

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

■ The Union of American Hebrew Congregations adopted a resolution stating that children who receive a non-Jewish religious education should not be enrolled in Reform religious schools. Passage of the measure at the movement's biennial convention came after an impassioned debate over outreach to intermarried families.

■ Argentine police arrested 15 people, including eight members of the army, in connection with the 1994 bombing of the Jewish communal headquarters. The judge in charge of the case said he was pursuing a new "avenue of investigation" to establish the source of the explosives used in the bombing. [Page 3]

■ Israel's Antiquities Authority announced that a burial site recently excavated near the town of Modi'in was not related to the Maccabees as previously believed. Archaeologists said a laboratory analysis proved that they had misread a Hebrew inscription on the tomb.

■ One in eight Israelis lived below the poverty line in 1994, according to Israel's National Insurance Institute. Forty-two percent of those under the poverty line were children. [Page 3]

■ Israelis will soon be able to travel to Jordan by public transportation. The Dan bus cooperative won a bidding competition to start a bus line early next year between Tel Aviv and the Jordanian capital of Amman. [Page 3]

■ The Jewish community in Quebec called on Lucien Bouchard, the leader of the separatist Bloc Quebecois in Parliament, to distance himself from the comments of Pierre Bourgault, a leading member of the separatist movement. "It's the Jews, Italians and the Greeks that [make up] the ethnic vote. It is they that are racist, not us," Bourgault said.

■ A group of Holocaust sculptures were to be removed from display at a Berlin train station after they were repeatedly vandalized. Police are investigating five suspects, but do not believe that the incidents were motivated by anti-Semitism. [Page 3]

**CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS [Part 1]****Church slow to convey teachings of Nostra Aetate to U.S. Catholics**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — The reading at the Roman Catholic feast day Mass was to be The Triumph of the Cross, which says, "Before Jesus Christ every knee must bend."

The 220 students of Notre Dame de Sion, a private Catholic girls high school in Kansas City, Mo., were all to attend.

But Kim Miles, the director of religious education at the school, felt that the reading "wouldn't be good for Judeo-Christian relations," so she appealed to the priest and the reading was changed to something more innocuous.

Notre Dame de Sion, which was founded by the religious order Sisters of Sion, who devote their work to bettering relations between Christians and Jews, is particularly sensitive to Jewish concerns.

The pupils observe Holocaust memorial day each year, and recently marked the anniversary of Kristallnacht with class discussions. Some also went to a local synagogue service, Miles said.

Sophomores last year spent two weeks of a world history course learning about the Holocaust.

Teachers, during their orientation session before school opens each fall, visit a synagogue and meet with a Jewish educator.

When a synagogue in town was defaced with anti-Semitic graffiti last year, students wrote to the congregation's members to express their outrage.

Although Notre Dame de Sion is not the only Catholic school to take so seriously the teachings of Nostra Aetate, it is in the distinct minority, say Catholic educators.

Nostra Aetate, a 30-year-old document borne out of the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, revolutionized the Roman Catholic Church's understanding of its relationship to Jews and Judaism.

Since the earliest days of Christianity, Jews have been portrayed in literature and liturgy as the people who rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah, had him killed and who, in turn, were rejected by God and scattered in a diaspora of punishment.

Jews were associated with the devil himself, according to Catholic teaching.

The charge of deicide — reiterated each year in the liturgy of the Catholic Holy Week preceding Easter — fueled pogroms for centuries, during which countless Jews were assaulted, raped and murdered.

Nostra Aetate, whose English title is "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," was supposed to change all that.

Jews were to be viewed as a people who "remain most dear to God, for God does not repent of the gifts God makes nor of the calls God issues," according to Vatican II.

**Changes in attitude have not reached the pews**

Much has changed in the last three decades, say both Catholic and Jewish observers, about the way the Roman Catholic Church educates its adherents — some 58 million in the United States and 1 billion around the world.

But the changes in attitude and theology have not sufficiently reached Catholics in the pews and in their schools, they say.

