

**PANEL INVESTIGATING WALDHEIM'S
MILITARY SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II
BEGINS ITS WORK BEHIND CLOSED DOORS**
By Reinhard Engel

VIENNA, Sept. 3 (JTA) -- An international commission charged with sorting out the facts of Austrian President Kurt Waldheim's military service during World War II commenced its work Wednesday behind closed doors.

The commission will deal with the questions of whether Waldheim was directly involved in war crimes, what did he know about operations and was he personally able to influence them.

The commission is headed by Swiss military historian Hans Rudolf Kurz and includes an Israeli military historian from Tel Aviv University, Yehuda Wallach; a former U.S. General, James Collins; the director of the Institute for Military History at the University of Freiburg in West Germany, Manfred Messerschmidt; a former professor at the Surrey University in Britain, Gerald Fleming; and a professor at the Belgian Center for Research on the History of the Second World War, Jean Vanwelkenhuyzen.

Commission head Kurz drew sharp criticism on Wednesday after a private meeting between him and Waldheim became public. Kurz defended himself saying he wanted to "get in touch on a human basis." He claimed he would also have met representatives of the World Jewish Congress, had they approached him.

The World Jewish Congress initiated the investigation that exposed Waldheim's membership in a Nazi unit implicated in the death and deportation of thousands of Jews, Serbs and Greeks during World War II.

The members of the commission have insisted on complete independence from the Austrian government and government officials have pledged to abide by their request. But Foreign Minister Alois Mock confirmed that there was "administrative support" for the work of the commission.

Sorting Out Two Different Accounts

The task of the commission is to sort through the two radically different accounts of Waldheim's war service, one put forth by the World Jewish Congress and accepted by the U.S. government, the other put forth by Waldheim himself in a recently published White Book. Waldheim's critics accuse him of being an intelligence officer in the Balkans whose unit was involved in the deportation of Greek Jews and atrocities in Yugoslavia. Waldheim claims he was a minor figure with no commanding power and little knowledge of atrocities.

The Israeli member of the commission, Wallach, told Austrian radio in an interview that Israel "should and must be interested in clear knowledge and conclusions in that matter." This is the reason, Wallach said, he chose to cooperate with the investigation.

Wallach brought almost 30 pounds of documents with him but said there are still gaps he will try to fill. He added that the commission would call witnesses to testify.

**DEFENSE MINISTRY ESTABLISHES FOUR
TEAMS TO WIND DOWN LAVI PROJECT**

By Hugh Orgel

Tel Aviv, Sept. 3 (JTA) -- Four special teams established by the Defense Ministry are working on winding down the Lavi project, with "the objective of causing the minimum possible harm in the level of employment at Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI)," Haaretz reported Thursday.

Defense Ministry Director-General David Ivri is coordinating the work of the teams.

One team will be leaving later in the month for the U.S., where its main work will be to examine contracts signed with American companies, and the amount Israel will have to pay them in compensation.

The second team will focus on closing down the project in Israel, and will conduct negotiations on the amount of compensation to be paid to Israeli companies that signed Lavi-related contracts.

Members of the third team will be responsible for employment issues, and will examine the possibility of worker mobility, and absorbing workers dismissed from IAI and other factories in new places of employment.

The fourth team, working with the Israel Defense Force, will examine the possibility of the army using a variety of Lavi components, which would prevent the shutdown of some parts of the Lavi project. This team will also look into the possibility of increasing IDF orders from IAI.

AMBIVALENCE ABOUT A HISTORIC MEETING

By Margie Olster

NEW YORK, Sept. 3 (JTA) -- The 75-minute meeting between Pope John Paul II and nine Jewish leaders Tuesday -- hailed by some participants as a historic new beginning -- has met with sharp criticism by some American Jewish figures who claim that the Vatican avoided all substantive topics of concern and that no real progress was made.

Rabbi Balfour Brickner of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue here said the meetings "did not break any new ground" but served the purpose of damage control.

