process: continuity and change. They are rooted in the tension between the demands imposed by the American ethos and legacy, on the one hand, and the exigencies of a circumstantially dynamic world on the other.

When President Harding declared, "We seek no part in directing the destinies of the old World (and) we do not mean to be entangled."[40] he was simply amplifying a very confident, but exaggerated attitude in the nation's ability to shape its own destiny in the international arena. Within two decades President Roosevelt suggested a very different picture, one in which the United States could no longer consider its own problems of security a separate interest. That is why, with the American government declaring Turkey vital to the national interest of the United States and extending Lend Lease assistance, a new course in policy for the United States in the eastern Mediterranean was made, It laid the foundation for United States political and military involvement with Greece and Turkey. At the time, the coefficient of friction among the three states was negligible but that, as we have come to know, was short lived.

[40]*USFR*, 1922, 2, p. 922.

The Question of Waldheim's Wartime Guilt in the Balkans

HAGEN FLEISCHER

IT IS NOT WITHOUT HESITATION, THAT I HAVE DECIDED TO BEGIN this lecture with a piece of personal biography. In 1971/72, while preparing my Ph.D on the Fascist occupation in Greece, I encountered the name Waldheim in the records several times. The name in question is not common in the German-speaking world, nevertheless this could have been a coincidence. However, at the same time, I made dozens of interviews with former Greek guerilla leaders as well as with veterans of the Wehrmacht. In the course of discussion, two of the latter confirmed to me that the young intelligence officer of the German General Staff in the Balkans was indeed the same man as the ambitious politician who at that very time was trying to further his career in Austrian politics and then, after a setback in the presidential elections, had jumped back to the international scene, successfully campaigning for the vacant post of UN Secretary-General. From one of these officers, at one time his direct superior, I got a photograph showing Waldheim, together with his staff, in Athens — a picture which, in 1986, would go round the world, since it is to date the only one known from occupied Greece.

However, I 'd made those inquiries rather out of personal curiosity, adding a piece to my personal collection of odd bits of information about the curricula of famous people — just as I had noted that among the Orthodox archbishops of Greece during the last half century one had been a professional wrestler, another an outstanding figure in intelligence work, a third had served in the dubious role of father confessor in civil war concentration camps, while the incumbent dignitary had been a guerilla fighter.

Somewhere in the same category I classified Kurt Waldheim. I was convinced, and my professor, whom I consulted, agreed with me, that

the records in question did not contain anything sensational, insofar as Waldheim was concerned. In spite of their bureaucratic dullness, the files were revealing about the extent of the various levels of Nazi oppression, among which were not only the exceeding outrages but also often "pacificatory" measures of occupational routine, such as large scale liquidation of hostages, which violated law and morality. Yet those documents I saw, also showed that Waldheim, as a junior staff officer, had no power of command, and so he was not in a position to give orders which resulted in war crimes. He just reported on them.

At that time, I did not realize the whole spectrum of Waldheim's activities, and I did not pursue any more research on him. In particular, however, I did not imagine that Waldheim had attempted to bury this period and his military service in the Balkans, concealing them systematically from his various curricula, interviews and memoirs.

As I stated previously, that fact that a German or Austrian of his age served in the army and was posted in an occupied country could not be considered sensational in itself. Refusing service would have been an act of resistance and such heroic acts were not usually required of diplomats and few people would have minded. Yet the information given by these documents was made sensational in an a posteriori fashion by Waldheim's lying or, shall we say, "selective amnesia" about his past which even gave grounds to suspicion that he might have been involved in much worse.

As we learned later, in the years, of Waldheim's terms as UN General Secretary, there repeatedly circulated rumors about his Balkan entanglement but very few people, if any, knew anything concrete. And none of them who knew went public — with various motivation, as we might suspect. Some had the same reason as I did, others presumably held their knowledge in reserve for future use since they assumed — not without a certain amount of justification — that Waldheim would be a potential victim for blackmail.

