



JUN 29 1987

**DAILY NEWS BULLETIN**

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PUBLISHED BY JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY • 165 WEST 46TH STREET • NEW YORK, NY 10036-2574 • (212) 575-9370

VOL. 65 - 70th YEAR

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 1987

NO. 119

# **U.S. JEWISH GROUPS WELCOME WIDE-RANGING CHRISTIAN CRITICISM OF POPE'S MEETING WITH WALDHEIM**

NEW YORK, June 24 (JTA) -- American Jewish groups were heartened this week by the concurrent dismay of Catholic and Protestant leaders in the U.S. over the audience Pope John Paul II will grant Austrian President Kurt Waldheim at the Vatican Thursday.

They were especially gratified by the statement of Archbishop John May of St. Louis, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, that he sympathized with Jewish concerns and agreed with their urgent call for a "further dialogue" with the Pope on the issue.

"We particularly appreciate his sensitive comments about the importance of the Catholic-Jewish dialogue and friendship that has been achieved in this country," Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, said Tuesday. "We fully agree with him about the need to protect this achievement from the unhappy fall-out from the decision of the Vatican to grant an audience to Kurt Waldheim."

Gunther Lawrence, a spokesman for the Synagogue Council of America, an organization of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Jews, said: "We think the bishops are saying they understand the hurt of the Jewish community. We think it was highly commendable for the bishops to take the time and effort to speak out."

Msgr. Peter Finn, a spokesman for John Cardinal O'Connor, the Archbishop of New York, said O'Connor concurred with the statement by the Conference of Catholic Bishops. But he thought the bishops' role should be that of advisors and it was up to the Pope to decide whether there should be a further meeting.

## **Protestants Make Statement**

Eight Protestant churchmen, representing different denominations at leading American universities, signed a statement protesting the Pope's invitation to Waldheim. They agreed it "is primarily a Roman Catholic problem," but "as Protestants we want to make our distress known. The invitation disgraces the memory of Christian martyrs who opposed Nazi idolatry. The invitation dishonors the memory of the victims of the Nazi Holocaust. The wounds of the Lord's people cannot be sealed so lightly," the statement said, quoting Jeremiah 6:14.

The signatories are the Rev. Doctors Franklin Littell, United Methodist Church, Temple University; William Harter, United Presbyterian Church, Chambersburg, Pa.; Hubert Locke, The Christian Churches, University of Washington; David Lewis, Assemblies of God, Springfield, Mo.; A. Roy Eckardt, United Methodist Church, Lehigh University; James Wood Jr., Southern Baptist Convention, Baylor University; George Williams, United Church of Christ, Harvard University; and F. Burton Nelson, Evangelical Covenant Church, North Park Theological Seminary.

Three Catholic women leaders noted in a statement that the Pope's decision to grant an audience to Waldheim "has been interpreted by some as a papal gesture of forgiveness and recon-

ciliation. This is a dangerous interpretation and reason enough to dispute this ill-advised visit," they said.

It continued: "Society must judge Waldheim's deeds. But who on earth can forgive him? Surely such absolution ultimately lies in the hands of his victims, Jewish and non-Jewish...Whatever the Pope's motives were in agreeing to such a meeting, a public appearance together at an official audience appears as absolving Kurt Waldheim from the consequences of his actions...It can easily and unfortunately be interpreted as part of the pattern of the Church denying the consequences which its own long history of anti-Semitism have had for the Jewish people."

The statement was signed by Doctors Eva Fleischner, a member of the Advisory Committee for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Bishops; Sister Mary Jo Leddy, founding editor of The Catholic New Times of Toronto; and Sister Carol Rittner, director of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity in New York.

## **Appropriateness Questioned**

Catholic members of the Christian Study Group on Judaism and the Jewish People noted that Waldheim has been implicated in the execution of Serbian Christians and the deportation and execution of Jews in Greece and Yugoslavia.

"We understand that receiving heads of state does not imply Vatican approbation of those leaders' actions, either past or present," their statement said, recalling that the Pope has received military dictators such as Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti, Augusto Pinochet of Chile and Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines. "Nonetheless, the particularity of the Holocaust places in question the appropriateness of such a visit between the Pope and Mr. Waldheim."