"The exchange cleared the air. It gave everybody a face-saving opportunity to allow the Jewish community an opportunity to participate in the Miami meeting (with the Pope September 11). What is critical is that American Catholic-Jewish relations not be affected because this is where they really work," Brickner said.

Archbishop John May of St. Louis, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, called the meetings "positive and constructive." He said the Vatican's stated commitment this week to increased consultations with Jewish leaders on decisions which affect Jews is a new development in Vatican-Jewish relations.

Earlier this month, the Pope sent May a letter thanking him for compiling a book of the Pope's statements over the years on Jews and Judaism. The letter included a sympathetic account of Jewish suffering during the Holocaust.

May also said individual American Catholic bishops who had conveyed Jewish dismay over the Waldheim meeting had been instrumental in arranging a meeting in New York between Vatican Secretary of State Agostino Cardinal Casaroli and Jewish representatives which paved the way for this week's discussions.

"I am very happy about the meeting and think it's a good basis for the meeting next week in Miami," May said.

A Landmark... But

One of the participants, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, reflected the ambivalent reactions of Jews to the meeting, calling it a "landmark in the history of Catholic-Jewish relations," but expressing dissatisfaction with some aspects of the exchange.

The delegation "did not accept" the Pope's explanation of why he had received Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, accused of Nazi war crimes, Schindler said. "Nor did we find persuasive the Pope's statement on why the Vatican has not yet recognized Israel," he said.

A joint communique issued by participants in the meetings touched upon the four main topics raised by the Jewish delegation but some said the document fell short of addressing the substance of those issues.

On the top of that agenda was Jewish bitterness over the Pope's reception of Waldheim in an audience last June 25. In the weeks leading up to the meetings, the Vatican had insisted privately in correspondences with the Jewish representatives that the subject of Waldheim not even be raised at the meeting with the Pope. Consequently, some viewed the admission of Waldheim's name to the talks a victory for the Jewish delegation, and a defeat for Waldheim.

But the Vatican did not apologize or concede a mistake in the Waldheim audience nor was such a reaction expected by the Jewish delegation. The joint communique said "The Catholic delegation acknowledged the seriousness of and the church's sensitivity to those Jewish concerns, and set forth the serious reasons behind the judgement of the Holy See." This was the only comment addressing the Waldheim controversy from a Vatican perspective in the entire document.

Claims Little Was Accomplished

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress -- which was represented in the delegation -- said the meeting accomplished very little. However, he noted that the Vatican had at least given in on the Waldheim issue, acknowledged sensitivity to Jewish anger and called this "a slap in the face to Waldheim."

Rabbi Avi Weiss of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, NY, said the meeting resembled more of an audience than a dialogue and claimed "nothing substantive came out of the meeting. The Pope did not respond to concerns raised by Jews on the Waldheim visit. Nor did he respond to the issue of recognition of Israel."

Weiss has led protests against Waldheim internationally. On the occasion of Waldheim's inauguration, Weiss protested in Austria and when the Pope received Waldheim at the Vatican, Weiss and his supporters dressed in black-and-white-striped garb symbolizing Jewish prisoners of the Holocaust and demonstrated outside the Vatican.

Weiss added, "I think many of the Jews emerged from the meeting terribly dissatisfied.

But they want to make it look as good as possible."

He noted that the Pope will probably meet Waldheim again in June when he makes a state visit to Austria.

The Issue Of Israel

The discussions of the question of the Vatican's absence of diplomatic relations with Israel, also one of the four main agenda topics, drew critical responses from observers and participants.

The joint communique said the Vatican declared "there exist no theological reasons in Catholic doctrine that would inhibit such relations, but noted that there do exist some serious and unresolved problems in the area." The communique restated the Vatican's opposition to diplomatic relations because of political questions which were noted in the past to include the status of Jerusalem and the Palestinian question.