These people, if they existed, I repeat, knew that Waldheim's official war history contained more gaps than answers. All versions of his carefully edited autobiographic story mentioned that he had been wounded in 1941, when serving on the Russian front. In consequence, he continued "being incapacitated for further service on the front," he resumed his law studies, completed his Ph. D., met his future wife and happily married her in 1944. In a few of his various accounts, he added vaguely that he was eventually recalled to armed service, connecting this admission with misleading formulations such as: "Shortly before the end of the war, I was in the area of Trieste."

With regard to the three years between, "the missing years," as Prof. Herzsteing, one of his recent biographers aptly named his book,

Waldheim recollected only his studies in law and love but not an iota concerning the lawless and merciless machinery of Nazi occupation in the Balkans, of which he was a cog. Later on, he would try to defend himself by arguing that he had mentioned only "those events and episodes which bear some significance fot the course of history."

This admission had become necessary, since after four comfortable decades, the still but deep waters of Waldheim's national and international career was suddenly disturbed by sharks. The "elder statesman" had decided in 1985 to run a second time for president on behalf of the conservative People's Party. Due to this challenge, historians and journalists close to leading circles of the competing Austrian Socialists started scrutinizing the Archives in order to find out whether there was any substance behind the rumors concerning his past.

In March 1986 the first results showed up and were duly leaked to the press, revealing Waldheim's rather loose linkage with two secondary Nazi organizations, the SA — Riding Corps and the NS Students' Union, as well as his service in Military Intelligence and on other posts in the Balkans.

A few days later, the correspondent of Reuter's had contacted me and asked for my comments. During the next days, I would have to repeat this story several times which could be summarized in two major points.

1) Due to his advantageous position in the intelligence section of the German High Command (the so-called "Ic" agency), Waldheim was among the best informed officers in occupied Greece, if not the Balkans, since on many aspects he knew more than the Commander - in Chief himself and the senior staff officers whom, especially in 1944, he had to brief regularly about current events and developments on the peninsula.

Consequently, his presents that he had not been aware of any war crimes could absolutely not be accepted, and that I personally regarded them as a rather provocative distortion both of truth and public opinion.

2) At least during his service in the Balkans, Waldheim had not executive authority and so any active involvement in war crimes seemed highly improbable. This was also the case with regard to the deportation of about 60,000 Jews — an important issue, since at that very time, newspaper headlines, especially in the States, accused Waldheim of having a hand in the deportation, if not even being some kind of mini-Eichmann, of supplying cold-bloodedly the crematoria of Auschwitz.

Although I had studied Communication Science as well only now did I have my first bitter de facto experience with newspapers and journalists. Several of my interviewers split up my twofold statement

quoting only that part suited them best. The prize however, goes to Waldheim's campaign staff which alleged in a pre-election brochure, distributed to all housholds, that: "This is the truth. The well-known military historian Hagen Fleischer from the University of Crete says: Waldheim's innocent."

The PR experts of the presidential candidate managed to infringe on truth on less than three times in this short sentence. First, I am not a military historian as I always was more interested in the political aspects even in war history. Secondly, I am not well known and in 1986 I certainly was entirely unknown, apart, from a limited circle of historians specialized in Modern Greek history. Thirdly, the largest fabrication, however, was that about "innocence" — a term I wouldn't use in a historical context — even concerning Joan of Arc.

So, I publicly denounced such tactics, in a very sharp way, simultaneously stating my conviction that candidates for highest national or international state offices, had to submit to much more rigorous screening criteria than ordinary people. For the president of a democratic country, it was *not* enough not to have personally committed crimes. He should also have an unblemished relationship with truth, *not* performing cosmetic surgery on "inconvenient" pieces of his past.

