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82nd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel gets list of 30,000 police

The Palestinian Authority gave Israel on Wednesday a list of 30,000 police officers serving in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel has been seeking the list since the first Oslo accord was signed in 1993. In a conciliatory gesture after receiving the list, Israel allowed the second-in-command of the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Abu Ali Mustafa, to enter the self-rule areas.

Papal visit announced

Pope John Paul II will visit Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas in March, the Vatican representative to Israel said Wednesday. Although a papal visit has long been expected, Papal Nuncio Pietro Samba's announcement provided the first official confirmation.

IDF chief questions timetable

The timetable for achieving a final Israeli-Palestinian peace accord is too optimistic, according to the Israel Defense Force chief of staff.

"I don't think that a conflict of 30 or 50 years can be resolved in a month or two, and not even in a year or two," Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz said.

Ground broken at Yad Vashem

The Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem broke ground for a Hall of Names that will house millions of pages of testimony about Shoah victims.

The hall is part of a plan to renovate the aging memorial.

Bibi may face more questions

Israeli police may summon former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, for further questioning, after contradictions emerged between their testimonies and that of a private contractor who allegedly carried out services for them for free.

The Netanyahus were questioned for more than eight hours Wednesday over allegations that Netanyahu tried to have private work paid for with public funds.

Because of Yom Kippur, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Tuesday, Sept. 21.

TRANSFORMING A COMMUNITY: (Part 3 of a series)

Multiracial adoptions change the face and color of Jewish life

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — His mom was a little worried about sending Ari Wolff, 8, to overnight camp for the first time this summer.

She had the usual concerns: Will he be homesick? At a Reform movement camp in California, will he be too far from their home in Honolulu?

But she also had one more: Will children tell him he's not Jewish, because he is black?

Ari is one of a growing number of children from African-American, Latino, Asian and mixed-race backgrounds being adopted by Jewish parents, including film royalty Steven Spielberg and Kate Capshaw.

Almost unheard of 15 years ago, transracial adoptions are, quite literally, changing the complexion of the Jewish community today.

No one knows just how many Jewish children from other ethnic backgrounds there are. In past years, most were born in Korea, Vietnam and Latin America. Americans continue to adopt children from those places but today the former Soviet Union and China are the leading birth countries in international adoptions, experts say, providing 4,500 and 4,000 children a year, respectively.

And while domestic adoptions of children from black and Hispanic backgrounds were first seen in significant numbers in the early 1970s, according to adoption counselor Abby Ruder, they seem to be increasingly popular among Jewish parents today. "I don't know that institutional attitudes have changed all that much, but on the grass-roots level there are many more people who are drawn to the idea of being in a multiracial family and are willing to embrace the complexities of what that means," says Ruder, a family therapist in the Philadelphia suburb of Wyndmoor, Pa.

With her partner, Ruder is the adoptive parent of Eliza, a 12-year-old who is biracial and African-American.

The 1990 National Jewish Population Study found that 6.5 percent of all respondents were nonwhite, according to Gary Tobin, president of the Institute for Jewish and Community Research, located in San Francisco.

Four percent of the 1990 study's core population — meaning Jewish by birth or conversion — was black or Hispanic, Tobin said, which equaled about 220,000 people.

It is now possible that through adoption, adult conversion and intermarriage, the percentage of nonwhite Jews is as high as 10 percent.

An adoption professional estimated that between 15 and 20 percent of the children being adopted by Jewish families are Hispanic or nonwhite.

"These children are gradually changing the face and color of what people think is Jewish life," Tobin says.

The personal experience of Tobin and his wife, Diane, led them to initiate the Ethnic and Racial Diversity Study of the Jewish Community, which recently got under way and is being partially funded by Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation.

The Tobins were married a few years ago when they were in their mid-40s. From previous marriages they have, between them, five biological adult and teen-age children.

