

BRITAIN CLAIMS THERE IS NOT ENOUGH PROOF OF WALDHEIM'S WARTIME ACTIVITIES TO BAR HIM FROM VISITING THE UK

By Maurice Samuelson (London) and Reinhard Engel (Vienna)

April 29 (JTA) -- Britain considers unproved the allegations that President Kurt Waldheim of Austria was involved in Nazi atrocities during World War II and sees no reason to bar him from visiting the United Kingdom, a Foreign Office spokesman said Wednesday.

The British position clashed with the decision by the U.S. Justice Department, announced in Washington Monday, to bar Waldheim from entering the U.S. in private capacity because "a prima facie case of excludability exists" based on evidence of Waldheim's activities as a Wehrmacht officer in the Balkans during the war.

Commenting on the Justice Department's move, the Foreign Office official said "British policy remains that the allegation against Dr. Waldheim have not been proved. As a democratically elected head of a friendly state he would be afforded formal courtesies."

The official said he was unaware of plans to invite Waldheim to Britain but he also knew of no plans to place Waldheim in a category which would prevent him from visiting there in private capacity.

Canada also has no plans to officially ban entry of Waldheim, according to a report from Ottawa Wednesday. But Prime Minister Brian Mulroney told reporters that Waldheim would not be welcome. It was not clear whether Mulroney was enunciating his government's policy or simply expressing an opinion in reply to a question.

Waldheim Challenges U.S. Decision

In Vienna, meanwhile, Waldheim personally challenged the Justice Department's findings in a television and radio address broadcast Tuesday night to the Austrian nation. "I have a clear conscience," he said. "Believe me, otherwise myself, my wife and my kids would not have been able to live through the weeks and months of accusations and allegations," he said.

Waldheim has admitted that for 40 years--10 of which he served as Secretary General of the United Nations--he had falsified the record of his military service, claiming to have been discharged from the German army in 1941 for a disability. In fact, he served as an intelligence officer in the Balkans.

During his campaign for the Austrian Presidency last summer, researchers for the World Jewish Congress discovered a file in the United Nations War Crimes Commission archive that charged Waldheim with "murder" and "putting hostages to death." He was on a "wanted list" of war criminals in Yugoslavia after the war.

In his broadcast, Waldheim said his predecessor, former President Rudolf Kirschnaeger, had reviewed all of the documents held against him and found no reason for charging him with war crimes. "Please let me stress that there is no proof of guilt," Waldheim said. He said he has

ordered a "White Book" on his past to be researched and published in the near future. Waldheim stressed that after the war he had worked for peace, first as an Austrian diplomat and later at the United Nations. As to the allegation that he was involved in the execution of hostages in Yugoslavia, Waldheim reminded his audience "in all modesty" that he had helped free hostages, including the American Embassy hostages held in Iran in 1979-80.

"I have always intervened for human rights. I demand the right not to be charged without proof," Waldheim said.

Regarding his military past, Waldheim said, "I do not want to minimize what all those (people) had to live through who were thrown into that horrible war scenario. It has been the fate of my generation and we will bear it for all our lives, namely the knowledge of the horror of war and the determination to work for peace for the future."

PERES TO PRESENT HIS PLANS FOR MIDEAST PEACE CONFERENCE BEFORE HE GOES TO WASHINGTON NEXT MONTH
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 29 (JTA) -- Aides to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Wednesday that he intends to present his plans for an international conference for Middle East peace to the full Cabinet before he goes to Washington in the middle of next month.

Sources at Peres' office said the plan has already won the approval of the U.S., Jordan and Egypt. Army Radio reported Wednesday that the understanding Peres reportedly reached with King Hussein of Jordan will be appended in the form of two secret documents to the basic peace conference draft.

Peres summoned Labor Ministers of the Inner Cabinet to a meeting Wednesday to outline his diplomatic plan. They were Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Education Minister Yitzhak Navon, Police Minister Haim Barlev and Minister-Without-Portfolio Ezer Weizman. Also present were Uzi Baram, Secretary General of the Labor Party, and MK Abba Eban, chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee.