Neither could we accept his simplistic argument that millions of Germans, Austrians and Italians had compromised themselves in one way or another during Fascist rule. Examples of statesmen who had made opposite choices were Ex-President Pertini of Italy, ex-Chancellors Kreiski of Austria, and Willi Brandt of Germany, who all resisted Fascism in their native countries.

Needless to say that after this classification, my popularity in the Waldheim camp declined rapidly.

Contrary to Waldheim's expectations, the uproar in the mass media did not calm down when he was elected President by a majority of the Austrian people—in spite of, or partly even, because of the almost daily accusations levelled against him.

So, in the spring of 1987, in an unexpected move, Waldheim requested from the Austrian government—at that time an uneasy coalition of Socialists and Conservatives—that it appoint an international commission of historians, to look into the whole affair. In a decision of the Federal government, the mandate of this inquiry was formulated as "the further examination and evaluation of the entire body of material in the light of the allegations made against the President."

The government agreed that the commission should be headed and personally selected by a neutral chairman, and Dr. Hans Rudolf Kurz, a senior member of the Swiss Military Historical Service, who had recently retired, was nominated to this position.

It is worth mentioning that in July, when the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs Mock, head of the Conservative Party and the staunchest supporter of Waldheim, officially entrusted Kurz with the task of heading the designated Commission, he re-formulated its mission, to say that it was solely to determine "whether there was *any personal culpable behavior* on the part of Dr. Waldheim during his military service."

Obviously, Mock intended to restrict the task of the Commission and, simultaneously, the risks involved for his political friend. The "personal culpable behavior" in question was clearly designed as a euphemistic synonym for "war crimes" since, as I have explained before, there was little chance that Waldheim had committed such crimes on his own. These two differing mandates given us by the Cabinet and the Foreign Ministry would subsequently turn out to be a continuous source of annoyance.

Therefore, after some internal discussion, the Commission would later decide to give preference to the original wording by the Government, as it was the superior authority. In accordance with this, on the 3rd of December 1987, we formulated our own terms of reference in a comprehensive way:

> This independent commission has been established to determine the facts concerning the war time service of Kurt Waldheim and of his participation in National Socialist organizations. The political content of his doctoral dissertation will also be examined . . .

Thus our decision raised misgivings in conservative circles and the General Secretary of the People's Party duly attempted to give us new guidelines by stating that "personal culpable behavior" would only be the case if Waldheim would have strangled six Jews with his own hands. Acceptance of such an, to say the least, arbitrary interpretation would have rendered our work a farce, since not even Eichmann, Himmler or Hitler himself had had such a record. Yet Graff's slip of the tongue revealed the role his friend Waldheim had apparently intended for us, when he initiated the formation of the Commission. Consequently, we clarified our attitude in public and Graff was forced to resign from his post. Yet after having finished and submitted our report, the Waldheim camp would howl in chorus that we had exceeded our mandate.

But I'll return to the chronological sequence of events. In summer 1987, the designated chairman Kurz invited a number of outstanding scholars in contemporary history to serve on the Commission. This

included Professor Wallach and General Collins, Presidents of the Israeli and United States Commissions on Military History respectively, the Belgium Dr. Vanwelkenhuyzen, then President of the International Committee on the History of WWII Professor Fleming of Great Britain who had done intensive research on the Nazi regime and the "Final Solution" and in particular, Professor Messerschmidt, Chief Historian of the West German Research Institute on Military History which was under its supervision the huge Military Archives at Freiburg.

Already, at this early stage, the Austrian Foreign Ministry had tried to include a well-known Austrian military historian as a "secretary" of the Commission but Wallach from Israel had vetoed this initiative and in fact threatened to resign, since the candidate had already taken public stand in favor of Waldheim.

