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P.O. BOX 14096 LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89114
Editor and Publisher Jack Tell
Business Manager Bea Tell, 876-1255
Vegas News Helene Stadler, 384-3685
**MARK TAN, DICK MC INNES,
TRUDE FELDMAN**

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Jewish Vote

The debate over the direction of Jewish votes in the upcoming presidential elections continues. The traditional Jewish votes, nominally democratic since Franklin D. Roosevelt, is being sought by both parties. The recent declaration for the incumbent by Jewish citizens, defined by the general press as Jewish leaders, has raised much criticism, and on the other hand, some support.

The Democratic candidate's "Jewish Affairs Committee" has stated that its nominee will seek the Jewish vote based on appeals to the traditional Jewish liberal approach to the need for change.

One of the "Leaders," a professor at a Rabbinical Seminary, declare for Mr. Nixon. He does not head an organization and so speaks for himself.

By the same token, there is no guarantee that Jewish leaders of organizations, no matter what side they opt for, will bring their constituency into the booths with the same decision. It is important that the Jewish vote, if there is such an animal in a bloc, not be up for grabs. It is also important the considerations entering into a decision be in the best interests of the common weal. Whatever is good for all the people should be good for sections of the people. If there will be peace abroad, it will be good for Israel; if there is peace at home, it will be good for all Americans. Good economic conditions will favor no particular section of the public, but all of them.

Samuel Gompers (who was Jewish), the head of the American Federation of Labor years ago, said that labor should "reward your friends and punish your enemies." It seems that the play for Jewish votes, applying this formula now comes from those seeking votes.

The Jews, as Americans, whether traditionally liberal or not, should not succumb to this kind of internecine politics. They should be guided by what is best for everybody.

The 'Jewish Vote'

BY MORTON YARMON

As the 1972 presidential campaign has gathered momentum in recent months, a number of commentators and analysts have speculated on what the "Jewish vote" in the forthcoming election is likely to be. In light of these discussions, it might be helpful to examine how American Jews have tended to vote in past elections -- and why.

A realistic answer to the question, "Is there a Jewish vote?" Would have to be both, "Yes and No": Yes, because Jews over the years have tended to exhibit unique voting patterns; no, because Jews, like other Americans, tend

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to disagree among themselves on political issues.

Americans in general have repeatedly shown themselves hard to control in the voting booth. Labor unions, both national and local, for example, have reason to know their members do not always vote as they are told. Most recently, in Michigan, unions spent much money and energy telling workers not to vote for George Wallace; yet it was the large labor vote that helped win Wallace the Michigan primary.

What then is meant by "the Jewish vote?" Sometimes it is taken to mean that Jews vote for Jews. Yet this seems to be less true than with any other ethnic groups. If Jews vote for Jews, Bella Abzug should have defeated William F. Ryan in the recent Democratic Congressional primary in Manhattan, and James H. Scheuer should have defeated Jonathan Bingham in the Bronx. Similarly, in 1965, Abraham Beame should have defeated John V. Lindsay in the New York mayoral election, and there should long ago have been a Jewish mayor of New York.

The term "Jewish vote" has also been used to mean a certain kind of unanimity. In 1968 for example, Jews gave Hubert Humphrey about 80 per cent of the votes they cast. This clear and impressive majority, while still some distance from unanimity, does indicate that the statistics of voting by Jews are in certain ways characteristic, and distinguish them from other groups. These statistics indicate that Democratic candidates generally do well with Jewish voters. (Republican candidates generally do well with Episcopalian voters, who are economically and educationally comparable to the Jews.)

The striking thing about "the Jewish vote," in this sense, is that the Democratic preference has lasted so long. In 1928, it could be explained by the large number of immigrants and workers in the Jewish community, and by the special appeal the Democratic party had for such groups. But the Jewish community today is preponderantly non-immigrant and overwhelmingly middle class. Though there are still serious problems of Jewish poverty, especially among the aged, the average income and level of education in the Jewish community has risen substantially. Among other American subgroups, support for the Democratic party has tended to shrink, and support for the Republican party to grow as they have climbed the socio-economic ladder. (Many prosperous Irish voters, for example, did not vote for John F. Kennedy in 1960.) Jews have been in large measure an exception to this generalization.

Two things account for this difference: Historically, especially in Europe, it was the conservatives who more often tried to keep the Jews from citizenship and equal rights, and the liberals who favored the non-discriminatory admission of Jews into the general body politic. In Great Britain, more than 100 years ago, the Conservatives voted against the right of Jews to be elected to Parliament, and the Liberals voted for it. To this day, proportionately fewer Jews vote for the Conservative party than other Englishmen of equivalent social and economic status; and since the Liberal party has declined greatly, British Jews are apt to vote for the Labor party.