Although much of the most overt anti-Judaism in Catholic liturgy has been eradicated, Catholics, in the teachings of the church, continue to receive the message that Jews are something "other" than a people blessed by God, say some.

"There is a difference between what they (the church hierarchy) say about a new teaching of Jews and Judaism, and what they do," said Sister Mary Boys, a nun who teaches at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

"It's a question still of education. The changes have not been implemented at the popular level enough," said Rabbi Leon Klenicki, director of interfaith affairs at the Anti-Defamation League and the ADL's co-liaison to the Vatican.

Before Nostra Aetate, Catholics recited the "Prayer for Perfidious

Jews" on Good Friday, praying for their salvation through conversion. The prayer was gradually edited out of the liturgy and today no longer exists in Roman Catholicism.

At the same time, however, many churches and schools put on Passion plays, dramatic re-enactments of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion in which Jews still are sometimes portrayed as informants leading him to death.

And even though a priest sermonizing about the death of Jesus during Holy Week has in front of him guidelines — for the homiletic presentation of Scripture — that indicate that the church no longer blames Jews for the death of Jesus, he rarely reads them out loud, said Sister Rose Thering.

As a result, the post-Nostra Aetate teachings of the church, which qualify and modify the Gospels without changing their text, are not known to the average churchgoer, said Thering, a nun who is the founder of the National Leadership Conference for Israel, a group that advocates Christian support for Israel.

Transmitting the changes in Catholic views of Jews heralded by Nostra Aetate in Catholic schools has been a slow process, particularly when it comes to training teachers and revising texts.

Students in Catholic schools across the United States often learn about Jews and Judaism from a rabbi who is invited in once or twice a year to talk about the Jewish holidays, the Holocaust or Israel.

The largest Catholic diocese in the country, Los Angeles, now has on its staff a Reform rabbi who teaches in its high schools three days a week about Jewish Scripture, history, culture and morality.

"Many of the students have never met any Jews," said Rabbi Michael Perelmutter.

"They have some of the stereotypes" about Jews because "they're in the air."

The schools' faculty "is mostly very respectful and accepting" of my presence, he said. "I haven't seen any of them present any of the archaic medieval ideas" about Jews.

The four-year-old program, a joint effort of the archdiocese and the American Jewish Committee, is being funded this year by movie mogul Steven Spielberg.

A similar program will be introduced in New York's Catholic high schools in September, said Rabbi A. James Rudin, director of interreligious affairs at the AJCommittee.

#### **'No knowledge of Jews'**

However, some schools not frequented by rabbis do pay attention to Judaism.

At Our Lady of the Wayside, a Catholic elementary and middle school in suburban Chicago, pupils get limited exposure to Protestant practices and almost none to Muslim beliefs, but spend much time learning about Jews and Judaism, with a particular focus on holidays, said Principal Peter Tantillo.

"There probably were misconceptions about Jews but just as bad, there was no knowledge of Jews, which means that they would be open to anti-Semitic kinds of things they'd be exposed to and have no way to respond to," Tantillo said.

Still, only 10 to 20 of the Chicago Archdiocese's 400 schools have any consistent programming relating to Jews and Judaism, he said.

In an effort to expand knowledge and awareness, Jewish groups are working with Catholic leaders to also teach teachers.

The AJCommittee and Los Angeles Archdiocese held a joint one-day conference for Catholic school teachers in November, similar to one conducted last year in New York.

The session came 15 years after the first such conference was held, a joint effort of the Anti-Defamation League and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, which attracted about 500 teachers, said Klenicki.

The teachers still meet once a year for a teachers conference, often devoting a section of it to learning about Jews and Judaism, he said.

Several years after that conference, a series of study guides on various aspects of Judaism was produced by the ADL and published by the education department of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Klenicki, who meets with directors of Catholic education in parochial and Sunday schools across the country to help them implement pilot projects, said the Boston Archdiocese is preparing to introduce a program for teaching Judaism.

