

**EXPECT VATICAN TIES WITH ISRAEL  
WITHIN ONE YEAR, CARDINAL SAYS****By Debra Nussbaum Cohen**

NEW YORK, June 9 (JTA) -- Cardinal John O'Connor, this country's ranking Catholic authority in the field of Jewish-Catholic affairs, says he expects the Vatican to conclude negotiations with Israel and establish full diplomatic relations a year from now.

"A year from now we should be very close to an agreement," O'Connor told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency after making a speech Wednesday to the New York Board of Rabbis.

"I'd be surprised if a year from now we weren't all getting ready for a big celebration," he said.

The official commission working on the task, which is composed of Foreign Ministry representatives from both Israel and the Vatican, is presently meeting in Jerusalem, he said.

Although O'Connor, who is archbishop of New York, is not a member of that commission, he is as close to the proceedings as any other Catholic leader outside the official delegation.

O'Connor, who is the moderator of Catholic-Jewish relations on behalf of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, told JTA that the commission is presently "working on the knottiest aspects of it all."

Those issues include access to all of Jerusalem's holy places by members of every religion and what O'Connor termed the "minor question" of ownership of property in Jerusalem.

He was likely referring to St. John's Hospice, a building that was once under Greek Orthodox control and sold to religious Jews determined to settle in areas of Jerusalem's Old City that have not historically had Jewish residents.

**Talks Are 'On Track'**

"I suspect that when the question of the status of Jerusalem is resolved, we will be very close" to the establishment of diplomatic relations, said O'Connor.

A Jewish expert on interreligious affairs agreed with his assessment.

"Everything I've heard from Rome and Israel is that the talks are substantive and on track," said Rabbi A. James Rudin, director of interreligious affairs at the American Jewish Committee.

"There are some points that remain to be worked through, but relations will be normalized. The sticky technical questions remaining are about taxation and custodial rights of property.

"But the strategic obstacles have been overcome, and all agree there should be full and formal relations," he said.

One indication that the Catholics expect the issue to be resolved by next year is that the International Liaison Committee of the official Catholic-Jewish dialogue has scheduled its next biannual meeting in Jerusalem, in May 1994.

The Vatican, which participates in the liaison group with the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, would not likely have agreed to hold the meeting in Jerusalem if the establishment of diplomatic relations were further off.

**JEWISH VOTE PLAYS KEY ROLE  
IN REPUBLICAN VICTORY IN L.A.****By Leslie Katz****Jewish Bulletin of Northern California**

SAN FRANCISCO, June 9 (JTA) -- The local Jewish vote, traditionally cast for Democratic candidates, may have played a key role in the election Tuesday of the first Republican mayor of Los Angeles in more than three decades.

According to tracking polls, 40 percent of the Jews who voted in the election cast their ballots for multimillionaire Richard Riordan, a political newcomer who combined a call for economic recovery and a tough stance on crime with a long record of generosity to inner-city schools.

He defeated two-term City Councilman Mike Woo, a liberal Democrat who pitched his message of multiethnic coalition building to the same voters who elected and supported Mayor Tom Bradley during his 20-year tenure.

Going into the election, the Jewish vote was considered by many to be the swing vote in what appeared to be a neck-and-neck race.

It might have seemed a given that the Jewish community that had so strongly supported Bradley and had cast some 80 percent of its vote for Bill Clinton in November would stand behind Woo and his progressive social agenda.

In the end, however, it was some of those same long-time Democrats who rallied behind the 61-year-old Riordan.

They did that, said political scientist Joel Kotkin, for the same reason other voters did. Kotkin, a Los Angeles-based senior fellow with the Center for the New West, a Denver think tank, said Riordan represents change, and in a city still reeling from last year's riots and caught in a painful economic slump, that promise carried enormous weight.

**'Sick And Tired Of Crime'**

"What we may finally be seeing is that urban Jews have joined the 'I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore' crowd," Kotkin said the morning after the race. "They're sick and tired of crime, of being strangled by business regulations, of dysfunctional schools."