Being parents "is what we enjoy most," says Tobin, and it was something they wanted to share. After briefly trying to conceive, Diane realized that it wasn't likely to happen, given her age.

When they decided to adopt, an application asked them what racial categories they

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israel, Turkey plan water deal

Officials from the Israeli Foreign Ministry discussed purchasing water from Turkey during meetings with their Turkish counterparts.

Israeli sources were quoted by Israel Radio as saying that the purchases would help Turkey deal with the economic hardships suffered in the wake of last month's earthquake. Turkish President Suleyman Demirel raised the possibility of a water deal during a visit to Israel this summer.

Poll: Palestinians want Jerusalem

More than 90 percent of Palestinians would reject a permanent peace deal with Israel if Jerusalem is made the united capital of Israel, according to a new poll.

Nearly half of the 1,200 respondents from the West Bank and Gaza Strip said they wanted all of Jerusalem to serve as the capital of a future Palestinian state. But more than two-thirds of those surveyed in the poll, which has a margin of error of 3 percent, said they supported the current peace process.

Court rules against health fund

An Israeli court rejected a lawsuit filed by the Maccabi health fund against two of the nation's leading cigarette manufacturers, Dubek and Ascot.

The health fund had sought compensation from the cigarette companies, saying it had incurred heavy costs for treating smoking-related diseases while the firms continued to conceal the dangers of smoking.

The court said the health fund could not seek damages for providing the services for which it was established.

Israel, Jordan plan optic cable

Israeli and Jordanian officials agreed to lay a fiber optic cable that will improve communications between the two countries. The cable will also be linked with other Arab states and the Far East.



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would consider. After checking off the entire list they reached the last box — black — and they couldn't bring themselves to leave that one unchecked.

Six months later they became parents to Jonah, who is now a toddler.

"People have been very supportive" of their decision, Tobin says, though "both white people and black people are curious about why somebody would do this."

Problems of race in America become quite real for Jews who adopt children of color. "I know that when one of my children who is white goes across the street to the store he will be treated differently than my son who is black," Tobin says. "He will be a minority within a minority wherever he goes — as a black being raised in a white family, as a black within the Jewish community."

As layered an emotional and spiritual process adoption is for anyone, it is all the more so for those who adopt children from different ethnic backgrounds.

"It's hard for some people to see us as a family because people are used to families looking alike," says Jana Wolff, a ghostwriter for business executives and author of "Secret Thoughts of an Adoptive Mother."

"We've increased the ways in which Ari stands out," Wolff said. "He's different by being adopted, by being Jewish, by living in Hawaii, by having a Hebrew name. And it's very hard to think you've contributed to making things difficult for your child."

Some adoptive parents consciously decide against adopting a child from a different ethnic background. Rabbi Simkha Weintraub and his wife, Simha Rosenberg, had already adopted Adin, who is white, when they pursued a second child.

They were offered a nonwhite baby whom, after what was "a wrenching experience for us," they decided to turn down. Soon after that they found their daughter, Meirav, who is now 4. "We didn't want to put Adin in the position of having to answer questions about his sister or brother every time they went to the playground," says Weintraub, who is a couples therapist and rabbinic director of the National Center for Jewish Healing and of the New York Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services.

"We have never hidden the fact of their adoption but we didn't want to impose a neon sign on them, either," he says.

Jewish parents who adopt children from different ethnic backgrounds say that they have to be conscious of how decisions they make will impact their child's identity.

For Ruder, it has meant arranging daily experiences for her daughter where she isn't in the minority. "We live in an interracial community, have her in an interracial school and have built strong friendships with other people of color," Ruder says. "I want her to be able to be bicultural."

The Ashkenazi/white focus of the American Jewish community also poses a real challenge for these parents. "It has been painful for Eliza as well as us that the Jewish community in this country is so Caucasian, while world Jewry is very multiracial," Ruder says. "We're just beginning to find a way to talk about being inclusive racially in the American Jewish community."

