

British Council Of Churches To Hold Intercession For Peace In The Middle East

LONDON, May 24 (JTA)--The British Council of Churches will hold a service of intercession for peace in the Middle East in St. Paul's Cathedral May 31. Similar services were held here in Westminster Abbey after the Six-Day War and in Southwark Cathedral last year. Representing the Anglicans will be the Bishop of London, the Dean of St. Paul's, the Archbishop of Jerusalem and the General Secretary of the British Council of Churches. Roman Catholics will be represented by the rector of St. Emonds College, the Superior of the White Fathers and the acting commissary of the Holy Land. Also participating will be the Free Churches and the Eastern Churches.