The comparatively high number of Jewish voters who went for Riordan -- only 20 percent of Los Angeles Jews voted for George Bush -- has implications beyond this particular race, he said.

"What you're seeing is that the Jews are no longer being swayed by traditional sort of liberal rhetoric, particularly in hard times. I think it's the beginning of an evolution of the Jewish community away from its overwhelming attachment to liberal Democratic politics."

Even though the mayoral race was officially non-partisan, no one truly expected it to evolve that way, and thus expected that Woo would easily be able to beat a Republican in a largely Democratic city.

And even though two-thirds of the city's voters are members of minority groups, the same percentage of registered voters are white, which may have aided Riordan.

"I think that the city really needed to be turned around and move in a new direction," said Rabbi Gary Greenebaum, Western regional director

of the American Jewish Committee. "There was a sense that Riordan was better able to do that and that Woo represented, to a certain extent, politics as usual."

Riordan's promise to find the funds to put 3,000 more police officers on the street may have had particular resonance for Jewish voters.

"Safety is an issue that's more important to minority communities, according to polls," Greenebaum said.

#### No Longer Have 'Natural Allies'

During the primaries, neither Riordan nor Woo paid particular attention to Jewish voters, assuming that Jews would back City Councilman Joel Wachs or State Assemblyman Richard Katz, who captured third and fourth place respectively, and who are both Jewish.

But as the race progressed and the candidates neared the finish line, they clearly realized that the undecided middle class -- to which most Los Angeles Jews belong -- would determine the outcome.

In turn, both courted the Jewish vote heavily, attending numerous Jewish events and celebrations around the city.

Despite those intense efforts, many Jews clearly remained torn between the two candidates until the end.

"I heard many saying they were choosing the lesser of two evils. They didn't feel good about supporting Woo or Riordan," said Greenebaum.

Now that Riordan is in office, it remains to be seen what sort of relationship he will forge with the city's Jewish population.

"I think that the Jewish community, at least certain parts of it, are going to feel a partnership with Riordan as L.A. starts to re-create itself in various ways," Greenebaum predicted.

Carol Plotkin, associate director of the American Jewish Congress in Los Angeles, on the other hand, believes that the Jewish community, particularly its more liberal elements, may have to work harder than it has in the past to establish an alliance with city leadership.

"We don't have the natural allies we once had there in City Hall," she said.

#### **LAWMAKERS DEFER ACTION ON SYRIA, CITING PLEDGE FROM ADMINISTRATION** By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, June 9 (JTA) -- Advocates for the Syrian Jewish community this week welcomed indications from the Clinton administration that it would make the plight of Jews trapped in Syria a top priority.

At a House Foreign Affairs Committee markup Tuesday of foreign aid legislation, Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) announced that he and Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) would not offer a Syria-related amendment to the 1994 foreign aid authorization bill because of assurances he had received from the administration.

The amendment would have prohibited aid to Syria until Damascus allowed Syrian Jews to travel freely and refrained from involvement in terrorism and narcotics trafficking.

Instead of the amendment, Schumer and other members of the committee, including Gilman and Rep. Howard Berman (D-Calif.), who had also received assurances that the administration would continue to press Syria on the issue of its Jews, agreed to insert tough language about Syrian

actions into a committee report accompanying the bill.

Also at the markup, committee members earmarked \$3 billion in aid for Israel, the same amount the country currently receives. The bill would include provisions for Israel to spend \$475 million of its military assistance within Israel itself instead of in the United States, thereby providing a boost to the Israeli economy.

In addition, congressional sources said, Israel would receive its money earlier than many other aid recipients.

The bill, which still has several hurdles to clear on the legislative track, also includes language restricting the types of weaponry Russia could sell to Iran while receiving American aid.

Another provision in the bill, inserted at the request of Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) and based on legislation introduced by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.), linked future arms sales to Arab countries to their willingness to rescind the secondary and tertiary boycott of companies doing business with Israel.