Ruder recalls her daughter wanting to be Esther at Purim a couple of years ago. "All of a sudden she didn't want to go to the Megillah reading because she said, Esther was white. I said no, she was Persian, and she decided if Esther was a person of color that she could be her."

Ruder had a long talk with her teacher about the need to validate Eliza's identity. "In the great majority of books in Jewish education, everybody's white. I can't tell you how many hours we've spent coloring the pictures in."

The big test of how accepting of racial diversity the Jewish community is, agree Jewish parents of children of color, will be when it is time for their kids to date and marry. "Even people who say they feel very supported by their synagogues and communities are saying, 'But will those people want their children to marry mine?'" says Diane Tobin, project director for the study on ethnic and racial diversity in the Jewish community.

In the meantime, Jewish parents have found ways to meld their children's racial heritage with their Jewishness. Many focus on the struggles of African-Americans and other ethnic groups during the Passover seder.

Wolff, with her husband and son, last year created "Kwaanzukkah," a meld of Chanukah and the African-American cultural holiday Kwanza. It went over so well that her son and their friends have asked that they make it an annual tradition. □

JEWISH WORLD

Moscow criticizes House vote

Moscow criticized the United States on Thursday for passing "anti-Russian" legislation after the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill a day earlier calling for sanctions against Russia if it helps Iran develop weapons of mass destruction.

The legislation is a "serious blow to our cooperation with the United States," the Russian Foreign Ministry said. The White House has threatened to veto the bill, which still requires Senate approval.

Bradley mixed on vouchers

U.S. Democratic presidential contender Bill Bradley said he does not think school vouchers are "a national answer" to the educational problems facing the country, though he would support them as "an experiment." The issue has sharply divided the American Jewish community.

Return of papal birthplace sought

A Jewish family is attempting to regain the house in Poland where Pope John Paul II was born. Ron Balamuth, whose grandfather rented rooms to the pope's father in the town of Wadowice before World War II, visited Poland to investigate how he could recover title to the house, which now serves as a museum on the pontiff's life. The pope made reference to Balamuth's family in a speech in Wadowice in June.

U.S. seeks deportation

The United States recently launched deportation proceedings against a man it alleges served as an SS guard during World War II.

The Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations charges that Michael Gruber, 84, served at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp from September 1942 through December 1944. Gruber, a native of Croatia and an Austrian citizen, immigrated to the United States in 1956.

Nazi ghetto drawings exhibited

An exhibit of children's drawings from the Theresienstadt ghetto opened Tuesday in an Australian gallery. The 80 drawings, titled "The Children of Terezin: Their Art, Their Legacy," are on loan from a Jewish museum in Prague.

University offers Y2K solution

A solution developed by the Hebrew University to potential Y2K problems in databases will be marketed worldwide, university officials said Tuesday.

The solution aims to prevent potential crises in the computer operations of banks, insurance companies, government offices and other large information-processing systems during the transition to the year 2000.

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

Ukraine, worried about brain drain, won't let Jewish pupils go to Israel

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — President Clinton is promising to press Ukrainian authorities to allow 250 high school students to take part in a program that encourages Ukrainian Jewish teen-agers to settle in Israel.

According to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, Ukraine has held up issuing travel visas to the students because the program chooses only gifted students. Ukraine claims that half of the students are not Jewish according to religious law and that the program is causing a brain drain on the nation, with some of its "best and brightest" leaving economically depressed Ukraine for better opportunities in the Jewish state. The Na'aleh program, run by the Jewish Agency for Israel, provides youth with the option of staying in Israel.

The paper said Clinton agreed to intervene in the dispute, which has been a source of tensions in Israeli-Ukrainian relations, after the matter was raised in a meeting last month with representatives from Jewish groups.