The statement added, "As Roman Catholic scholars...we join our National Conference of Catholic Bishops in supporting the request by Jewish leaders that, prior to the Pope's September visit to the United States, there must be a substantive meeting between John Paul II and American Jewish leaders to clarify this and other issues regarding Jewish-Catholic relations."

The statement was signed by Sister Celia Deutsch, Sisters of Zion; the Rev. Edward Flannery, Diocese of Providence, RI; Dr. Eva Fleischner, Montclair State College; and the Rev. John Pawlikowski, Catholic Theological Union.

## **BEYOND OFFICIAL PROTEST, ISRAEL MUM ON POPE'S MEETING WITH WALDHEIM By David Landau**

JERUSALEM, June 24 (JTA) -- Israel, having lodged a formal protest against the meeting of Austrian President Kurt Waldheim with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican scheduled for Thursday morning, is withholding further comment pending the meeting's outcome.

Media reports here Wednesday said Israeli ambassadors in Europe have been advised to moderate their criticism for now. But an outraged Knesset would not be silent. Ezer Weizman, who is acting Foreign Minister in the absence of Shimon Peres, presently visiting Western Europe,

had a difficult time discouraging motions calling on the Knesset to demand that the Pope cancel his audience with Waldheim.

Weizman, responding for the government, said Israel would ask the Vatican for an official explanation of the invitation to Waldheim. He praised the Pope for his efforts to further Jewish-Catholic dialogue and for the solemn respect he has always shown to the memory of the Holocaust.

But Weizman lashed out at Waldheim, who has been accused of complicity in Nazi atrocities. He recalled his own dim view of the Austrian diplomat who served as United Nations Secretary General in the 1970's when Weizman was Israel's Defense Minister. "Without knowing what we now know, my feelings then fully reflected our present knowledge," Weizman said.

The newspaper Haaretz, citing Foreign Ministry sources, suggested Wednesday that Waldheim, a practicing Catholic, might confess his war crimes to the Pope and seek absolution. But that idea seemed far-fetched to Knesset members across the political spectrum who denounced the upcoming Vatican encounter.

Shulamit Aloni of the Citizens Rights Movement (CRM) said the meeting was hardly that of a penitent with his confessor, but rather of one head of state with another. It is a political encounter, she said.

Geula Cohen of the Tehiya Party said the Pope's invitation to Waldheim showed that the Pope is very fallible and that the Holy See still has not freed itself from its ancient hatred of the Jews. "For Jews there was a connection between the cross and the swastika," she said.

Shimon Ben-Shlomo of the Shas Party said the Pope has broken the worldwide taboo against Waldheim. Avner Sciaki of the National Religious Party said he was grieved by the absence of protest from other countries.

#### FRENCH CATHOLIC LEADERS UPSET, SURPRISED BY WALDHEIM MEETING, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF POPE'S RECORD

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, June 24 (JTA) -- Albert Cardinal DeCourtray, the ranking Roman Catholic prelate in France, said Wednesday that he was pained by the audience granted Austrian President Kurt Waldheim by Pope John Paul II and failed to understand the rationale. He said he spoke for all French bishops.

DeCourtray, who as Primate of Gaul is considered the head of the Catholic Church in France, said the meeting to take place at the Vatican Thursday "shows a total misperception of Jewish sensibility."

He made his statement after visiting a temporary Holocaust memorial erected by the Jewish community of Lyon for the duration of the trial there of Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie. DeCourtray, who was accompanied by the Chief Rabbi of Lyon, Richard Wertenschlag, said: "Maybe I personally have a good perception of Jewish feelings because of my close relations with the Jewish community. I do not feel, however, that the meeting, though it will leave a scar, will adversely affect the rapprochement between Catholics and Jews for which we have labored these last few years." He added, "The Pope is certainly totally above any suspicion." Nevertheless, the Cardinal said he will convey to the Vatican the many letters of protest he has re-

ceived from the French Jewish community "and I shall certainly add my own comments."

#### Said He Represents Colleagues

He said, "I know that Cardinal (Jean-Marie) Lustiger (the Archbishop of Paris) and other Catholic bishops share my own feelings on this subject. I am spontaneously expressing their sentiments."