Seton Hall University, in South Orange, N.J., is the only Catholic-affiliated college offering a master's degree in Christian-Jewish Studies, said Thering.

It also offers scholarships to Catholic educators — 14 are now enrolled — to study Christian-Jewish relations full-time for a semester or year, she said.

In her 1961 study of texts used in Catholic schools, Thering found widespread negative assertions about Jews, mostly about the Jewish rejection of Jesus, the Jewish murder of Jesus and the Pharisees as blind hypocrites.

One book stated: "Christ, by his miracles and teachings, tried to conquer the obstinacy of the Jews and bring them to repentance. The Jews, on the contrary, by the bad influence of their hypocrisy and pride, hindered the spread of knowledge of God among the nations."

A 1976 study by Eugene Fisher found that "American Catholic religion materials are significantly more positive towards Judaism than they were before the Vatican Council."

All references to Jews as a people cursed because of the crucifixion were either absent or condemned, he found.

The idea of a divine retribution against Jews for their supposed rejection of Jesus had been expunged from American Catholic textbooks.

#### **'Much work to be done'**

But Fisher, who now works as head of Catholic-Jewish relations for the National Council of Catholic Bishops, also found that there "were almost no references to Jews and Judaism between the close of the New Testament period and the 20th century," which perhaps reinforced the "idea that Judaism ceased to be vital after the coming of Christ."

Philip Cunningham, an associate professor of theology at Notre Dame College in Manchester, N.H., found in his 1992 study of Catholic school texts that there has been overall improvement in the presentation of Judaism in primary school texts.

But one area in which Fisher had found improvement 16 years before, Cunningham found the opposite: One series of books used in primary schools states twice that Jerusalem was destroyed because its people "did not believe in the Savior."

In junior high and high school texts, Cunningham found that little has been improved since 1976, and in the category of blaming Jews for Jesus' death, there had been a marked decline.

"Given the history of the deicide charge against Jews, this deterioration is quite disturbing," wrote Cunningham.

"While improvements have occurred" overall, he wrote, "and while the defamatory language revealed in earlier textbook studies has been eliminated, there is still much work to be done." □

## Israeli bus companies plan to begin service to Jordan

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israelis will soon be able to travel to Jordan by public transportation.

The Dan bus cooperative won a bid to start a bus line between Tel Aviv and the Jordanian capital of Amman.

The line is expected to start in 45 days and tickets will cost \$7 each, Israel Radio reported.

Other Israeli-Jordanian bus routes are being planned.

In addition, United Tours plans to establish a connection between Eilat and Aqaba in the south.

And a travel agency in Nazareth is working on a connection that will run from Haifa and Nazareth to Irbid in northern Jordan, then on to Amman.

Amid the plans for increased travel links between Israel and Jordan, however, there were signs in Jordan that the 13-month-old peace with the Jewish state still does not sit well with some.

The federation of Jordanian writers recently expelled comedy writer Hisham Yanis for violating a ban on contacts with Israel. Yanis and partner Nabil Sawalha recently brought their stand-up comedy act to Israel, where they performed sketches that included comic looks at the regional peace process.

The two comedians, who met with Prime Minister Shimon Peres last week, told the Israeli leader that they consider him the architect of the peace process and that they had wanted to come to Israel and offer their support for his efforts.

Peres described the two as "emissaries of peace," adding that "we all have a need for good spirits and humor."

But the Jordanian writers federation viewed the visit with a less appreciative eye.

A member of the federation's executive board was quoted as saying that Yanis did not respond to a request not to visit Israel. The trip violated the federation's charter, which bans any dealings with the "Israeli enemy," the board member said.

Professional unions in Jordan have already banned or disciplined at least 12 writers, journalists, artists, doctors and engineers for engaging in contacts with Israelis.

King Hussein has responded to the unions' actions by warning the professional groups not to interfere in politics and by directing the government to amend laws governing their operations.

In a related development, Jordan's Justice Ministry ordered that charges be dropped against Jordanians convicted of having contacts with Israel, Israel Radio recently reported.