#### 'Encouraged' By U.S. Stance

On the issue of Syria, congressional sources pointed out that Syria is already barred from receiving American aid, both because of other legislation and because Syria remains on the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

The amendment that would have been introduced, and the even tougher language that was inserted into the committee's accompanying report, serves as a sign to Syria of American views, the sources said.

Alice Harary, president of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, said in a statement Wednesday that she was heartened by Schumer's remarks Tuesday.

"I'm encouraged by the firmness with which the Clinton administration appears to be addressing the question of Syrian Jewry," Harary said. "While I am cautiously optimistic at this news, I urge the Congress to continue to press the Syrian government to release the 1,400 Syrian Jews still remaining hostage in Syria."

Recently, the Syrian government, responding to American complaints that Syrian Jews are no longer allowed to travel freely, asserted that the Jews no longer seek to leave the country -- a claim that was quickly refuted by Syrian Jewry advocacy groups here and in Canada.

In the spring of 1992, Syria had announced a policy of free travel for Syrian Jews.

But between last October and January 1993, no Jews in Syria were granted travel visas, and in recent months, only a few have been given exit papers each week.

#### **HEZBOLLAH FIRE WOUNDS SOLDIERS**

TEL AVIV, June 9 (JTA) -- Four Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the southern Lebanon security zone Tuesday, when Hezbollah forces north of the zone fired an anti-tank missile at their vehicle.

The wounded soldiers were flown from the Kawkabeh region in the eastern sector of the zone to a hospital in Haifa to be treated for concussion, shock and shrapnel wounds.

Four Katyusha rockets were fired shortly afterward at an Israel Defense Force position near the site of the first attack, apparently in response to heavy countershelling by IDF and the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army forces.

# **TOUVIER'S WHEREABOUTS ARE NOT CLEAR, CLOUDING WHETHER TRIAL CAN TAKE PLACE** By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, June 9 (JTA) -- Where is Paul Touvier?

The French Nazi collaborator who headed up the intelligence division of Lyon's wartime Vichy regime militia was freed from jail last year. Shortly afterward, travel restrictions were dropped when a Paris court dismissed the charges of war crimes leveled against him.

However, an appeals court in Versailles last week overturned the earlier decision, ruling that Touvier, 78, must indeed stand trial for ordering the 1944 execution of seven Jewish hostages as a reprisal for the killing of a Vichy regime official.

When the Versailles court made its decision, it did not order his imprisonment, given his age and health. He reportedly suffers from cancer.

But Touvier's trial and his whereabouts suddenly took on added significance this week, after another Frenchman accused of war crimes, Rene Bousquet, was shot dead by a deranged writer on Tuesday.

No Frenchman has ever stood trial in France for crimes against humanity, although the German Gestapo commander Klaus Barbie, who supervised roundups and tortures in France, was convicted of such crimes in a French court and sentenced to life imprisonment.

French Jewish leaders have long urged that Touvier, Bousquet, and Maurice Papon -- who ordered the deportation of Jews from Bordeaux -- be put on trial, exposing the French Vichy regime's role in the Holocaust.

With Bousquet's assassination, Touvier's trial may take on added importance, observers said this week.

But where is Touvier?

Touvier's only obligation is to spend the night before his trial -- if there is a trial -- in a jail to be designated, said a spokesman of the French Ministry of Interior.

## **Touvier's Lawyer Denies Client Is Missing**

According to the Jerusalem office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Touvier left France a few weeks ago for Canada's Quebec.

Other reports, by the French satirical weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné*, say that Touvier, a connoisseur of the various convents and abbeys of Europe, may have vanished in one of his favorite Catholic hideouts.

All these rumors have been completely denied by one of Touvier's lawyers, Guillaume de Maignan.

De Maignan told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that "some people close to the plaintiffs against Touvier are taking advantage of Rene Bousquet's assassination to have Touvier arrested again and put back in jail."

"Touvier hasn't left France, he hasn't changed a pebble in his regular way of life since he left jail last year. He is living at the same place, he goes on meeting with his relatives, friends, and lawyers.