Political observers noted particularly Rabin's apparent support for Peres' initiative. Rabin, one of the more hawkish Laborites and a long-time rival of Peres for party leadership, has often expressed skepticism over an international conference. For the time being, he seems to be standing behind Peres, the observers said.

Premier Yitzhak Shamir, the Likud leader who is unalterably opposed to an international conference, is due back from his visit to France Thursday. Likud and Labor may have their ultimate confrontation on the peace issue which most pundits expect will bring down the unity coalition government and precipitate early elections.

Peres spoke of new elections Wednesday as if they were a foregone conclusion. He said he hoped for a brief campaign -- three weeks instead of three months.

SHAMIR TRIES TO PERSUADE FRENCH OFFICIALS THAT A MIDEAST PEACE CONFERENCE WOULD BE 'DISASTROUS'

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, April 29 (JTA) -- Israeli Premier Yitzhak Shamir remained firmly opposed to the idea of an international conference for Middle East peace as he energetically sought to persuade French political and diplomatic officials Tuesday that such a forum would be "disastrous" for Israel and would endanger rather than advance prospects for peace in the region.

Shamir, on the second day of a three-day official visit, refused to comment on press reports that Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres had reached a secret agreement with King Hussein of Jordan on procedures for an international conference, to be followed by direct negotiations between Israel and Jordan.

"I shall not react to this type of leakages abroad. The matter is far too serious," Shamir told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. But in his talks with dozens of French officials during the day he carefully refrained from personalizing his dispute with Peres over an international conference.

"My personal relations with Peres are rather good," he told the newspaper *Le Monde*. (Our divergences) are not a personal matter but a political issue. We both have to take our responsibilities before our voters," he said.

Shamir told Socialist Party leader Michel Rothen, National Assembly President, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, and Senate President Alain Poher, "You French are traditionally opposed to the internationalization of regional conflicts. Why do you want to internationalize the Middle Eastern regional issue?"

But he has apparently not succeeded in swaying the French leaders who generally favor a peace conference and the Jordanian option diplomacy of Peres.

During his visit here, Shamir met with Premier Jacques Chirac, President Francois Mitterrand, Foreign Minister Bernard Raymond and Economics Minister Edouard Balladour. He is to address a dinner given by the Jewish community Wednesday night and leave for Israel Thursday.

ISRAELI CHILD IS IN SERIOUS BUT STABLE CONDITION AFTER RECEIVING LIVER TRANSPLANT IN BRITISH HOSPITAL

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, April 29 (JTA) -- Moran Kadosh, a four-year-old Israeli girl, is in serious but stable condition Tuesday in a Cambridge, England, hospital after receiving a liver transplant.

Kadosh's case has attracted nation-wide attention here since passengers on her El Al flight from Tel Aviv to London last Wednesday spontaneously collected 45,000 Pounds Sterling on hearing that she and her mother were among them.

The 450 tourists, who had just celebrated Passover and Easter in the Holy Land, included leading members of Britain's Jewish community active in fund-raising for Israel.

Kadosh's mother, Tova, 28, had brought her hurriedly to Ben Gurion Airport on hearing that the British hospital might be able to save her life by giving her a new liver. The flight was booked up, but four passengers immediately gave up their seats to Kadosh, her mother and Dr. Akiva Frad-

kin, her Israeli pediatrician. Her father, Zion, 29, followed on a later flight. In flight, the aircraft became the scene of a flying fund-raising function, with regular announcements on how much money had been donated to meet her hospital fees of about 170 Pounds a day and her family's other expenses.

Later, a hospital spokesman said: "The parents are incredibly grateful to all the people in Israel and on the plane who raised the money for the operation."

There were then several days delay in finding a compatible liver to transplant. She is scheduled to remain in the hospital for about a week. The transplant operation took place Monday, after a suitable liver was eventually located.

HADASSAH HONORS THREE LEADING WOMEN FROM ISRAEL, EGYPT, THE U.S.