On the contrary, in its first working session early in September, the six Commission members stressed the necessity that Yugoslavia and Greece, the two Balkan countries which were occupied by Waldheim's unit, Army-Group E, should also be represented on the Commission. An appeal was made to the Belgrade government to appoint a Yugoslav member and Hagen Fleischer from the University of Crete was personally invited to join. The latter accepted but unfortunately the Yugoslav government failed to respond. There was, however, some discussion about Fleischer's status, when the Austrian Foreign Ministry referred to a former decision that the Commission should not have more than six members. Yet Fleischer himself preferred the status of a "permanent expert advisor" since he considered that this would give him a greater independence and make it easier to resign if necessary. Moreover, the six members made it clear to the Foreign Ministry that he would be "treated for all intents and purposes as a full member."

The exceptional scope of the material to be processed — thousands of files from two dozen archives, interrogation of eye-witnesses, etc. — made it necessary for the Commission to divide up the various investigations among themselves according to the criteria of time, content and knowledge. I briefly refer to the thematic units:

1) Attitude towards National Socialism,

2) Organization and Structure of Command,

3) Waldheim's Function as an so-called "03" in the Staff of Army Group E. This meant that we had to establish in general the assignments of an "03," i.e. the 3rd Officer in the Military Intelligence and then to refer to Waldheim's concrete activities within the staff.

Then we investigated in separate chapters the outstanding charges laid against Waldheim:

4) The interrogation and general treatment of captured Allied Commandos who were usually shot as spies due to a secret order by Hitler.

5) The deportation of Greek Jews.

6) The deportation of Italian prisoners after the Italian surrender in September 1943 and

7) The most extensive point concerning the usually very brutal German measures against guerillas and their suspected sympathizers in the civilian population such as "mopping up" operations, and reprisals.

Since I have been asked to speak predominantly to the question of a possible involvement in the Holocaust or "Final Solution" issue, I shall lay special weight on this.

The facts are that between March and August 1943, almost 50,000 Jews of Salonica were evacuated for physical annihilation to Auschwitz, after having been deployed as slave laborers for the German Wermacht since the middle of 1942. In early 1944, Jews from the rest of the mainland and the Greek islands were deported under inhuman conditions to the death camps.

After 1986, when the storm broke out, Waldheim repeatedly maintained that he knew nothing about these persecutions and that, in any case, all this dirty work was done exclusively by SS, SD and similar Nazi agencies without the slightest involvement of the "regular" Wermacht units.

For instance, in a telex to the President of the World Jewish Congress, Edgar Bronfman, Waldheim stated:

". . .The deportation of Jews from Greece as I have learned from research brought to my attention recently had not been carried out by regular army units. At any rate, I, for my part, have never been informed about or involved in such activities . . ."

Waldheim supported his professed ignorance by stating that he had been in Austria "on study—and wedding leave" during the whole period when deportations took place. So we outlined a time frame comparing these dates versus the period of Waldheim's presence in Greece, establishing that he WAS absent most of the time deportations from Salonica took place. But there was at least a short period of overlap and even without that, anyone with a minimum amount of intelligence undoubtedly must have realized after his return that a fourth of the population of this city, of approximately 50,000 persons, had suddenly disappeared, that the large Jewish cemetery, dating from the end of the 15th century and having a half a million graves, on the way between Arsakli, the seat of the staff of Army Group E, and the center of Salonica had been levelled and had vanished from sight, and that a Jewish ghetto had been set up across from the Salonica main railway terminal. Statements made under oath have confirmed all these facts were known to, and discussed, even by *ordinary* German soldiers there. In addition, Waldheim was in the General Staff all the time between

April and August 1944, and thus during all the period in which the islands were "cleared of Jews" — deportations of which he also claimed ignorance.

Waldheim also alleged that Wermacht units had not been involved in the expulsion of the Jews. Historical research has long since established that the Wermacht was implicated in war crimes in certain theaters of the war. Yet even in the concrete instance of the action in the Balkan theater in general, and in the area of Army Group E in particular, there is sufficient proof substantiating that the Wermacht was also involved in the deportation of Jews. There are War Diary entries pertaining to provision of military means of transport for the purpose of concentration and deportation of Greek Jews. And the War Journal entry of May 12, 1944 notes explicitly that the Army Group had no objections to the deportation of the Jews of Corfu and Crete.