Controversy over the program is not the only source of tensions between Israel and Ukraine. Earlier this year, Ukraine expelled two Jewish Agency emissaries after claiming they had visited a security installation to try to persuade Jewish scientists to emigrate. Ukraine has also accused the Jewish Agency, a quasi-governmental body responsible for immigration and absorption, and the liaison office in Israel's Prime Minister's Office of going beyond the bounds of agreements regarding their work in the Ukrainian Jewish community.

In 1994, Kiev demanded that the Jewish Agency stop its operations in Ukraine — a dispute that was settled when then-Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres intervened during a visit to Ukraine.

During the past decade, Ukraine has been the source of 50 to 60 percent of all emigrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel. Ukraine has an estimated 500,000 Jews. More than 250,000 Ukrainians have emigrated to Israel since 1989.

Ukrainian officials have repeatedly expressed discontent with the Na'aleh youth program that recruits 15- and 16-year-olds to finish high school in Israel. Most of the participants move to Israel and adopt Israeli citizenship. More than 8,000 youth from the former Soviet Union were enrolled in the program in the spring of this year. The Na'aleh program in Ukraine operated according to the five-year bilateral agreement on student exchange signed in 1994 by education officials representing the two countries.

Since then, Ukrainians have repeatedly expressed indignation, claiming that the Jewish Agency in fact recruits teen-agers for emigration under the pretext of cultural work.

Jewish officials in Kiev were told that Ukraine is especially unhappy with a quasi-governmental agency implementing an agreement signed on the governmental level.

The agreement on Na'aleh expired in July. Last December, Ukraine warned Israel that they would not prolong the agreement as long as the Jewish Agency runs the program. Under the expired contract, the Jewish Agency had been allowed to use its offices throughout the Ukraine "to inform the Ukrainian Jewish community about their Jewish heritage and background, Israel and general concern and caring throughout the Jewish world," said Joel Tauber, chairman of the executive committee of the United Jewish Communities.

The Jewish Agency is the primary beneficiary of the UJC, the organization formed by the merger of the United Jewish Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations and the United Israel Appeal.

The Ukrainian and Israeli governments are negotiating a new contract, but the restrictions called for by Ukrainian officials pose a difficulty because Ukrainian Jews are not aware of the opportunities available to them, Tauber explained.

Restricting Jewish Agency activity, he said, would require Ukrainian Jews "to make the initial effort" to come to the Jewish Agency and "will minimize if not eliminate aliyah." □

(JTA staff writer Julia Goldman in New York and correspondent Naomi Segal in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Vatican denounces book alleging wartime pope deeply anti-Semitic***By Ruth E. Gruber*

ROME (JTA) — A new book that claims deep-seated anti-Semitism caused the wartime pope to condone the Holocaust and facilitate Hitler's rise to power has drawn Catholic outrage and bolstered Jewish calls to open secret Vatican archives to scholars.

The issue has also prompted warnings that the troubled legacy of Pope Pius XII — and plans for his possible beatification — could be manipulated to reverse positive strides in Jewish-Catholic relations.

Excerpts from "Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII" by British historian John Cornwell appear in the October issue of *Vanity Fair* magazine. Not only do they describe Pius XII, who was pope from 1939 to 1958, as a knee-jerk anti-Semite, but they assert that he helped Hitler consolidate power through the Vatican's 1933 Concordat with the Third Reich.

Pius XII, according to Cornwell, had "undermined potential Catholic resistance in Germany. He had implicitly denied and trivialized the Holocaust, despite having reliable knowledge of its true extent. And, worse, he was a hypocrite because after the war he had taken undue credit for speaking out boldly against the Nazis' persecution of the Jews."

The Rev. Pierre Blet, a Jesuit scholar who co-edited an 11-volume edition of Vatican wartime papers, dismissed Cornwell's book as "very confusing" and lacking documentation.

The New York-based Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights also attacked it for bad scholarship, describing the *Vanity Fair* article as "laced with conjecture and innuendo of the most scurrilous kind."

But Richard Heideman, the president of B'nai B'rith International, called Cornwell's work "deeply disturbing."

