

CABINET SIDESTEPS ISSUE OF INQUIRY COMMISSION ON THE MASSACRE IN REFUGEE CAMPS

By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- The Cabinet, contrary to expectations, refrained today from taking any decision to investigate the massacre of Palestinian civilians in Israel-occupied west Beirut Friday by Lebanese Christian armed forces allied with Israel.

Its failure to act on the matter, during a 5 1/2 hour meeting, came as a surprise in light of President Yitzhak Navon's unprecedented and explicit call last night for an "early and thorough investigation by credible and independent people into what happened in this awful affair." Navon said Israel owed an inquiry to itself and to its image "among those civilized countries of which we see ourselves a part."

The opposition Labor Alignment had also called for the early creation of a judicial commission of inquiry to determine the facts of the tragedy. Premier Menachem Begin's government has been hit by a storm of criticism at home and abroad over the episode, including allegations of army indifference if not complicity in the slaughter of at least 300 Palestinian men, women and children in the Shatila and Sabra refugee camps.

Begin's personal position toward an inquiry was uncertain. Although he angrily condemned all criticism of Israel as "blood libel", sources close to the Premier said he had considered the idea of an official inquiry and even raised the matter at Sunday night's Cabinet meeting. But the Prime Minister's Office issued a statement last night denying that Begin had agreed to an inquiry.

Elements Favoring Inquiry

Two elements of Begin's coalition government, the National Religious Party and the ultra-nationalist Tehiya, appeared to favor the idea of an inquiry. The NRP leadership met with Begin yesterday afternoon and suggested that he take the initiative in that direction. Tehiya issued a statement today supporting an investigation.

Another coalition faction, Tami, was also believed to favor such a move. Its Cabinet minister, Aharon Uzzan, had been expected to propose it at today's meeting.

President Navon's proposal drew strong editorial support from the Israeli press and from the academic community. Within hours after the President spoke, a group of leading professors and intellectuals issued a manifesto supporting an official inquiry.

Their spokesman, Prof. Elimelech Uhrbach, a Hebrew University Talmudical scholar, went on television last night to demand a "thorough and impartial investigation." He warned that the west Beirut massacre could gravely erode Israel's moral image and democratic institutions.

Uhrbach blasted Begin for failing to address the nation and the world when the gory details of the Beirut massacre became known, to give expression to Israel's shock and sorrow. He said Chief of

Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan's version of events, presented on a television interview Sunday, was "utterly confused." Uhrbach carries unique moral force in Israel. Although in 1972 he was the Likud-NRP candidate for President, his non-partisan credentials are impeccable.

Former President Ephraim Katzir, who defeated Uhrbach in the 1972 Presidential ballot, joined him yesterday in demanding an inquiry as did other academicians, Profs. Shmuel Eisenstadt, Shmuel Sambursky, Yehoshua Prawer and Nathan Rothenreich.

Sources close to Begin who said he initially favored an inquiry indicated that he had in mind an investigation "not only of the massacre but the events that preceded it and the events that followed it." That was taken to include what the Cabinet called a "blood libel" against Israel abroad and "incitement" against the government by opposition circles at home.

Knesset Unit Snubbed By The Military

Meanwhile, the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee was furious today over an apparent snub by the military. Eitan and Gen. Amir Drori, commander of Israeli forces in Lebanon, were scheduled to appear before the committee today to explain the circumstances of the massacre. They failed to show up and the meeting had to be cancelled.

Likud MK Eliahu Ben-Elissar, chairman of the committee, said he had been trying since Friday to summon Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to discuss the events in west Beirut, but without success.

According to Ben-Elissar, it was Sharon's office which had suggested that Eitan appear before the committee. It was their "privilege and also duty" to brief the committee but Eitan and Sharon "did not use their privilege and did not fulfill their duty," Ben-Elissar said. Their failure to appear showed "lack of respect for the committee and the Knesset," he said.

Incidents Of Unrest

In a related development, unrest flared in Galilee, on the West Bank and East Jerusalem where Palestinian youths demonstrated against the massacre. Many stone-throwing incidents were reported. Two Israeli border policemen were injured in East Jerusalem today where six Arab youths were arrested.