Even more clearly recognizable is the role of the Wermacht in the persecution of the Jews in the area under Army Group E as reflected in the report by the Commander of the 11th Italian Army, General Carlo Geloso. In his memoirs, the Italian general wrote:

"After having placed before a fait accompli, as was customary practice on the other side, the German command requested the Italian Command to deal with Jews in an analogous way in those areas of Greece occupied by Italian troops. The proposal, in the form of a simple idea brought up during the course of conversation, was broached by General Lohr to General Geloso, and by an official of the German General Staff to the Chief of Staff Tripiccione.

It should be noted here that Waldheim was one of the very few competent interpreters being used at high-level German Italian staff talks but the few extant files, saved about the issue of Jewish destruction, do not contain any hint as to his possible participation.

Geloso's statement clearly substantiates that the Wehrmacht staffs (and not Nazi authorities?) were dealing with the Jewish question.

The correspondence of the commander of Corfu, Col, Jager, with his superiors also substantiates that Wehrmacht units were implicated (in particular, the branch Ic and the GFP, Secret Field Police) in this matter. In the case of the island of Rhodes, it is indisputably clear, based on testimony to our Commission, that the concentration, guarding and deportation of the Jewish population of the island was carried out by Wehrmacht units, since there were no SS or SD units deployed on Rhodes. Rather, documentary evidence indicates that the Wehrmacht was instrumentally involved in the process of deportation both on Rhodes and Crete.

As early as September 1943, the Admiral in the Aegean — i.e.., a member of a Wehrmacht unit and not the SS or SD — was charged

with the task of evacuating Jews from the islands to the mainland.

A report of the Army Corps in Western Greece, branch Ic, to the High Command, Army Group e, stated concerning the Jews of Corfu:

"There are still 2,000 Jews present on the island (. . .). Their deportation would also lead to a quite significant easing in the problem of food supply. The SD and GFP are currently involved in making preparations for a deportation of the Jews." At the end of the report is the statement: " . . .for the purpose of regulating Jewish question, the Army Group requests that the SD carry out implementation measures." Accordingly, the initiative for the deportation of Jews on Corfu came from the Wehrmacht.

The involvement of the Wermacht in measures of persecution against the Jewish minority is particularly manifest in connection with the island of Crete, especially since no mobile or stationary SS unit was operative there, in contrast with other localities. In the Historical Archives of the island I found a number of orders of the Field Command 606 ordering the registration of all Jews, Jewish civil servants, businesses, etc. They involved all preparations for their deportation, carried out in May 1944 with the aid of the local unit of the GFP. It is noteworthy that the Field Command's responsible branch for questions relating to Jews with the Field Command was Ic and it can be assumed that its reports also became known to the corresponding section at the level of Army Group, i.e. Waldheim.

Repeatedly, Waldheim attempted to counter the allegations against him by the assertion that there had been no possibility of protesting against orders. It has been established by a report of Col. Jager, commander on Corfu, that this was not the case. Col. Jager had the courage to express his reservations about deportation of the Jews on Corfu. These reservations were tactical in nature, and also entailed humanitarian considerations. The Commission had been able to determine that Jager's objection did not result in any negative consequences for him. Such correspondence passed over the desk of Waldheim, in his capacity as Ic/O3, and he undoubtedly had knowledge of the step taken by Jager.

Even more striking is the case of the commander on the island of Zakynthos (Zante) A. Luth, who by a combination of delaying tactics and concrete warnings, was able to prevent the deportation of the local Jews, until the departure of German troops signaled their final rescue. The recent research findings indicate that there is not a single known incident in which a soldier refused to take part in the murder of civilians and was consequently court-martialed and punished. In most cases, such soldiers only lost previous privileges or were transferred to direct front duty on the eastern front. Thus, in this case there was no situation of

presumed complusion to obey orders.