"The central question of Israel has been left in abeyance," Steinberg said. "This still remains the principle obstacle to betterment of Vatican-Israel relations. You cannot normalize relations with the Jewish people unless you normalize relations with the Jewish State."

Weiss echoed this sentiment, saying, "If the Vatican does not recognize Israel, it does not recognize me."

'Realistic In Our Expectation'

Seymour Reich, international president of B'nai Brith who met with the Pope said "We were realistic in our expectations... We did not expect the Pope to apologize for meeting with Kurt Waldheim, nor did we expect the Vatican to announce the commencement of diplomatic relations with Israel.

"Nevertheless, both subjects were aired and the Church now knows the depth and intensity of Jewish feelings on these matters. I must also add, frankly, that while I was not satisfied with the Church's response concerning diplomatic relations with Israel, we will continue to pursue the issue."

Although the Vatican did respond to a third item on the Jewish delegation's agenda, concern over revisionism of the Holocaust, by saying it was preparing a paper on the topic, this is also not a new development. The formulation of an official Catholic document on the Holocaust and historical anti-Semitism was announced more than a year ago on the occasion of another Jewish delegation's visit to the Holy See.

It remains unclear, though, whether the Vatican will address the Catholic Church's role during the Holocaust in that paper, which was one of the concerns expressed by the Jewish delegation and others.

Achievements Should Not Be Exaggerated

Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress and also a member of the Jewish delegation, played down the significance of the meeting. "What was achieved in Rome should not be exaggerated; it is far too early to describe our achievement in Rome as historic. We averted permanent damage to the newly developing relationship between Catholics and Jews that might have been harmed by the unfortunate audience granted Kurt Waldheim by Pope John Paul II."

A letter by the American Jewish Congress following the Waldheim audience -- in which it declared it would boycott the Miami meeting with

the Pope and Jewish representatives in Miami and called on the Pope to address the question of the role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and historical anti-Semitism -- was one of the catalysts for this week's meetings in Rome.

UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS AGAINST JEWS MEETING POPE

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Sept. 3 (JTA) -- The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Thursday that it strongly opposed any meeting of Jewish leaders with the Pope in Rome and in Miami next week. The Union's director, Rabbi Hersch Ginsberg, emphasized that they are opposed to Jews meeting with the head of the Catholic Church at any time. Ginsberg explained that their reason is halachic and not political.

Ginsberg said that the Union had contacted the Rabbinical Council of America prior to the visit of Jewish leaders with Pope John Paul II and advised them not to send anyone to Rome. He said the Union hadn't come out with a statement at the time because they had felt that personal contact would be strong enough. "Because they didn't listen," said Ginsberg, "the Union is now issuing a public statement."

Ginsberg said the Union, the oldest rabbinical organization in the U.S., founded in 1900, bases its decision on a response by the late Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, printed in *Egrotz Moshe*, Yorah Deah, Vol. 3, Response No. 43. He said the response was written in 1964 to Rabbi Joseph Soloveichik of Boston, at a time when Jewish leaders wanted to go to Rome to talk to Pope John XXIII.

Feinstein's response stipulates specifically that according to Jewish law, it is strictly prohibited to meet with the head of the Church. Feinstein mentions the Pope specifically, Ginsberg said. He added that this response includes even social meetings, because this is considered as leading to "avodah zarah," idol worship.

Ginsberg emphasized that "we are not taking any revenge on anyone, like Waldheim. This is a strictly halachic response."

Ginsberg said the Union had come out with a very strong statement against condemning the Pope, "because we felt this is pikuach nefesh (healing)." He said they felt such condemnation "could cause anti-Semitism, could cause revenge by Gentiles against Jews, and we believe in living on very good terms with the Gentiles. We would not insult or abuse the Pope. We just go according to the halacha, which does not permit either dialogue or social meetings with the Pope."

ARAFAT TO GENEVA FOR NGO MEETING ON PALESTINE QUESTION

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Sept. 3 (JTA) -- Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat is expected here Monday to participate in the international meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) dealing with the question of Palestine and the call for a Middle East peace conference. The conference takes place September 7-9.