In Sakhnin village, east of Acre, police forcibly dispersed a large group of youngsters and women demonstrating on the main road. The youths later marched through the village carrying Palestinian flags, portraits of PLO chief Yasir Arafat and black flags signifying mourning for the dead in the Beirut refugee camps.

At the nearby predominantly Christian village of Kufer Yassif, high school students went on a mourning march. A police vehicle was set afire, other Israeli vehicles were stoned and Palestinian flags were raised. In Nazareth, the largest Arab city in Israel, hundreds of students left their classrooms but returned shortly afterwards. Palestinian nationalist slogans were smeared overnight on walls in Haifa.

Disturbances were reported in several West Bank towns. Arab mayors called for a general strike tomorrow to protest the Beirut massacre. Shops in East Jerusalem remained closed today.

Binyamin Gur-Arye, the Prime Minister's advisor on Arab affairs, said he understood the feelings of Israel's Arabs, many of whom had relatives in the Beirut refugee camps. But he insisted that order be maintained. He said if Arab strikes and demonstrations were conducted peacefully, Israeli authorities would not interfere.

JEWISH LEADERS SHOCKED AT MASSACRE BUT REJECT SUGGESTIONS THAT ISRAEL WAS INVOLVED

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- Leading representatives of major American Jewish organizations have reacted with shock and horror at the massacre of Palestinian civilians at the Shatila and Sabra refugee camps in Beirut.

While rejecting any suggestion of Israeli involvement in the massacre in which some 300 men, women and children were slaughtered, some leaders, however, called for an inquiry by the Israeli government to determine the facts surrounding the events that occurred at the refugee camps.

"We join with President Reagan and Premier Menachem Begin in expressing our shock and revulsion at the massacre of civilians in Beirut," Julius Berman, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said. "There can be no justification for the slaughter of innocents."

"We reject the idea of any participation or involvement by the Israel Defense Force in this terrible event. The history of the Jewish people is too full of massacres and pogroms, and the injunctions of Jewish law are too powerful a force in Jewish consciousness, to have permitted or even countenanced a Jewish role in this awful incident. Any suggestion that Israel took part in it or permitted it to occur must be categorically rejected."

Maynard Wishner, president, American Jewish Committee, said:

"Every step must be taken by every party involved, directly or indirectly, including Israel, to determine how this tragedy occurred and by whom these crimes were perpetrated. Responsibility must be fixed and appropriate action taken."

Henry Siegan, executive director, American Jewish Congress, said that while "I do not believe for a moment that Israeli forces were involved in the tragedy in any way," Israel must depart Beirut "if it is not to be dragged into that city's bloody fratricide." Siegan also called for Israel to "sever all of its ties with the murderous forces" of Maj. Saad Haddad's Christian militia and other Christian militia "responsible for this outrage. Otherwise, Israel will be seen as an ally and supporter of killers of innocent men, women and children."

Cites Trigger-Quick Response

Charlotte Jacobson, chairman, World Zionist Organization-American Section, said "No one is more shocked at the great tragedy in Lebanon than the Jews, and never more so than at this time of year when we emphasize the sanctity of human life and moral conduct." Continuing, she said: "We are therefore also saddened by the trigger-quick eagerness of the world to lay the blame for the terrible event at Israel's door."

Alexander Schindler, president, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, said the tragedy in Beirut demands "that those responsible be brought swiftly to justice. We have every confidence that the government of Israel will repudiate and sever relations with any Lebanese force found guilty of this foul deed."

Jack Spitzer, president, B'nai B'rith International, said "This cold blooded murder cries out for the restoration of order" in Lebanon. Such restoration can be achieved only by the establishment of a strong central Lebanese government, the dissolution of private armed forces, and the pullout, "as soon as possible," of all foreign forces, Spitzer declared.

Rabbi Arthur Schneier, chairman, World Jewish Congress-American Section, said "there can be no justification for this savage crime. There is now an urgent need for a full inquiry to establish the facts surrounding these grotesque events."

Warns Against Hysterical Conclusions

Paul Zuckerman, former national chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, cautioned against quick accusations against any party for responsibility of the massacre. "I think it would be unwise to point fingers haphazardly at any parties," he said. "We should be careful that this tragic act does not create hysterical conclusions, which could lead to more tragedy."

