

JACK TELL'S NEWSPAPER
LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE
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LETTERS

TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth
Constitutes A Majority"



BY JACK TELL

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dox Rabbis all over the country, accusing us of encouraging Jews to eat non-Kosher food. It seemed incredible, we'd found ourself in that predicament, but we realized we did offend some devout members of our Faith. We publicly admitted our mistake, withdrew the offer, said we were sorry, and promised to be more careful in the future. Let's look at the other hand.

If we are correct in our original premise, we stand by our guns. Naturally we expect some irate target of our statements to expostulate in his own defence. We print his retort without comment. It is the policy of the Israelite. We've had our say, he's entitled to his.

So far, the denunciations touched on everything from our legitimacy to our sanity, but invariably little or no mention was made of the important issue we had made public. Here is an example of the past to prove our point.

It took place about two years ago, when we charged a candidate for the nomination for governor with seeking the support of the John Birch Society. We pointed out how certain leaders of the society, at the time, were notorious anti-Semites. The retort came, of course, which we ran in its entirety. It was worded in the usual vein, calling us all the epithets barely printable in a family newspaper. Long and loud was the bleat that he never had been, nor was he then, a member of the John Birch Society (which we never charged him as being.) But he did reiterate that he welcomed the support of anyone who preferred to vote for him, be they Jews, Catholics, Mormons, Negroes, Communists, or Birchers -- which was exactly the issue, and the sole one, we had brought forth.

Now we find ourself in a situation where a Republican candidate for nomination for U. S. Senator saw fit to oppose President Johnson's nomination of Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas to Chief Justice. Fortas is the first Jew ever honored with that distinction. Naturally, we are proud to have member of our Faith rise to that high position.

It is not unusual for elected members of the opposition party to seek to block this type of appointment, especially when the timing is proximate to an election and any furor created may cause embarrassment. Also, right now, when liberalism and conservatism has divided the country as never before, there are many honest and legitimate and decent reasons to reject Fortas, an extreme liberal. Also, there is the far-fetched but acceptable objection that Johnson, a lame duck President, should not be allowed to make so important an appointment with a few months remaining in his term of office. Lastly there is the objection of "cronism."

This writer disagrees with all the objections, but does not disagree with the right of anyone to oppose appointment.

Then the ugly factor of anti-Semitism seeped into the proceedings, a Senate hearing to determine the qualifications of the Presidential nomination. Prof. Fred Rodell of the Yale Law School, stated: "there is no doubt about it," about the question of anti-Semitism being involved. A couple of Fortas colleagues on the Court," he said, "told me they haven't the slightest doubt that one of the objections is the fact that Abe is Jewish. It may not be the whole thing, but it is definitely there."

There it is straight from most competent source available.

Now let's get back to the timing Raggio chose to make the Fortas nomination an issue. Was it weeks back when our President first announced the nomination? No. Was it during the initial stage of the hearing when racist Southerners and reactionary Republicans started floundering around seeking legitimate reasons for their opposition. No. Whether it was by chance or design, Raggio brought forth his stand at the precise time when anti-Semitism was embedded at the hearings. What effect did Raggio's opposition to Fortas' appointment have at the time it was made? It told every anti-Semite in the state, and they number more than a few, that Raggio's stand was in keeping with their own nasty views on the subject.

The Las Vegas Israelite, the only English-Jewish newspaper in the State of Nevada, would not be worth its paper-weight if it did not call these circumstances to the attention of its readers.

At a forum in Reno last week, according to an Associated Press dispatch, a woman in the audience asked Raggio why he's "so violently opposed" to the nomination of Justice Abe Fortas as chief justice of the U. S. Supreme Court. (Still quoting the AP) Raggio held up a copy of the Aug. 9 edition of the Las Vegas Israelite which he said contained an editorial "suggesting" he's anti-semitic.

In the United Press International news report, Raggio stated the Israelite carried an inference he was anti-Semitic. Also in the UPI dispatch Raggio was quoted:

Dear Mr. Tell:

Your editorial of Friday, August 9, about Bill Raggio has greatly dismayed and shocked many people including prominent leaders of the Reno Jewish Community.

As the only Rabbi in Reno over a 400-mile radius, and with no ulterior motive other than satisfying a deep sense of fairness and ethics, I feel compelled to appraise you of the following facts:

I have only been in Reno since September of 1966, when I took my first pulpit. I am called upon, not only to minister to the Jewish community but also to be their spokesman to the Gentile community. Since, more often than not, Religion and Law go hand in hand, Bill Raggio and I belong to mutual organizations, serve on the same panels and participate in open discussions on subjects of vital importance to the entire community. It is inevitable, then, that through my almost daily contacts with him, I get to know him quite well, and I find it simply incredible that he could be labeled as an anti-semitic.

Long before any thought of running for political office, he has been consistently willing to help the Jewish cause, either actively or by lending his name when he was not available. He is a long-time active Executive Board member of the National Conf. of Christians and Jews, and has done an excellent job as the Chairman of the Christian Campaign (67-68) for U.J.A., as can be attested to by our very good friend Dr. Berger, Chairman of the No. Nevada U.J.A. He and Mrs. Raggio

Dear Mr. Tell,

The implications in your editorial in the August 9th issue of the Las Vegas Israelite on Bill Raggio were neither warranted or justified. I am greatly disturbed over this.

