

Nixon: Past and Present

BY ROBERT E. SEGAL

Richard Nixon's most recent disparagement of Jews, his anti-Jewish slur in connection with America's debate over the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia, came soon after new Nixon tape revelations. A simultaneous look at both Nixon capers is educational.

In the course of the steaming AWACS debate, the dehorned ex-President put forth the crude opinion that "if it were not for the intense opposition of Prime Minister Begin and parts of the American Jewish community, the AWACS sale would go through."

The tapes of a May 5, 1981 talk between Nixon and his White House Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman, newly accessible, disclose that Nixon wanted to know if "the Chicago Seven," a group of anti-Vietnam War protesters were "all Jews." Haldeman said half were. Ticked with the proposal set forth in the tape to engage thugs "to knock the heads off" the protesters, the President wondered out loud "if Congress will really get a bellyful of these people."

Surely, we are justified in wondering ourselves if the great majority of Americans have by now had a bellyful of Nixon. His latest effort to elbow his way back to the center of American policy - making in a critical hour has to make some of his diehard supporters a little nauseous. When they compare the Nixon attack on Jews on the AWACS matter with Senator Charles H. Percy's rebuttal, they might start to rethink their view. For in the judgment of the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Mr. Percy) the criticism of the American Jewish community for lobbying against the AWACS deal is "patently unfair. Jews, along with all other Americans, Percy opines have not only the right but the responsibility to make their views known."

The history of Nixon's hate affair with Jews is well documented. It surfaced in his successful effort to defeat Helen Gahagan Douglas in the 1950 California Senatorial battle. Although he rejected Rev. Gerald L.K. Smith's endorsement,

embracing the offer to help him "get rid of the Jew - Communist," the final days of the Nixon drive included the work of a telephone squad reminding voters that Congresswoman Douglas was married to a man whose original name was Hesselberg. Years later the man who gave America the hijinx of Watergate (which Senator Percy has termed "the darkest scandal in American political history") attributed his smear campaign against Helen Douglas to the innocence of youth.

Now his denigration of Jews may well take a sordid place in history alongside Charles A. Lindbergh's 1941 brazen and disastrous Des Moines indictment of American Jews as players of a lead role in forcing America into war against the Nazis.

The new Nixon tapes also will recall for many his boorish advice to escorts of his daughters not to let the Nixon children frequent art museums inasmuch as Father Nixon linked museums in his mind with Jews. Henry Kissinger, who prayed with and for Nixon in the dark Watergate and impeachment times concluded that the 37th President of the United States fostered "a dangerous brand of anti-Jewish prejudice born of ignorance."

The man who was twice elected President got to that high office with the help of many questionable artifices. Remember the Checkers speech? "Pat's not a quitter," he said of his wife. "Her name was Patricia Ryan and she was born on St. Patrick's Day." Truth to tell Mrs. Nixon's first name was Thelma, her birthday March 16. But the man who shows up at Anwar Sadat's funeral then rides on to dine with leaders of Arab nations arrayed against Israel, is now admired by some of the new functionaries in the White House one of them has said that "a lot of people are impressed that he took this opportunity to rehabilitate himself."

So begins a new chapter in the biography of the man who once went to the trouble of declaring "I am not a crook" but did not take pains expected of any President to read and absorb what Article II of our Constitution has to say to the occupant of the highest office in the land: that he has the duty to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed."

DISPUTE OVER YARMULKAS

A federal district judge in Chicago, Milton I. Shadur, ruled this week that the Illinois High School Athletic Association does not have the right to tell yeshiva high school boys to doff their yarmulkas during athletic events. The Illinois Association had ruled that yarmulkas pose a threat to players when they fall off the heads of Jewish basketball players on to slippery gymnasium floors.

Alvin Rapp, a principal at Yeshiva University's Tonya Soloveitchik High School in Manhattan, who was a yeshiva high school basketball coach for seven years and is currently a licensed athletics official of the City of New York was flown to Chicago as an expert witness by prosecution lawyers representing two yeshiva high schools in the Chicago area in their case against the state's High School Athletic Association.

Rapp told the judge in Chicago that yarmulkas worn during basketball contests in New York City had

never resulted in physical injury to players of any team, as far as he was aware. In New York, sports officials' rules classify yarmulkas in the same category as eyeglasses and face masks.

The case, which will probably be appealed, was tried in the federal district court because American Jewish Congress lawyers representing the yeshiva high school families said that the rule forbidding the boys to wear their yarmulkas was a violation of the boys' first amendment rights, outweighing the physical risk to other basketball players. The judge held in favor of the ACJ lawyers' interpretation of the case.

Federal District Judge Shadur's decision arrives in time for the start of the 1981-82 basketball season in Illinois. The ruling is expected to be applicable in other cases in which Jewish athletes are asked to remove their yarmulkas before the start of athletic events.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Israel radio and TV will be banned from referring to the "West Bank" if a Supreme Court application from the Judea and Samaria Settlers Association is upheld. The Association has submitted arguments to the court that the term "West Bank" is essentially a Jordanian concept, implying Jordanian rule over both banks of the Jordan River.

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