Ivan Novick, president, Zionist Organization of America, said "What happened over the weekend was not a premeditated blatant act by Israel, although Israel might have misjudged the situation or been misinformed. It is not a reason for a close friend and ally like the United States to come down hard on you."

Shirley Leviton, president, National Council of Jewish Women, urged that "all necessary steps be taken immediately to prevent the recurrence of wanton killings of civilians and to create a climate in which progress can be made toward the establishment of an independent Lebanese government, the total withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon and negotiations for a lasting peace."

Peter Goldmann and Herbert Zweibon, director and chairman of Americans for a Safe Israel, respectively, said "Blaming Israel for the massacre of Palestinian Arabs in Beirut by Lebanese forces is unjust and deplorable --- Israel cannot be blamed for every act of revenge undertaken by the Lebanese against the Palestinians."

Debbie Goldman, chairperson, New Jewish Agenda's national Middle East program, said Israel is "at least indirectly responsible since Israel took upon itself to guard the security of the camps. These deaths are a natural consequence of the invasion of Lebanon."

Prof. Irwin Cotler, president, Canadian Jewish Congress, and Sam Filer, chairman of its National Executive, said "We trust that an independent commission of inquiry will be established in Israel so that the true facts can be known and justice done."

CABINET AGREES TO RETURN OF MULTINATIONAL FORCE TO BEIRUT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- The Cabinet today agreed to accept President Reagan's proposal for the return of a multinational force to Beirut, including U.S. marines. Officials said after the Cabinet meeting that the Knesset would meet in special session tomorrow to debate the massacre of Palestinian refugees and its repercussions.

Cabinet secretary Dan Meridor said after today's session that the ministers had proposed the creation of a "coordinating committee" of Israel, Lebanon, the U.S., Italy and France to discuss "ways to prevent a return of bloody terror to Beirut." Sources here stressed however, that the creation of such a body was not a condition for Israel's withdrawal from west Beirut.

Meridor said the government intended to withdraw its forces from all of Beirut very soon and that the Cabinet had been informed today that a large part of Israel's armor and other forces have in fact already pulled out of the city. He said Israeli troops were still collecting weapons left behind by the PLO -- according to Meridor a violation of the withdrawal agreement negotiated by U.S. special Ambassador Philip Habib. But he said the complete recovery of the arms was not a condition of Israel's withdrawal.

Sources here said that contacts with the Lebanese army were proceeding to Israel's satisfaction for the gradual handover of areas of Beirut occupied by Israeli troops to Lebanese forces. They said that those informal contacts would continue even if the Lebanese government refused to join with Israel in a "coordinating committee."

Reagan Sending Marines Back To Lebanon

Reagan announced yesterday, in a brief nationally televised address, that the U.S., France and Italy have decided to send back their contingents which last month supervised the evacuation of PLO and Syrian forces from west Beirut. Reagan said the U.S. and its European allies were acting at the request of the Lebanese government, in the aftermath of the massacre of Palestinian civilians in two refugee camps near Beirut last Friday.

The President assigned no blame to any party for the massacre which he described as "among the most heart-rending in the long nightmare of Lebanon's agony." But he emphasized, several times in his address that Israel must withdraw its troops from west Beirut as a first step to the early withdrawal from Lebanon of all foreign forces.

"Unless Israel moves quickly and courageously to withdraw, it will find itself ever more deeply involved in problems that are not its own and which it cannot solve," the President said. He said the U.S. position was conveyed to the Israeli government "on my behalf" by Secretary of State George Shultz.

Reagan also said, "I re-emphasize my call for early progress to solve the Palestinian issue and repeat the U.S. proposals, which are now even more urgent." At another point in his address, he said "I am determined to press ahead in the broader effort to achieve peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The events in Beirut of last week have served only to reinforce my conviction that such a peace is desperately needed and that the initiative we undertook on September 1 is the right way to proceed."

The President acknowledged that both Israel and Syria have asserted they have no territorial ambitions in Lebanon "and are prepared to withdraw." He said there were lessons for all in recent events.

"The people of Lebanon must have learned that the circle of massacre upon massacre must end. Children are not avenged by the murder of children. Israel must have learned that there is no way it can impose its own solutions on hatreds as deep and bitter as those that produced this tragedy. If it seeks to do so, it will sink more deeply into the quagmire that looms before it," Reagan said.