By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, April 29 (JTA) -- Hadassah, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary, honored three leading women from Israel, the United States and Egypt Tuesday. The three women are Ophira Navon, the wife of former Israeli President Yitzhak Navon; Jihan Sadat, the widow of former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Barbara Bush, the wife of Vice President George Bush.

Navon, told the some 200 Hadassah members gathered at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, that the organization was "well known all over Israel for your special skill in turning big deeds into effective action and practical deeds."

She called upon Hadassah to help stem the decreasing population of Jews in the diaspora which she said would shrink from 11 million to 5 million in 50 years because of low birthrate, intermarriage and lack of Jewish education.

"We must stress upon a strong Jewish identity by making young people aware of their unique Jewish heritage," Navon said, suggesting that Hadassah help all young Jews to come to Israel after graduation.

Navon, who was given the award for her work with disturbed, deaf youth and disadvantaged teenagers, confessed that Hadassah had "improved the quality of my life" when she was diagnosed as having breast cancer seven years ago. The Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem offers an alternative to removal of a breast in treatment of the disease.

Sadat, who was praised for her efforts to build a rehabilitation center in Cairo for the handicapped, told the audience of her happiness over the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

"I always feel one man can make a difference and nothing paralyzes a man's willpower more than fear," said Sadat who is visiting professor at University of South Carolina and American University. "Peace is more powerful than evil and love is much better than hate. Peace is more powerful than war and love is stronger than hate."

Bush, who was honored for her work on behalf of illiterates, related her visit to the pediatric ward in Hadassah Medical Center in Ein Kerem where she saw Jews and Arabs treated side by side. "I came away with even greater admiration for Hadassah. You are volunteers in the finest sense," Bush said.

The Hadassah program included remarks by several leaders in the organization: Barbara Topol, president of the Greater Washington Chapter; former national presidents Bernice Tannenbaum-

and Charlotte Jacobson, current president Ruth Popkin, and Lois Slott, chairperson of the 75th anniversary in Washington. Israeli Ambassador Meir Rosenne also attended the event and Israeli pianist David Bar Ilan played selections from Chopin, Gershwin and Liszt.

Peter McPherson, administrator of the Agency for International Development, also addressed the Hadassah event, saying the key to world development lies in "harnessing the self-interest of poor people."

RUMANIA JEWISH CHOIR CALLED A SYMBOL OF THE VICTORY THE JEWISH PEOPLE WON AGAINST THE NAZIS

By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, April 29 (JTA) -- A young Rumanian Jewish choir sidestepped political boundaries and brought the Rumanian and Israeli Ambassadors to the United States, members of the Rumanian Jewish community and several U.S. officials together Tuesday.

"This choir is both a symbol of the victory the Jewish people won against the Nazis, and against all those who tried to put an end to the existence and symbol of the redemption of the Jewish people," said Israeli Ambassador Meir Rosenne as he welcomed the choir to the Israel Embassy during the U.S. Holocaust Remembrance Week.

Rosenne was 13 when he left Rumania, having survived a pogrom that killed much of the country's Jewish community. "I did not dream that I'd have the privilege of representing Israel and greeting the Jewish choir of Rumania," he said.

Addressing the choir for a few minutes in Rumanian, which he said he had not spoken since the death of his mother 13 years ago, Rosenne said he too had sung in a choir as a boy.

Rosenne also joked that he should be speaking in Moldavian, instead of Rumanian, a reference to the part of Rumania that now belongs to the Soviet Union.

'A Desire From The Rumanian People'

Rumanian Ambassador Nicolae Gavrilescu, who said he brought a "desire from the Rumanian people for peace and understanding," said the "language of music is used by the choir in order to show the ties between people."

The choir, with 46 members ranging in ages from 16-24 who are children of Holocaust survivors, sang a selection of Yiddish and Rumanian folk songs, Hebrew songs and a version of "Oh Susannah" performed in English with a western twang.

The group, whose male members wore yarmulkes, have been on a packed tour of the U.S. from April 23-30, and have performed at Holocaust remembrance ceremonies in New York's Madison Square Garden on Sunday and in Washington. They are scheduled to meet later this week with Vice President George Bush.