The decree affects about 30 Jordanians who are in prison or were sentenced to prison in absentia. □

## 15 arrests made in Argentina in bombing of Jewish center

By Sergio Kiernan

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — In what may be a breakthrough in the case, Argentine police have arrested 15 people in connection with the 1994 bombing of the Jewish communal headquarters here.

Among those arrested last Friday were eight members of the army who, along with the other detainees, were said to have links to terrorist groups.

Judge Juan Jose Galeano, the official in charge of the investigation of the bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Aid Association, ordered more than 50 searches in

several areas of Greater Buenos Aires, including the Campo de Mayo army base, the largest in Argentina.

Galeano said after the searches were conducted that he was pursuing a new "avenue of investigation" in an attempt to establish the source of the explosives used in the bombing, which left 86 dead and at least 300 wounded on July 18, 1994.

All those arrested are experts in explosives and were linked to Carlos Alberto Telleldin, the sole suspect held until now in connection with the case. He was charged with selling the Renault van allegedly used in the bombing.

A source close to the investigation said in an interview that the latest arrests "might be a major breakthrough, a step in the right direction, the key to find who gave support to the bombers."

Police Commissioner Angel Salguero, the official who conducted the searches, said the group now under arrest "combines different elements: extreme rightists, drug dealers and traffickers of assault weapons. They are linked to other groups capable of terrorism."

During the searches, the police found 75 hand grenades, 110 detonation caps, 7 rocket-propelled grenades, 60 blocks of plastic explosives, handguns and more than 2 pounds of marijuana.

One of the suspects was found in possession of a set of false IDs, including fake police badges and judiciary officials' badges.

Jewish leaders here and abroad have complained about what they describe as the slow pace of the investigation, which has to date provided no satisfactory explanation for the attack.

An earlier attack on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires also remains unsolved. The car bombing of the embassy in March 1992 killed 29 people and left more than 100 injured. □

## Vandalism ruins Shoah sculptures

By Miriam Widman

BERLIN (JTA) — A group of Holocaust memorial sculptures that have been vandalized repeatedly were to be removed last week from public display.

The 16 sculptures at Berlin's Anhalt train station — in memory of the deportation of Jews during World War II — have been seriously damaged because of recent incidents.

In October, there were three cases of vandalism at the train station memorial within a week.

The police have five suspects, and do not think that the incidents were motivated by anti-Semitism.

Stuart Wolfe, the sculptor, told the German press agency that eight of the 16 sculptures were so badly damaged that they are ready for the garbage dump. □

## Poverty level in Israel rises

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — One in eight Israelis lived below the poverty line in 1994, the National Insurance Institute announced last week.

According to the institute, 671,500 people lived under the poverty line — defined as those with a monthly income of less than \$780.

The statistics showed that 23,000 more people lived in poverty than the previous year. Some 42 percent of those under the poverty line were children.

Labor and Social Welfare Minister Ora Namir said government policy had failed to reduce the number of the poor.

She added that a program she initiated last year to fight poverty had a marginal impact. □

## ADL delegation finds hope in swing through Middle East

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — In what appears to be a continuing effort to foster relationships with American Jews by a country with no official ties to Israel, Saudi Arabia recently hosted a delegation of the Anti-Defamation League in Riyadh.

"They believe the Jewish community is a significant element in American policy and in world affairs and that it pays to cultivate" its leaders, said Abraham Foxman, national director of the ADL.

The 10-member delegation, which included ADL National Chairman David Strassler, also traveled to Gaza — to meet with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat — Cairo and Jerusalem.

Foxman called on Arafat to bring to justice Abu Abbas, who masterminded the killing of Leon Klinghoffer 10 years ago on the cruise ship Achille Lauro.

Abbas has been a member of the PLO executive committee, but apparently is not part of Arafat's inner circle.

Foxman, whose organization established the Klinghoffer Foundation one decade ago to combat terrorism, made the call on behalf of the daughters of Klinghoffer.