He also warned that "Those outsiders who have fed the flames of civil war in Lebanon for so many years need to learn that the fire will consume them too, if it is not put out."

The President said that "the multinational force will return to Beirut for a limited period of time" and that "its purpose is not to act as a police force but to make it possible for the lawful authorities of Lebanon to discharge those duties for themselves."

REAGAN 'DEMANDED' ISRAEL LEAVE ALL OF BEIRUT, STATE DEPT. SAYS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- The State Department stressed today that President Reagan in his nationally televised speech yesterday, had "demanded" that Israel leave all of Beirut, not just west Beirut, so that a multinational force can help the Lebanese government "restore control over its own capital."

"The sooner Israeli forces are out of Beirut, the sooner the Lebanese government can restore order," Department spokesman John Hughes said. But he maintained that the departure of Israeli forces are not a "precondition" for the multinational force made up of U.S. marines and Italian and French troops to enter the Lebanese capital.

Hughes said the United States government has not received a formal communique, as yet, from the Israeli government on the Cabinet decision today agreeing to the multinational force but he said that, on the basis of news reports from Jerusalem, the United States was proceeding with talks with the governments of Lebanon, France and Italy about the force, its size and its duties. The marines could be in Beirut within 72 hours.

Hughes said there had been a "thinning out" of Israeli troops in Beirut but "entire units have not left the city."

Shultz: Marines' Stay Is Indeterminate

Secretary of State George Shultz, appearing on NBC-TV's "Today" show this morning, said that, while the U.S. marines would be in Beirut for a "limited duration," he could not give an exact time of 10, 20, 30, or 40 days. He said the reason was he did not know how long it would take for the Lebanese government to "create stability and govern" in Beirut.

Shultz added "I don't want to put down some number of days because then we might somehow be in the position of doing something that was not appropriate at the end of that number of days, or we might feel that it is propitious to leave well before that, and people would then say, 'why don't you stay longer?' So it is a mistake to put yourself into that trap." Should U.S. forces be required to remain longer than 30 days, the President would have to seek approval of Congress under the War Powers Act.

Shultz rejected the charges by some that the marines were pulled out too early when they left September 10. He said that at that time Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel, who was later assassinated, "was in the process of bringing about a reconciliation" in Lebanon. "So the conditions that were presumed at the time we came in had been met, and so we left, and I think properly so," Shultz said.

Meanwhile, Hughes said the United States "welcomed" the election of Amin Gemayel today as President. "We believe this is an important beginning in the process of reconciliation vital in Lebanon's future as a nation," the spokesman said.

He added that Reagan "is determined to assist Lebanon in the arduous process of rebuilding and reconciliation." He observed that the multinational force "is an essential element in this important effort aimed at enabling the Lebanese government to restore security to its capital and eventually throughout its territory."

Reagan did not announce the composition or the size of the American contribution to the multinational force. Apparently it will consist of the same marines from the U.S. Sixth Fleet who participated in the earlier force. They were withdrawn from Beirut on September 10 and are reportedly stationed at Naples, about 72 hours by sea from the Lebanese capital.

WESTERN EUROPE SHOCKED AND HORRIFIED AT BEIRUT MASSACRE

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- Western Europe reacted with shock and horror at the massacre of Palestinian refugees in the camps of Sabra and Shatila near Beirut. The European Economic Community (EEC) called for the "immediate" withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Beirut and an eventual withdrawal in the "near future" from all of Lebanon as well.

The Foreign Ministers of the 10 member-states, who met in Brussels yesterday, approved of President Reagan's Middle East peace proposals which he enunciated September 1 but said the PLO should be associated with any future Mideast peace negotiations. The EEC had defined the PLO's role in similar fashion in a resolution it adopted in Venice in June, 1980.

Multinational Force Returning To Lebanon

While the EEC ministers were meeting yesterday, government officials in Rome and Paris said troops have been placed on the alert and are ready to return to Beirut at a few hours' notice. A contingent of French paratroopers left today for Lebanon. President François Mitterrand said in a television address that the French units would be ready to take up positions in Beirut within three days.