"We didn't dream such a thing would happen. If this is not a miracle, what is a miracle?" asked Moses Rosen, Chief Rabbi of Rumania, who is accompanying the choir along with presidents of the Jewish communities of Bucharest and Jassy.

There are approximately 23,000 Jews remaining in Rumania, most of whom are over age 60. There is an active Jewish life with 70 synagogues, religious instruction and kosher community kitchens.

Rep. Stephen Solarz (D. NY), who visited Rumania several years ago to see the birthplace of his grandmother, said he was surprised to find "in a community virtually cleansed of Jews, here was an old Jewish community that was young and vibrant, singing songs of their fathers and their faith."

Alfred Moses, a Washington lawyer who has represented the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in dealings with Rumania and who helped to arrange the choir's tour, claimed that "we've had problems on behalf of the Jewish community. Things are not as smooth as we would like them to be."

Moses was involved in the unsuccessful attempt to prevent the Rumanian government from destroying the only remaining Sephardic synagogue in Eastern Europe located in Bucharest.

But Rosen added that "the choir represents dozens of thousands of Rumanian Jewish children who had the possibility to learn Talmud and sing in the Jewish choir. Rumanians have an understanding, and humanitarian feelings from the government that the Jewish people have the same rights as other people to build their own destiny."

CBS DOCUMENTARY ON BARBIE

TO BE TELECAST ON MAY 5

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, April 29 (JTA) -- The lawyer for Klaus Barbie claims his client was not responsible for the deportation and murder of Jews in France. This is revealed in an interview with Jacques Verges, attorney for the man known as "The Butcher of Lyon," in a segment of the CBS-TV news program, "West 57th Street," to be aired Tuesday, May 5. Verges, as well as former resistance fighters and a Jewish survivor, were interviewed in Lyon by CBS correspondent Steve Kroft.

Moreover, according to the weekly documentary program, the French, themselves, are facing the upcoming trial of accused Nazi war criminal Barbie with little enthusiasm, if not outright fear of exposure of some of their most cherished national heroes. And it is expected that the role of the United States government in hiding Barbie and helping him escape to South America will be revealed in embarrassing detail.

The trial, scheduled to begin May 11 after a long delay, will "shatter the big myth of France having been mainly a country of people who were indifferent during the war, or members of the resistance," says Olivier Todd, a French writer and commentator, who was interviewed for the program.

Kroft says Verges' strategy is "to shift the blame to the French," to claim that Barbie was "nothing more than a middle manager." Verges told Kroft -- who describes the lawyer as "a defender of terrorists" and "champion of the Third World" -- that his client was not head of the Gestapo in Lyon, but rather "number three in command." Charges against Barbie comprise "a coalition of the reality and the propaganda," according to Verges. "The trial will be a mirror in which French society will see their face," Verges said. Michel Thomas, a former resistance fighter who later worked for U.S. Army intelligence and is one of the few living witnesses who can place Barbie at the scene of his alleged crimes, told Kroft that he was interrogated at gunpoint under Barbie's supervision at a French clearing house

for the registration of Jewish refugees. Thomas was released, a fate not shared by the 86 Jews present at the time.

"They were all deported and killed," says Thomas, who now is an American citizen. Thomas says that U.S. complicity in helping Barbie escape "is a betrayal of the death of over 200,000 young Americans who fought and died in order to save us from the evil that was represented and symbolized by Klaus Barbie."

But Verges rebuts Thomas's claims as an eyewitness, saying that Thomas was "the single witness to have seen Barbie in this place." Verges contends that "Thomas is lying, of course."

Another former member of the resistance who was imprisoned, Mario Bardon, told Kroft that under Barbie the tortures were multiple. He claims Barbie had a torture chamber in his own office, where "women were tortured equally." Bardon says that Barbie "was sadistic enough to have had a police dog -- a German shepherd--that was trained specifically to rape women. I saw that with my own eyes."

Simone La Grange, a French Jewish survivor, told Kroft she was only 13 when she first saw Barbie. He beat her repeatedly, she says, and was personally responsible for the death of her older sister and two nephews. Her father was shot, her mother burned to death at Auschwitz.