Arafat is scheduled to address the gathering and hold a press conference. The keynote address will be given by U.S. Rep. Nick Joe Rahall (D. W. Va.). Also participating is Vladimir Vinogradov, Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Israeli

delegation to the United Nations here is planning to counter the conference with press briefings.

Beginning September 3, the NGO international coordinating committee is holding seminars on the Palestinian problem at the Ecumenical Center. There will also be an exhibition of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and a sale of handicraft by women from Lebanon and the Israel-administered territories.

Israeli, Palestinian and French authors are expected to sell and autograph their books. A festival of films on the Palestinian problem will be held at a local cinema.

Swiss authorities do not appear eager to have Arafat here. President and Foreign Minister Pierre Auber refused to receive the PLO leader. Instead, he will be received by general manager of the Ministry Edouard Brunner. One of the apparent reasons for Auber's reluctance to meet with Arafat is the July hijacking of an Air Afrique jet by a Lebanese terrorist, Hussein Ali Mohammed Hariri, who was captured at the Geneva airport after killing a French passenger and wounding a steward. Hariri, imprisoned in Switzerland, is expected to stand trial here on charges of air piracy and murder. Switzerland has been geared for Arab terrorist reprisals since the hijacking.

FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL CHIEF SAYS USSR MUST BE BROUGHT INTO THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Sept. 3 (JTA) -- William Quandt, who directed Middle East affairs in President Carter's National Security Council, said Thursday that the Soviet Union must be brought into the Middle East peace process if progress is to be achieved.

The United States can no longer be the lone intermediary in the Mideast, Quandt said in a talk at the Brookings Institution, where he is a senior fellow.

Quandt, who said he had long been opposed to including the Soviets, said his views changed after his summer tour of Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Syria, that, he said, left him "skeptical and pessimistic" about any chances for progress.

If peace could be achieved through negotiations just between Israel and Jordan, then the U.S. could be the lone intermediary, as it was in the Egyptian-Israeli peace talks, Quandt said.

But, he stressed, Jordan cannot make peace with Israel without either the support of Syria or the Palestinians, and the U.S. "does not have much influence" with either. However, the Soviets do, he added.

Critical Of Reagan Administration

At the same time, Quandt criticized the Reagan Administration for failing to be more actively involved in the Mideast peace process. He said the Administration mistakenly believed that it should only act after the parties involved have taken the "necessary" steps to move toward negotiations.

But, Quandt argued that once the parties have shown willingness to negotiate, the U.S. is needed to push them along. "Any time we have made progress in the past, it is been after a heavy dose of leadership from the United States from the outside," he said.

He explained that when Israeli and Arab leaders have to make difficult political decisions "it's a lot easier to say 'the Americans made us

do it." He pointed to the Israel Cabinet's decision to abandon development of the Lavi fighter plane which he noted many in Israel wanted to do, but found it helpful to stress that the decision was needed to prevent a deterioration in relations with the U.S.

On the Soviet Union, Quandt said that there had been "encouraging talks" about the Mideast recently between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, as well as signs that the USSR was moving from its "traditional positions" of "inflexibility" in the Mideast where it only dealt with the intransigent Arab countries.

He said the Soviet Union appears to support an international conference that would neither dictate the terms to the parties nor impose a veto on any decisions reached through bilateral talks. He said the Soviets also seem to support the Palestinians being part of a Jordanian delegation without any formal participation in the negotiations by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

But Quandt said that the Soviets, like the U.S., do not consider the Mideast peace process a priority item.

SHAS PARTY QUILTS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

JERUSALEM, Sept. 3 (JTA) -- The ultra-Orthodox Shas Party quit the City Council Thursday to protest the screening of films on the Sabbath and vowed more street demonstrations if the Sabbath continued to be desecrated. The move does not threaten Mayor Teddy Kollek's city coalition but underscores religious bitterness over the screenings. Shas has three seats on the 31-member Council.