"Perhaps some of the people who peep on Mr. Touvier's life didn't see him go out of his home and spread the rumor, but Touvier is in France, where he has always been ever since he was freed from jail," De Maignan said.

De Maignan did not, however, reveal his client's address and it was not possible to independently confirm Touvier's whereabouts.

Despite rumors that Touvier suffers from cancer, his lawyer said Touvier's health is satisfactory and that he leads a "normal" life.

Reaction to Bousquet's sudden murder has meanwhile continued, with Jewish leaders lamenting the fact that Bousquet's trial could not now take place.

France's Chief Rabbi Joseph Sitruk proposed on French television that Bousquet be tried posthumously. But this is remote, as the law stipulates that death ends the prosecution.

Serge Klarsfeld, who led the fight to bring Bousquet to trial for the past 15 years, said Touvier's crimes pale compared to Bousquet's.

Even Papon, who was secretary-general of the Bordeaux area Vichy administration, is of far less importance than Bousquet.

"Papon wasn't close to the first circle of policy-makers, like Bousquet," said Klarsfeld.

Police have formally charged Bousquet's self-confessed killer, Christian Didier, 49, with murder. The obscure writer, who called a news conference Tuesday to announce his crime, was also identified by Bousquet's valet and janitor as the man who entered Bousquet's apartment and shot him dead.

## **AUSTRIAN LEADER PLEDGES HIS COUNTRY WILL DO MORE TO AID VICTIMS OF NAZIS** By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, June 9 (JTA) -- Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky has pledged his country will do more to meet demands for compensation to Holocaust victims, but he said nothing to indicate Austria would agree to large-scale reparations similar to what Germany has paid.

Vranitzky, who is the first Austrian head of government to make an official visit to Israel, made the remarks during Hebrew University's annual graduation ceremonies.

Vranitzky delivered the main address and received an honorary doctorate for his "strong commitment to democracy and freedom" and his friendship with Israel and the university.

The Austrian leader pointed out that his government had concluded a number of agreements with the Austrian Jewish community and international Jewish organizations to give money to Holocaust victims.

But Jewish officials said the sums involved have been limited. For the most part, Austria in the past has hesitated to admit responsibility for the Holocaust, claiming Austria was a victim of Nazi Germany.

But Vranitzky was among the first of Austrian leaders to break with that tradition, and in his address here the chancellor reaffirmed his claim that Austria must bear collective responsibility for the role Austrians played in the Nazi Holocaust.

At the same time, he said his country has resisted the xenophobia and intolerance that has flared elsewhere in Europe.

"Efforts to profit politically from xenophobia have failed" in Austria, especially among the young, said Vranitzky. He said that the failure of far-right and neo-Nazi groups in Austria was due to the efforts of the government to teach the lessons of the past and convey the moral responsibility history placed on them in the wake of World War II.

Vranitzky cautioned, though, that the fight against nationalism in Europe must continue to be waged.

## TWO DELI BRANDS INVOLVED IN SCANDAL OVER KASHRUT

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, June 9 (JTA) -- Sinai Kosher and Best Kosher meats are being pulled off delis' and butchers' shelves as retailers coast to coast comply with a rabbinical statement recommending against the use of those products.

When widely respected Orthodox rabbis Gedalia Dov Schwartz of Chicago, Sholom Rivkin of St. Louis and Nota Greenblatt of Memphis recently visited slaughterhouses that supply Sinai and Best with their meat, they found conditions there that render the brands' products unacceptable, sources said.

In a statement made public this week, the three rabbis said "that serious irregularities in procedures exist in certain slaughterhouses" that supply Sinai and Best and, as a result, the rabbis "no longer recommend" the meats sold under those brand names.

They did not come right out and call non-kosher the companies' hot dogs, sausages, corned beef, brisket, veal, lamb and other deli meats items, for fear that a lawsuit might be brought by the Bessin Corp., which produces the Sinai and Best brands, explained a rabbi involved in the situation.

But their statement has virtually the same effect.

Schwartz said he hopes the company rectifies the problems with their kashrut soon.