DeCourtray has been active in negotiations leading to an agreement not to establish a Carmelite convent at the site of the Auschwitz death camp, ground hallowed by the memory of the Jews who perished there. He has also worked to improve relations between Catholics and Jews in France.

When he said he "felt a certain pain" on learning that the Pope planned to receive Waldheim and that he couldn't understand the rationale, he seemed to be expressing the astonishment of Catholics and Jews over the decision by a Pope who has given his personal blessings to Catholic-Jewish reconciliation.

The Pope's visit to the main synagogue in Rome on April 13, 1986 was seen as a turning point in the ambivalent relations between the two religions. He used the occasion to condemn anti-Semitism and paid tribute to the Jewish people as "our beloved brothers."

Catholic sources said the Pope himself urged the Catholic delegation to find a mutually satisfactory solution to the Carmelite convent controversy. It was eventually decided to dismantle the convent out of respect to Jewish martyrdom during the Holocaust.

During his trip to West Germany earlier this year, the Pontiff went out of his way to condemn Nazism and anti-Semitism in the strongest language. Last month, on a visit to his native Poland, he visited the site of the Maidanek concentration camp where he spoke of the persecution suffered by Polish Jewry and assured a delegation of survivors of his "special fraternity" with them.

It was shortly after his return to Rome that the Waldheim visit was announced.

#### CANADIAN BILL WOULD ALLOW FOR PROSECUTION OF WAR CRIMES COMMITTED OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY

By Michael Solomon

OTTAWA, June 24 (JTA) -- Justice Minister Ramon Hnatyshyn introduced sweeping legislation in the House of Commons Tuesday to amend the Criminal Code to allow suspected Nazi war criminals to be tried in Canada for crimes committed outside Canadian territory.

The legislation, which the Minister termed "historic," would also amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act to bar suspected war criminals from entry into Canada and to deny citizenship to suspects, even if they have not been convicted.

Hnatyshyn said he hoped his measures would be enacted into law before Parliament recesses for the summer next Tuesday. It has the strong support of two opposition leaders, former Solicitor General Robert Kaplan of the Liberal Party and Svend Robinson of the New Democrats. They pledged to do everything they can to convince their colleagues to back it. Major Jewish organizations which have been lobbying for such legislation for more than a decade hailed the measure. Representatives of the Canadian Jewish Congress,

the League for Human Rights of B'nai B'rith Canada and the North American Jewish Students Network stressed the importance of its swift passage so that prosecutions can be initiated before any more war criminals and witnesses die of old age.

Hnatyshyn called the bill "a generic war crimes law" because, he said, "it deals with war crimes wherever they were committed without reference to any particular set of events." It is based on the premise that these acts would have seemed criminal had they been committed in Canada, he explained.

The legislation will clear the way for the prosecution of as many as 20 suspected war criminals identified in the report submitted to the government by the Deschenes Commission last December as still alive and living in Canada. The Commission, headed by Quebec Superior Court Justice Jules Deschenes also recommended that the government prosecute 218 other cases.

A special team of eight Justice Ministry lawyers and three officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has been set up to gather evidence. Hnatyshyn said, however, that he had "no idea" when the first prosecutions would begin. "It is a priority for us," he said.

The Immigration Act will be amended so that "in the future, persons who are reasonably believed to have committed war crimes or crimes against humanity" will not be admitted into Canada or may be ordered deported if found here.

Immigration Minister Benoit Bouchard said he would decide to which country they will be deported. However, he said, to apply deportation to all persons "in the past" would have raised the problem of what to do with persons already in Canada. Consequently, the government decided earlier this year it would try suspected Nazi war criminals in Canada rather than send them to the Soviet Union, Europe or Israel.

#### Broadens Jurisdiction

But "without the amendment to the Criminal Code, there are cases under consideration that could not be prosecuted in Canada because the criminal code (as it stands) only applies to offenses committed on our territory," Hnatyshyn said. "We want to get prosecutions where prosecutions are possible and a proper and complete investigation of all remaining files in addition," the Justice Minister told the House of Commons.

The amendment to the Immigration Act would ban Canadian citizens under investigation elsewhere from trying to return to Canada to avoid trial for war crimes in another country.