"It reinforces our position that the Vatican needs to open its Holocaust-era archives to independent historians and journalists so the controversy over Pius XII's wartime actions can be dealt with fully."

Jewish organizations have called for Vatican archives to be made public for several years.

Jews have long accused Pius XII of remaining silent in the face of the Holocaust, and the outlines of the material presented in the *Vanity Fair* excerpts have been presented in the past.

The 1963 play "The Deputy," by Rolf Hochhuth, touched off the debate by painting a bitter portrait of the pope as a cynic who held scant regard for Jewish suffering.

A best-selling book published two years ago in Italy, "La Parola Ebraica" (The Word Jew) by Rosetta Loy, gave a detailed depiction of Pius XII as being extravagantly pro-German, dating back to when he served as papal nuncio in Munich and Berlin long before he became pope. And Pius XII is well known to have been a staunch anti-Communist.

What is different with this most recent book is that Cornwell, a practicing Catholic, at first set out to write a defense of Pius XII and, as such, gained access to what he described as "secret material" from Vatican archives, including letters.

These, he wrote, were "explosive" evidence that proved Pius XII to have been "blatantly" anti-Semitic. He believed the Jews

were responsible for their tragedy by rejecting Christ, and he also equated Jews with communists.

"He was the ideal pope for Hitler's unspeakable plan. His denial and minimalization of the Holocaust were all the more scandalous in that they were uttered from a seemingly impartial moral high ground," Cornwell wrote.

The battle lines over Pius XII's wartime role have become sharper in recent years.

The millennium year is celebrated as a holy year by the Roman Catholic Church, and Pope John Paul II, 79 and ailing, has indicated it as a landmark for reflection, repentance and self-examination.

John Paul II has made improving Catholic-Jewish relations a priority of his papacy. He is the first pope to have visited a synagogue, he has visited Holocaust sites and he has spoken out frequently against anti-Semitism. He also oversaw the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Holy See.

But several recent events have raised concern among Jews.

A major Vatican document released last year repented for individual Catholic failings during the Holocaust, but it absolved the Catholic Church itself from any responsibility and, in particular, staunchly defended Pius XII.

Catholic critics of Cornwell's book, such as Blet, have reiterated the Vatican's defense that Pius worked behind the scenes to help Jews. "As far as the silence is concerned, we know clearly that a public protest against Nazism would have been a disaster not only for Catholics but above all for the Jews," Blet wrote in the Catholic newspaper *Avvenire*.

Last year, too, many Jews were deeply offended by the pope's canonization of Edith Stein, a Jewish convert to Catholicism who became a nun and was killed at Auschwitz. Some Jews also questioned the pope's beatification of Alojzije Stepinac, a Croatian cardinal accused by many of having been a wartime fascist collaborator.

As the year 2000 approaches, media reports have increasingly stressed John Paul II's desire to beatify Pius XII along with two other postwar popes, John XXIII and Paul VI, as part of millennium-year celebrations.

Some observers warn that the beatification issue, and competing visions of history, could become a flashpoint that might undo years of progress in Catholic-Jewish relations.

"The danger is in the buildup to beatification," said Shimon Samuels, director for international liaison at the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Some members of the church hierarchy, he said, including nationalist bishops from Eastern Europe and patriarchs in the Middle East, already view John Paul II as being too soft on Jews and Israel. "Some feel they can use the Pius XII issue against what they see as 'Jewish power,'" Samuels said.

Cardinal Edward Cassidy, the Vatican's key liaison in Catholic-Jewish dialogue, said in speeches earlier this year that the Vatican was becoming frustrated with sometimes bitter Jewish criticism of its policies — including its defense of Pius XII.

Cassidy, who maintains excellent relations with the Jewish world, complained that "recent Jewish attempts to influence decisions concerning the internal life of the Catholic Church are strongly resented. People very dear to the Catholic faithful are condemned without proof but simply because they are not personae gratae with the Jewish community." □