Arafat responded by telling the ADL delegates that the killing was a Libyan operation committed "under the PLO flag" to embarrass his organization and that he had condemned it at the time.

Arafat made no pledge to prosecute Abbas, but invited Klinghoffer's daughters to pay him a visit, which they declined, according to a spokesman for the ADL delegation.

The ADL's arrival in the Saudi capital Nov. 13 marked the organization's first visit, but it followed similar trips in recent years by representatives of such groups as the American Jewish Committee and American Jewish Congress.

It also followed an unprecedented appearance in October in New York by Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal before the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations during which he urged American Jews to demonstrate more support for the Israeli government's peacemaking efforts.

He also told the conference that his country would be ready to normalize ties with Israel as soon as there is a comprehensive peace in the region.

### Paint Saudi Arabia as key

Faisal was particularly eager at the meetings with both the conference and the ADL in Riyadh to paint Saudi Arabia as key to prodding the Arab parties to the peace table and to ensuring stability and security in the Middle East.

For Foxman, Faisal's message, plus the open atmosphere of the ADL visit — during which "no subject was taboo" and the Saudis displayed a surprising knowledge of Israel — signified that "the world has changed."

Foxman said all the parties — both Arab and Israeli leaders — evinced a common concern about terrorism and religious extremism — "in the guise of Islam or the perversion of Torah."

"No one is immune," he said, noting that a bomb exploded in a U.S.-run military center in Riyadh shortly after his arrival, killing six and wounding scores of others.

Egypt is slated to take a seat on the U.N. Security Council in January and pledged that it would wage an international fight against terrorism, ADL sources said.

The delegation also said the Israelis, Egyptians and

Saudis all hinted at impending breakthroughs in talks between Syria and Israel.

U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross was due in the region early this week in a renewed effort to advance these talks.

In Egypt, the group pressed President Hosni Mubarak on anti-Semitism in his nation's media and on the habitual exclusion of Israel from cultural festivities.

Mubarak said he could not censor the media.

And even though he "repudiated anti-Semitism," he gave no "acceptable response" to the anti-Israeli trends among the intelligentsia, according to those present.

Meanwhile, in Riyadh, the group was assured that the primary Arab boycott against direct trade with Israel is being eroded and would end formally "at the appropriate time" in the peace process.

The secondary and tertiary boycotts, which blacklisted companies with economic ties to Israel and banned trade with companies doing business with blacklisted companies, have already ended.

In Gaza, the group pressed Arafat to revoke the clauses in the Palestine Covenant calling for the destruction of Israel.

Arafat said he "could not guarantee" the changes under a democracy, but pledged to "urge" the Palestine National Council to vote for the changes, said the ADL delegation spokesman.

Foxman said he decided to visit Arafat in Gaza after Arafat paid a condolence call to the widow of slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and "was sensitive enough not to go to the funeral. The least I could do was have a dialogue."

"He is what he is," Foxman said of Arafat. "To move the process along and save lives, we don't have the luxury of saying we don't like him."

Foxman pointedly did not attend the meeting with Arafat last month in New York organized by the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

He called it "a show, a production, and I didn't want to be part of the circus." □

## Infant gets army call-up notice

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — He can't yet walk, but he has already been called up by the army for reserve duty — as a driver.

For Elihu Ben-Shoshan, crawling is more his speed these days, preferably with a pacifier firmly planted in his mouth.

Nevertheless, an Israel Defense Force order recently arrived in the mail at his Carmiel home, ordering him to show up for duty as a driver in a month.

"I burst out laughing, I couldn't believe it," his mother Michal Ben-Shoshan told the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot. "What, they've started drafting babies into the army?"

The IDF said in response that thousands of similar orders are issued weekly, and such a mistake in the paperwork is possible. □

## Israeli charters soar to Morocco

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The first two charter flights from Israel to Morocco left Ben-Gurion Airport on Sunday.

The planes flew a group of Israeli travel agents to a conference in Marrakech, Israel Radio reported.

Morocco hosted the first regional economic conference in Casablanca last year. □