The consensus of informed and thoughtful students is that the Jewish community maintains an operating ethos of what might be called civic concern. Just as Jews have been exceptionally responsive to philanthropic obligations, so they have also been responsive to political appeals, in the name of justice and compassion, for the poor and weak. The philanthropic impulse expresses itself in a readiness to contribute to Federation, United Jewish Appeal or United Way. The civic concern expresses itself in a readiness to vote for candidates who will tax those who are better off on behalf of those less well off -- which translates into a willingness to send a larger check to the tax collector.

As to the issues that American Jews are weighing in this election; some -- Israel, Soviet Jewry, preferential quotas -- are of special concern to them as Jews; others -- Vietnam inflation, unemployment, crime, welfare reform -- are the same issues being weighed by the electorate as a whole.

The question being asked as we approach the November elections is whether we are beginning to see a slow but decisive change in the political outlook and behavior of American Jews, tending towards a shift from the Democrats to the Republicans, or whether the current ups and downs are not much more than wiggles on a graph line, hardly affecting the long-term trend. And the answer is that it is far soon to be able to tell.

TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth Constitutes A Majority"

BY JACK TELL



(Continued from Page 1)

pay if the candidate should succeed in his unorthodox quest? It will mean that Paul Price and the corrupt Las Vegas Sun will have another pipe line into the highest tribunal in our state.

It will mean that no matter how damaging and positive the evidence may be against Hank Greenspun or Paul Price in any lower state court, they will be assured of one more vote for the verdict or judgment to be reversed. Isn't that nice?

Not that Greenspun or Price "must" have this candidate elected. Its just an added insurance, because in the final analysis, in case of a criminal conviction in a state court, our present governor, with his power of pardon, as relationships now stand, would never let either Greenspun or Price spend any measurable time in jail. How sweet it is!

It just happens that the candidate in question is not too bad a chap. We met him on one occasion and he appeared personable and even likeable. As for his qualifications, we do not have sufficient information on which to form an opinion. The one platform he advocated, to hold six months of high court sessions in Las Vegas. Certainly does not alone warrant his election.

If he conducts his campaign, strictly on the merits of his qualifications, just as any other candidate, especially his opponents, we will be satisfied to refrain from further comment and allow the voting public to make its choice. He is entitled to his fair Chance at the post.

BY THE RAREST OF COINCIDENCES, JUST PRIOR TO GOING TO PRESS WITH THIS COLUMN, WE RAN INTO THE (STILL UNNAMED) CANDIDATE AND HIS CHARMING WIFE AT A POLITICAL RALLY AT PAT'S CHINESE KITCHEN. WE SPENT THREE HOURS IN EARNEST CONVERSATION WITH HIM. HE IS HIGHLY KNOWLEDGABLE AND QUALIFIED FOR THE POST HE IS SEEKING IN EVERY RESPECT - EXCEPT FOR ONE SKELETON IN HIS CLOSET - HIS ASSOCIATION WITH PAUL PRICE. SINCE PAUL AND GREENSPUN HELP ONLY THOSE WHO PAY OR WILL RETURN THE FAVOR WHILE IN OFFICE, IF HANK AND PRICE DO NOT BACK THIS MAN WE PROBABLY WILL COME OUT STRONGLY IN HIS BEHALF DURING THE GENERAL ELECTION. POLITICS MAKE STRANGE BEDFELLOWS.

But if Price, and or Greenspun, should put the power of their ignoble press behind his candidacy, all of us will know why. Then he will not deserve our silence and the ISRAELITE will do everything to expose the nefarious conspiracy. And the public will listen.

The ISRAELITE was successful to some degree in defeating Price's bid for City Commissioner, despite Paul's overwhelming popularity in the primary. As a result the City Commission is probably the only governmental agency in Southern Nevada free from fear of intimidation by the Las Vegas Sun.

This was proven when we exposed Greenspun's threats and abuse against commission members on the Thriftmart slot issue. We had advocated the issuance of the Thriftmart license because the super market deserved it. Greenspun attempted to force the license for his own selfish profit. Almost a year has passed and the license is still denied. Would this have happened if Price were a city Commissioner?

We cannot, we must not, allow the Las Vegas Sun, Hank Greenspun, Paul Price, et al, to be the power behind the throne of any more governmental agencies. They are already calling the shots in too many, where even honest elected officials are paying the penalty for support from dishonest sources.

But we are slowly weeding them out, one by one. True, it is taking time, but the ISRAELITE will not cease until Nevada is free from the tentacles of the iron hand of the corrupt Las Vegas Sun.

The old order passeth, and with it will go Hank, Paul, and all those they supported for their own good.