Verges says that Barbie "has nothing to do with this trial. This concerns the people who have these kind of nightmares."

ADL AWARD TO FAMOUS YET UNKNOWN DUTCH COUPLE

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, April 29 (JTA) -- The petite elderly woman stepped up to the podium in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza here, before the Holocaust Memorial Wall, and faced the audience shivering in the cold morning. Smiling at the people who sat there patiently waiting to see her, Miep Gies said simply, "We are so happy to be here with you, and we thank you so very much for your warm and friendly welcome."

With such simple words and great humility, the woman who hid Anne Frank received the Courage to Care Award from the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

While children from the Raoul Wallenberg School Children's Choir sang as part of the ceremonies, Gies approached them, to take in the faces and voices that seemed to remind her of other children, long ago.

Gies (pronounced Kheiss) doesn't think of herself as a hero, she says repeatedly. "People call me hero, but it is my opinion that that is not the right word. What we have done derives from my European character and my love for mankind. We will always remember that there were other people who did the same as we. We would like to accept this award for all the lesser-known people who did the same. We will never forget what has happened."

Gies remained very much a private figure in Amsterdam, but now she has decided to come forward with her memories of Anne and the Frank family, who were her employers and friends, because she, and her husband Jan, who received the award with her, are the last eyewitnesses to the remarkable story.

The book she has written, "Anne Frank Remembered" (with Alison Leslie Gold, published by Simon and Schuster) tells the story from the

other side of the famed swinging bookcase that hid what Anne called "the Secret Annex." In it, she has recalled with sorrow and love the girl who left the diary that became the world's treasure.

Jan (who appears as Henk Van Senten in Anne's diary, to protect his identity, and as Henk Gies in his wife's memoirs) worked in the underground. "I was a social worker in the city of Amsterdam," he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "We were close friends before they went into hiding. There was a group of eight to ten people in my office who were doing the same work," he said, illegal social work in a time of terror. "As a social worker," Jan explained, "you always feel the same," no matter what the times are. "You have to help people."

Jan, now 81, a tall, strong man who appears both tough and tender, said that to explain his memories of the Frank family "would take ten hours." He is very protective of his beloved Miep, who looks much younger than her 78 years. Miep, asked to remember the Franks, said simply, "They were a nice family, good people and close friends."

She Did The Unthinkable

After the Franks and the others who hid with them -- the Van Daan family and Mr. Dusel -- were taken away to Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz, Miep did the unthinkable. She walked right into the Gestapo headquarters in Amsterdam, to see the Viennese Nazi who had taken them away. He had not arrested her only because she, like him, was from Vienna. With tremendous "chutzpah," she offered to buy back the people from the man who had asked her, "Aren't you ashamed to help Jewish garbage?"

Miep Gies went there not once but twice, asking, "How much money do you want to free the people you arrested the other day?" She refused to believe the answer 'no,' going to high-ranking Nazis, asking, "Who is in charge here?" Like Anne, Miep believed in the "goodness of mankind."

It was Miep who found the orange-checked diary after the denizens of the "Secret Annex" were taken away. She put it aside, along with other possessions of the young girl, saying, "I'll keep everything safely for Anne until she comes back."

Only Otto Frank returned, and he lived with the Gieses for seven years. Yet even when Frank published Anne's diary, Miep could not bring herself to read the diary, her sadness was so great.

After many years, when Miep finally allowed herself to read Anne's diary, she felt, she said, "peaceful. Even though we had lost her, I had the feeling she was with me."

'Why Weren't There Others?'

As the Gieses posed for photographs and last-minute interviews before the seven-bronze wall plaques titled "Zachor -- Remember," Abraham Foxman, ADL associate national director and a child survivor who was hidden by a Righteous Gentile in Poland, embraced the Gieses warmly and with obvious personal attachment to the rescuers. "Let me hug you," said Foxman, remembering the Christian woman who had hidden him at personal risk to herself. As Foxman presented the award to the Gieses, he asked, "We have the obligation to ask, 'Why weren't there others? Why weren't there more Gieses?'"