Asked if the blanket ban on the admission of suspected war criminals would extend to President Kurt Waldheim of Austria, Immigration Minister Bouchard said: "That's a very delicate subject. Was this person effectively recognized as having committed war crimes?"

The legislation also would deny Canadian citizenship to people "under investigation" for war crimes or crimes against humanity. Secretary of State David Crombie said citizenship would be denied to persons only suspected, not convicted, "to make sure that no one will abuse the spirit of the act" by becoming a Canadian citizen while under investigation.

Hnatyshyn said he did not know how many, if any, of the war crimes suspects identified in the Deschenes report have left Canada since the report was submitted seven months ago.

#### **FRANCE PLEDGES HELP IN ACHIEVING MIDEAST PEACE TO VISITING PERES**

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, June 24 (JTA) -- French President Francois Mitterrand backed Wednesday the need for a continuation of the peace process in the Middle East. Mitterrand, who conferred for an hour with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres at the Elysee, is reported to have said that France will do whatever it can to help peace.

Peres earlier conferred with French Foreign Minister Jean Bernard Raymond. The French, diplomatic sources said, told Peres: "The Soviets are already in the Middle East. The main point is trying to influence their policies there."

Peres had come to France as part of a four-nation tour of Western Europe to obtain visible backing for his peace process which involves an international peace conference on the Middle East, a project hotly opposed by Premier Yitzhak Shamir and the Likud.

Peres is due to meet Thursday with Premier Jacques Chirac and will leave Friday for Switzerland for talks with Swiss President and Foreign Minister Pierre Aubert. He is due to meet Monday in Cologne with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of West Germany.

On Tuesday, Peres received the backing of British Premier Margaret Thatcher for an international conference as "the most practical way forward" to peace negotiations, official British sources said.

#### **WAR CRIMES FILES SHOW HITLER ORDERED MASS MURDER, ISRAELIS SAY**

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, June 24 (JTA) -- A preliminary study of the 500 files Israel obtained from the United Nations War Crimes Commission archive on June 5 confirms that the Nazis embarked on the extermination of Jews in the early stages of World War II, with the active participation of Adolf Hitler, the Israel Mission to the United Nations disclosed Wednesday.

The documents revealed for the first time that Hitler personally ordered the mass murder of 10,000 Jewish women and children in the Latvian village of Skirotawa, near Riga, in 1941, while Jewish men were sent to slave-labor camps.

According to the Israelis, this is the first documentary evidence of Hitler's direct involvement in the destruction of European Jews. Historians until now have been unable to find written orders from Hitler setting the "Final Solution" into motion.

Study of the archives also revealed that of the 142,000 Czech Jews killed as of July 1943, 51,000 were women and 49,000 were under age 21.

The documents under study include the files on Hitler, his deputy Martin Bormann, Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels, Reichsfuhrer Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich, Auschwitz death camp doctor Josef Mengele and Klaus Barbie, the former Gestapo chief in Lyon currently on trial there for crimes against humanity.

The Israel Mission said there is additional information on medical experiments performed on inmates of various death camps and a comprehensive list of the Nazi officers who operated the Maidanek, Stothoff and Treblinka death camps.

# ACCUSED NAZI SKIPS DEPORTATION HEARING FOR PARAGUAY, LAWYER SAYS By Steve Feldman Jewish Exponent

PHILADELPHIA, June 24 (JTA) -- Serge Kowalchuk, an alleged Nazi during World War II who has been convicted of lying about his past on his request for an American visa and later citizenship, failed to appear at a deportation hearing here Friday. His attorney divulged that he has fled to Paraguay to avoid the possibility of being returned to face trial in the Soviet Union.

According to Ronnie Edelman, an attorney for the Office of Special Investigations of the U.S. Department of Justice, the proceedings against Kowalchuk, 67 of Philadelphia, will be held in absentia, with the OSI seeking an order of deportation from Immigration and Naturalization Service Judge Bruce Michael Barrett.

Edelman said the government asked in February 1986 that Kowalchuk be deported, probably to the Ukraine, where he worked closely with Nazis while serving in the local Ukrainian militia, according to the Justice Department.

The order to deport would not result in any action since Kowalchuk is no longer in the country.