Bessin's vice president of sales, Michael Hahn, said, "We hope to resolve this issue after a very short period, so I don't believe it will have a significant impact on sales. We have an optimistic future," he said.

Bessin is owned by Sara Lee Corp., which bought the company earlier this year.

Many observers say it is impossible for the rabbis' statement not to have a dramatic, long-term impact.

In the kosher world, "your credibility is your worth," said Alan Abbey, publisher of the Kosher Business newsletter, which recently suspended publication.

### 'A Significant Blow'

"If you lose that good name, you're hurting. It's a significant blow. At Sara Lee, heads are probably spinning," he said.

The rabbis made their determination after being involved in "two investigative situations," according to Schwartz, who heads the religious court, or beit din, of the Rabbinical Council of America, the New York-based association of Orthodox rabbis.

He would not provide any details of what they found or how long the investigations lasted.

The rabbis' recommendation has so far affected retailers in the Chicago, Los Angeles, Memphis, St. Louis and Dallas areas.

In New York, where the kosher population is a diverse lot, each community makes its own decisions regarding kosher products and it is difficult to ascertain how many stores were adhering to the rabbis' ruling.

According to Rabbi Mayer Bendet, a spokesman for OK Laboratories, a Brooklyn-based kashrut supervising agency, the rabbis visited the slaughterhouses and came to the conclusion that "you can't touch that stuff."

"Did we suspect it? Yes, we did. We had information from people who worked there going

a year back that things were really bad," he said.

Rabbi John Shawl, a kashrut administrator in Dallas, said that "some terrible things were going on that would not be comfortable for any person who wants to keep kosher," but would not be more specific.

Another source, who asked not to be named, said the rabbis found that the men slaughtering the animals were not Sabbath-observant. According to Jewish law, the meat is not kosher if slaughtered by men who are not shomer Shabbat.

This source also said the rabbis found that the knives used for killing the steer were not being checked as often as is required according to halachah.

The three rabbis who supervise the kashrut of Sinai and Best products -- Yeshua Hershel Kaufman, Yosef Arie Leff and Michael Small -- put out their own statement on June 6, defending their supervision.

"All of the company's meat sources are of the highest caliber of kashrut as required by Torah Law. The total production of Sinai Kosher and Best Kosher Sausage Companies are under the constant supervision of God-fearing and knowledgeable mashgichim," they said, using the Hebrew word for supervisors.

"We wish to reassure the Jewish community that nothing has changed in any aspect of production of Sinai Kosher and Best Kosher products. Use of these products conforms to the highest standards of kashrut as prescribed by the Code of Jewish Law (Shulchan Aruch)," the statement said.

### The Products 'Will Be Missed'

But Debbie Linksmann, owner of Kosher Link, Dallas' only kosher butcher, is taking the advice of her rabbi, and has pulled all Sinai and Best products from her shelves.

Sixty percent of the meat she sold came from those companies, and "they will be missed. They were very popular products, because most of the kosher homes here do not use Hebrew National. It filled in a space" between Hebrew National and glatt meat, she said.

Sinai and Best meats were considered more reliable, in terms of kashrut, than Hebrew National, said sources, though neither is acceptable to the stringently Orthodox, who eat only glatt kosher meat.

Glatt means smooth, and refers to an extra check of the lungs of the slaughtered animal, to make sure that the organ is smooth, as it must be in order to be kosher.

But glatt consumers represent a small percentage of the \$300-\$400 million kosher meat market, Kosher Business' Abbey said.

Bessin's Hahn said that Best and Sinai meats do about \$100 million in business a year.

Sinai, Best and Hebrew National products are popular with Conservative Jews who keep kosher homes, and more popular with Orthodox Jews outside of major metropolitan areas, where glatt kosher meat is not as readily available, said observers of the kosher food scene.

Linksmann, who said she is stuck with at least \$3,000 worth of Best and Sinai inventory, added that "it will take a long time to restore confidence" in the brands.

"It will take a whole new group of supervising rabbis to go back in there and do what they need to do and to convince the public that it is OK. And it will take more than a week to do that."