Deputy Mayor Nissim Zeev of Shas told reporters that "as long as the disturbances continue in Jerusalem, the Holy City, we cannot stand by and give legitimacy to all that happens." Shas' resignation becomes effective at the Council's next meeting later this month.

A spokesperson for Kollek said "We are sorry to see them go because they represent a certain percentage of the population. We are sorry they cannot see that there are other citizens in this city who have desires that should be respected." The ultra-Orthodox make up 25 percent of the city's population.

MOSCOW FAIR TO EXHIBIT JEWISH BOOKS

NEW YORK, Sept. 3 (JTA) -- Jewish Book Publishers is exhibiting more than 1,000 titles from more than 115 American publishers, including about 15 university presses, at the sixth Moscow International Book Fair, Sept. 8 through 14.

Members of the Russian Jewish community who attend the book fair will have an opportunity to examine Bibles and Talmuds, as well as books on Jewish religion, thought, art, history, holidays, mysticism, poetry and literature.

The exhibit includes children's books, educational materials and works on Chasidism, Jewish life and prayer, and the Holocaust. Most of the books are in English, but a number are in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian.

During the fair, the association expects to distribute 18,000 copies of a 64-page catalog and illustrated poster prepared by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. The catalog contains a list of the books and publishers at the exhibit as

well as information about the Jewish family, holidays and life-cycle events.

Featured in the catalog are a narration of "nachas" from Charles Silberman's "A Certain People" and an evocation of Shabbat memories by Elie Wiesel.

The colored poster includes an illustration of a 1797 menorah, a four-year Jewish calendar and a short description of the major Jewish holidays.

The association's participation in the book fair is being supported by the Lucius N. Littauer and the Joseph Meyerhoff foundations.

Founded in 1962, the Association of Jewish Book Publishers is a non-profit organization of more than 40 publishers for the discussion of mutual concerns by those producing books of Jewish interest.

TOGOLESE PRESIDENT ASKS AJWS FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

MONTREAL, Sept. 3 (JTA) -- President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo met Thursday in Quebec City with Laurence Simon, president of the American Jewish World Service, to finalize plans with AJWS for assistance with the critical problem of grain storage in this West African nation, it was reported by the AJWS.

The meeting with Eyadema was the culmination of a series of meetings between Simon and Togolese officials including, Foreign Minister Yaovi Adodo and UN Ambassador Kwam Kauassi.

In those discussions, the AJWS said, Adodo emphasized his country's numerous unsuccessful attempts at decreasing post-harvest grain losses which reach 40 percent in good years and in poor years can be as high as 60 percent. Simon travelled to Quebec City at Eyadema's invitation, where the President was attending a meeting of Franco-phone nations.

At the meeting, it was agreed that AJWS's work in Togo will commence by the end of this year with a review and analysis of grain storage problems. AJWS's work in Togo will become part of its larger grain storage program which is testing new storage technologies for use in developing nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America, where losses as severe as those in Togo are common.

AJWS staff and Trustees, and Israeli grain storage experts, will participate in the review in conjunction with the Minister of Rural Development of Togo, the AJWS reported.

Togo recently joined the growing number of African nations to reestablish relations with Israel.

The centerpiece of the AJWS program is the testing of a revolutionary, low-cost plastic grain silo developed by the Volcani Center, Israel's leading agricultural institute. Use of the Volcani silo in Israel's Negev has reduced post-harvest grain losses to less than one-tenth of one percent. This is the lowest known loss for any type of grain storage system in use anywhere in the world.

The Volcani silo's inventors consider the silo a reliable technology for semi-arid regions, like the Negev, and are confident that through testing it can be adapted for use in semi-tropical regions.

Eyadema expressed his country's strong interest in becoming a test site for the Volcani silo, with the hope that Togo's experience could be shared with other nations of West Africa.