In summary, Waldheim's assertion that he knew nohting about the deportation of Jews from the Greek mainland and islands is based on the following:

a) he only learned about this after the war and, in fact, in 1986.

b) at the time of the events, he was not present in Greece;

c) The Wehrmacht was not implicated in these actions, and therefore, as a member of the Wehrmacht, he had nothing to do with them;

d) on the basis of an order by Hitler personally, he, as a junior officer, had no access to the revelant information;

e) there was a sharp separation in functions between Ic and other sub-branches within the staff of Army Group E.

All these points did not hold up under critical examination. The assertion that there was an absolute compulsion to obey orders has also been refuted.

I would like to close with some of the conclusions from the Commission's Report which is still unpublished, mainly due to the covert obstruction by the Austrian Foreign Ministry.

Concerning Waldheim's overall activities, at the various positions he held during his "missing years" in the Balkans, the picture which emerged was one of differing proximity to measures and orders that were incriminating in terms of the laws of war.

So we hesitated to "provide a final answer to the question of Waldheim's wartime guilt."

In general terms, even the mere knowledge of infringement of human rights near one's place of duty may constitute a certain guilt — if a person, for lack of strength of courage, disregarded a human duty to intervene. Among such measures whose illegality had to be recognized, and probably was, were in particular the large number of exaggerated and disproportionate "retaliation measures reprisals," the liquidation or deportation of large segments of the population especially the merciless deportations of entire Jewish populations, as well as the practice of "special treatment"—i.e., the execution of Allied commando units, as well as the sending of women, children and the aged to concentration camps.

More serious than the passive acceptance of such infringements of human rights was the active complicity in cases where various degrees of participation could be determined. One such example was the consultative complicity in suppressive measures, such as reports on the enemy associated with so-called "mopping-up operations," and preparing or to some degree even provoking them.

In evaluating the question as to Waldheim's complicity in wartime

crimes, one must proceed from the fact repeatedly noted in the report that he was undoubtedly far more than just a junior-level "chancellery officer" in his staff function in the Balkans, despite his low rank. Even if, as a junior officer, he had no executive authority in his staff positions, he was extremely well-informed about what was transpiring during the war. This high level of information was due to his education and knowledge as well as the information and insights he was able to obtain as translator regarding events at leadership level.

In particular, however, he was well-informed by dint of his activity in the central intelligence service of his army gourp and his proximity to the scene of the events. He acquired a deep and comprehensive insight into the situation at the various fronts, and especially in the Balkans, drawn from a sizeable number of situation reports and war journal entries, which he either wrote himself or which passed across his desk; in particular, in connection with his work preparing the situation reports which he often presented in top-echelon discussions at army-group level. Even if his personal influence on the decision-making process at the top levels of leadership had been somewhat overrated by his adversaries and played down inordinately by his defenders, Waldheim was frequently present at such high-level discussions, and was therefore one of the especially well-informed members of he general staff. His insights here were comprehensive in their scope. They pertained not only to tactical, strategic and administrative orders but in some cases also included acts and measures in contradiction to the laws of war and humanity.

The Commission has not noted a single instance in which Waldheim protested or took steps to prevent, or at least to impede its execution — against an order to commit a wrong that he must doubtlessly have recognized as such. On the contrary: he repeatedly assisted in connection with unlawful actions and thereby facilitated their execution.

As time is running short, I shall have to leave some other interesting points out and will end by quoting the last sentences of our report:

"Waldheim's own description of his military past does not tally at many points with the findings of the Commission. He attempted to let his military past slip into oblivion and, when that no longer proved possible, to play it down and make it appear innocuous. His lapses of memory are, in view of the Commission, so basic that it was not able to obtain any elucidating references from Waldheim for its work."