France and Italy had been part, along with the United States, of the multinational force which supervised the evacuation of PLO fighters from Lebanon's capital last month. The force withdrew last week. Several days afterwards, gunmen entered two Palestinian refugee camps near Beirut and massacred several hundred men, women and children. Italian and American troops were also ordered back to Lebanon by their governments.

French and Italian spokesmen deplored that the multinational force was so rapidly withdrawn, and indirectly blamed Washington for the decision. French Premier Pierre Mauroy said "France wanted the force to remain in Beirut to ensure the safety of civilians there but one of the (force's) partners was opposed." In Rome, Premier Giovanni Spadolini made a similar statement after national legislators and the media blamed him for the speedy return of the Italian contingent.

Denunciation In Various Capitals

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was quoted as having said in Tokyo, where she is on an official visit, that the killings of the Palestinians in the refugee camps "are unbelievable barbarism." In Paris, Mitterrand issued a statement expressing his "horror" and calling for speedy international action to prevent a recurrence.

The Italian government rapped the massacre and also indirectly charged Israel with responsibility in the killings. The Spanish government also violently condemned the killings and mentioned Israeli responsibility while Greek Premier Andreas Papandreu termed the massacre "an anti-Palestinian genocide."

In Moscow, the Soviet government for the first time ever called for Israel's expulsion from the United Nations. Tass, the official news agency, carried a dispatch saying the Soviet government will propose that the matter be taken up by an extraordinary session of the General Assembly. The Tass dispatch said "there is no place for countries like Israel, which totally disregard international law and commitments, within the United Nations."

Several hundred Italian students demonstrated in Rome yesterday to protest "Israel's complicity" in the murders and some 5,000 demonstrators carried Israel's flag through the dust in Milan.

The Federation of Jewish Students protested against the demonstrations but called for the resignation of Israeli Premier Menachem Begin, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and Chief of Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan. The students union said "Israel was not to blame" but said the three carried some responsibility for what had happened.

In Athens, several thousand people marched yesterday on the building where Israel's interests are represented to protest the massacre. The march, organized by the General Confederation of Workers, began near the American Embassy where the protesters listened to speakers denounce U.S. and Israeli policies in Lebanon and the Mideast.

A strong police force guarded the building of the Israeli representation in Psychiko, a few miles north of Athens. The Socialist government of Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu has refused to extend full diplomatic recognition to Israel, but upgraded the PLO's information office to diplomatic status last December.

In Paris, French writer Roger Ikor, a Goncourt Prize recipient, also called for Begin's resignation. In an article in the French Socialist daily, *Le Matin*, he said "Begin has to go and go at once." Ikor, a long-standing supporter of Israel, called on President Yitzhak Navon and the Knesset to "ask the victims' pardon."

Several Jewish intellectuals led by philosopher Wladimir Jankelewitz demonstrated in front of the Israel Embassy and left an appeal to Begin asking him to have Israeli troops evacuate Lebanon at the earliest.

Most French Jewish communal organizations and personalities have condemned the massacre but have avoided implying any Israeli responsibility in the crime.

Most radio, television and press commentators in West Europe blame Israel for, at least, indirect responsibility in the massacre. Television stations throughout Western Europe showed at length pictures of bloated bodies, dead children and wanton destruction, which they said had taken place in the two camps while surrounded by Israeli forces.

LOW KEY REACTION TO RECALL OF EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

JERUSALEM, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- Israel kept its reaction deliberately low-key today to the announcement that Egyptian Ambassador Saad Mortada has been summoned home for consultations. Mortada delivered the news personally to Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and later met at his own request for close to an hour with President Yitzhak Navon. Both Israeli leaders expressed the hope that he would be back soon, and he, according to Israeli sources, joined in that hope.

Meanwhile, Israeli officials said that Israel's Ambassador to Egypt, Moshe Sasson, who is in Jerusalem on home leave for Rosh Hashanah, would return to his post as scheduled when his leave ended. There was no intention of "reciprocating" by keeping Sasson here "for consultations," too, the officials said.

NEW YORK (JTA) -- The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany announced that the filing deadline for applications to the Claims Conference Harship Fund will expire on December 31, 1982. Applications may also be filed by such persecutees who prior to December 31, 1965 resided in countries outside Eastern Europe and did not file timely claims under the German Indemnification Law.