I have known Bill and his family for over fifteen years; as a matter of fact I am his children's pediatrician. Furthermore, as the general chairman of the UJA in northern Nevada, I asked Bill to be my chairman for the Christian campaign, to which he readily agreed and did a very commendable job. He is also an active member of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and participates actively in their program.

Even if he differs in his personal views with his opponent to the point of taking a stand against the appointment of Justice Abe Fortas and Judge Thornberry to the Supreme Court, this should not stir up any religious and racial innuendoes.

Yours for fairness in judging people,
Emanuel Berger, M. D.
(Reno)

cc-Bill Raggio
cc-Rabbi Jack Frankel
cc-John Sinai
cc-Dr. Heinz Rettig

(who is a charming lady loved by everyone who meets her) contribute to and attend most of our functions and have come to be considered almost part and parcel of our congregation.

This is Mr. Raggio's public image. But in addition, and without any thought of aggrandizement or gain (except our gratitude), Bill has been of great help to some Jewish youths in deep trouble with the law, through his sheer faith in, and understanding of, teen-agers and their problems.

I have discussed this entire affair with, among others, Judge David Zenoff, who has permitted me to quote him. Although, like myself, he is prohibited from interference in matters political, he has strongly stated that he "will not permit any misconception about any candidate", that he has known Bill Raggio for quite some time, and that he would emphatically disavow any notion that Bill is or has ever been an anti-semitic.

Mr. Tell, I appeal to your sense of fairness and to your great responsibility as a journalist to rectify the great wrong of branding Mr. Raggio as an anti-semitic.

Sincerely,
Rabbi Jack E. Frankel
Reno

cc:
Bill Raggio
Judge David Zenoff
Dr. Emanuel Berger
Mr. John Sinai
Dr. Heinz Rettig
Mr. Hank Greenspan
Michael Laine, Dean of Men U. of N.
P. S. You have my permission to print this letter in your paper.

cc-Hank Greenspan
cc-Michael Laine, Dean of Men, U. of N.
cc-David Zenoff

Dear Sir:

In the past few days, there has been a minor explosion between two of our Republican candidates - Lt. Gov. Fike and William Raggio. I am sure that you know about what happened and the accusations that took place.

I have read your Editorial in the Israelite newspaper and I want you to know my feelings concerning this; my feelings as a member of the Jewish faith; as a citizen of this state and as a Republican.

I have known "Bill" Raggio since he was born and have never known of any criticism of him that might be construed as racism. He is very friendly, not only to me and my family, but with all of the Jewish people in Reno. He has visited our Temple many times and has gone out of his way to be of help to us, and I don't mean recently during this political campaign, but for many years.

I feel, as do a great many of the Jewish people in Reno, that by your innuendoes, you

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Piracy

Algeria's refusal to release the hijacked Israeli plane, its crew and passengers is another illustration how international diplomacy flounders when matters affecting Israel are involved.

It is four weeks now since the plane was hijacked as it left Italy -- in fact it may have been over Italian territory when the goons took over and still there are no indications on the part of Algerian authorities that they are ready to make a move. When the plane was first forced to land on an Algerian airport, it was widely believed no responsible government would risk being branded an accomplice to the crime of piracy, but it now seems that those elements in the Middle East who have been defying world public opinion with impunity over the years, and often with the silent blessing of the Arab and pro-Arab bloc in the United Nations, are again hoping to be exonerated by their friends in the councils of the nations.

Israel is properly taking a serious view of the situation, for what it amounts to is world countenancing of Arab blocking of its air traffic with impunity. Civilized nations don't behave that way. Even Cuba, with its deep well of hostility toward the United States, has never failed to return a hijacked American plane.

History has a peculiar sense of retribution of its own. The downed Syrian planes on Israel territory in what was described as navigational mistake is a case in point, even though the two incidents have no common elements.

It seems to us that if the UN cannot or will not act our own government together with other aerial nations should step into the picture. If air piracy is condoned, none of us is safe in flight.

JERUSALEM (WNS) A bill imposing strict news censorship on Cabinet meetings dealing with defense and security problems, or such matters as the Cabinet may define as unpublishable, received Knesset approval.

JERUSALEM (WNS) The impact of last April's world economic conference of Jewish financiers and industrialists here as of now is reflected in joint economic projects entailing investments of about \$50 million, according to a report by Zvi Dinstein, Deputy Minister of Finance.

WASHINGTON (WNS) Disclosure that the International Federation of Pilots will boycott Algeria over the hijacking of the Israeli plane until such time as the plane, its crew and passengers are released was made here in a report from Amsterdam which indicated the international pilots will refuse to land planes in Algeria.

JERUSALEM (WNS) More than 342,000 people visited the Knesset building during this year, making it next to the Walling Wall the greatest attraction to tourists and Israelis alike.

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