It "would be pointless" to bring him back to the United States and send him away to another country again, said Edelman, ruling out any reason for the United States to extradite him from Paraguay. The attorney stressed that if the order to deport is given, Kowalchuk would be barred from re-entering the United States.

The Philadelphia Daily News has reported that according to Kowalchuk's attorney, John Rogers Carroll, Kowalchuk has been granted admission to Paraguay for a year.

The newspaper also reported that Tass, the official Soviet news agency, said that Kowalchuk, "if deported to the Ukraine, would face trial as a war criminal before the district assembly."

## EMIGRE RIMMA BRAVVE DEAD AT 32 By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, June 24 (JTA) -- Rimma Bravve died Monday at her home in Rochester, NY, from ovarian cancer that had spread to other parts of her body. The former Moscow refusenik, 32, was surrounded by her family including her mother, Khanna Abinder, husband Vladimir, and sister Larisa Shapiro.

Bravve made news last November when the Soviet Ambassador to the Helsinki Accords follow-up talks in Vienna announced to a large international delegation that Bravve had been granted a visa to emigrate when, in fact, she had not. Shapiro, a Soviet emigre living in the U.S. since 1976, travelled to Vienna with her mother and others working on behalf of refusenik cancer patients to publicize Bravve's plight. She issued strong appeals for her sister's emigration via the Jewish media and through the assistance of Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R. NY), who pushed her case in Vienna and through Soviet and U.S. State Department contacts in Washington.

Bravve finally received a visa, along with her husband, last December 12, and arrived here December 19. Bravve was the second of a group of five known as the International Cancer Pat-

ients Solidarity Committee, founded by a Montreal oncologist Dr. Gerald Batist. Batist had visited Bravve in Moscow the previous spring and, after seeing other refuseniks suffering from cancer, mounted a campaign to highlight their plight. Bravve and other cancer patient refuseniks held a press conference in Moscow in June to talk about their situation. Since then, press conferences were held throughout the U.S. and Canada engaging government figures in efforts to obtain their emigration.

Bravve's story was especially touching because she had received a visa in December 1979, with her husband, and had booked a flight out of Moscow for January 17, 1980. However, a week earlier the Bravves were asked to surrender their visas for "clarification" and did not get them back. Bravve's cancer was diagnosed in 1984. Burial was scheduled for Wednesday in Rochester.

## WZO CHAIRMANSHIP COMPROMISE SMOOTHES RIFT BETWEEN ZIONISTS, NON-ZIONISTS AT JEWISH AGENCY GENERAL ASSEMBLY By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 24 (JTA) -- The World Zionist Organization appears to have paved the way toward reconciliation between the Zionist and non-Zionist elements of the Jewish Agency. The WZO Executive decided this week that the chairmanships of the various WZO departments, elected at the World Zionist Congress next December, will remain open for the following 30 days subject to the advice and consent of the non-Zionist half of the Jewish Agency.

The decision was seen as a concession to the non-Zionists and an attempt to arrest the deterioration of relations between the two halves of the Jewish Agency. It applies to such key WZO departments as Aliya, Youth Aliya, Education and Settlement. Persons elected to the chairmanship of those departments automatically assume chairmanship of their Jewish Agency counterparts.

The decision does not apply, however, to the elected chairman of the WZO Executive, who is also chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive. But the advice and consent procedure for department heads would give the WZO a degree of flexibility, allowing it to shuffle portfolios if the non-Zionists should reject a particular individual for a particular department.

### Apparent Dissatisfaction

There has been mounting dissatisfaction in the non-Zionist constituency with the election process at World Zionist Congresses, which involves inter-party politicking. In recent years, several Zionist nominees were rejected by fundraising leaders who comprise the non-Zionist group.

Leon Dulzin, chairman of the WZO and Jewish Agency Executives who addressed the Jewish Agency Assembly meeting here this week, warned against "a power struggle" between the two Agency partners. "I have been disturbed by voices I have heard lately on both sides: 'We give the money, we will make the decisions,' or 'We do the work, we will make the decisions,'" Dulzin said. He urged a complete merger of the two wings and resolved to erase the term non-Zionist from the vocabulary because it is "anachronistic and irrelevant."