

Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man

as told by



John P. & C. Buck West

ABU HASSAN ALI

"The Black Sultan" of Morocco
(A.D. 1350)

"ABU HASSAN ALI, 'El Sultan el Ašwad' or 'The Black Sultan,' was the most famous of the Merinides rulers of Morocco.

"He is renowned in the annals of the East for his ambition, courage, and the fortitude with which he bore his reverses, as well as for his patronage of art. Under him Moroccan art, architecture and literature rose to the zenith of their splendor.

"The Black Sultan came to the throne by ousting his brother. In 1330 he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Christian king of Castille and captured Gibraltar. Ten years later he made himself master of the Mediterranean by destroying the Christian fleet commanded by the white admiral, Godefrey Tenorio.

"Then began a long series of misfortunes. The kings of Castille and Portugal, allying themselves against him, defeated him. They took not only his treasures but also his wives. Driven from Europe, he returned to Africa, conquered Tunis and Algeria, and became so great a power in North Africa that the Mameluke Sultans of Egypt looked to him as the protector of Western Islam.

"While he was absent from Morocco, his subjects revolted under his son, Abu Fares, who seized the throne. With this army, the Black Sultan sailed from Tunis for Morocco, but a tempest in the Mediterranean wrecked his fleet. Thrown into the water with the dead tossing around him, he managed to save himself by clinging to a piece of wreckage, and finally drifted ashore near Algiers.

"Undaunted, he gathered a large army and marched against his son. He was defeated but, notwithstanding, he reached Fez and captured it. But he was unable to hold the city and was driven into the desert where he assembled army after army, hurling them against his foes again and again only to be beaten.

"Stern, self-denying, and dynamic, the Black Sultan refused to yield to the pleasures that had softened so many of his predecessors, and was thus able to endure hardship and vicissitudes such as few monarchs have had to face. While at times he was subject to outbursts of extreme cruelty, he was nonetheless refined and possessed great nobility of spirit. His colleges upon which he lavished all the beauties of Moroccan art, are monuments to his highly civilized taste and love of culture.

"His favorite wife was a European named Shams-ed-Douha, or 'The Morning Sun,' and his tomb and hers, at Shella, are one of the architectural treasures of Morocco. Upon the eastern face of the sultan's cenotaph is a wall of red stone carved with an inscription from the Koran with the exquisite ornament of the Alhambra--a page softened by the passing of time.

"O'Connor says of him: 'To the Sultan, Abu Hassan Ali, 'The Black Sultan,' are due the Mederseas of Es-Sahrij and El Mesbahiya (1331-48). He got his name like his dark skin from his mother, who was an Abyssinian Negress.

"ABU HASSAN was man of many parts; he inscribed a copy of the Koran with his own hand and had it richly bound in leather and gold and sent to Mecca to be placed in the Mosque. He likewise sent copies to Medina and Jerusalem. He sought by the foundation of the Mederseas to strike the imagination of the Moslems of his capital and to show them what he could accomplish. He appealed to the civic pride of the East and conciliated the learned who at Fez have always been influential. His power and glory

Governor Sawyer's Address

IT IS WITH DEEP PRIDE that I join you in Winnemucca. As we enter the second half of this bountiful decade, Nevada is enjoying its greatest period of expansion. Our economy is healthy and growing. Our people are active and optimistic, and they have every reason to be.

There are many problems and many more to come. Our very growth is forcing upon us demands we could not have imagined ten years ago. Nevada has been meeting these demands to a remarkable degree.

Statistics best illustrate our fantastic growth. We Nevadans live with superlatives and we become bored with them. While they are the truest indicators of our success, I do not mean to dwell on them today. As leaders of the party that had a great deal to do with achieving those statistics, you know well what they show. It is but a simple statement of fact to note that the leaders of the Democratic Party have been in large part responsible for the programs that have marked this decade of success.

And you well know this progress has been achieved over the objection of the opposition party. The Republican record of reaction and regression on the great social and economic questions of modern Nevada is clearly documented. Our Party has moved--the other Party has held back. One Party has offered hope--the other has offered doubt. One Party said "Yes" to the people--the other said "No."

Were Nevada minorities to have equal opportunities? Was Nevada to diversify its economy through industrial development? Was Nevada to protect its great natural resources? Was Nevada to have superior education?

To these and many other issues, the Democratic Party answered "Yes." The Republican Party answered "No," year after year. The record is clear.

IT WAS THEREFORE with something approaching awe that we witnessed last week one of the most revealing political dialogues in this decade at the Republican Convention.

Discounting several minor matters offered purely as window dressing, we welcome the Republicans to positions we have been taking for years. Let us take a look at the more important pronouncements of "The Grand Old Party". Then, just for fun, let us take a look at the record of the Party and its candidate on these same matters.

They declare they are interested in CIVIL RIGHTS. The record shows that until after the Congress passed a Federal Civil Rights Law and public opinion could no longer be denied, the Lieutenant Governor and Republican leaders generally were intractable in their opposition to Civil Rights Legislation. In 1963, all eight Democratic Senators stood ready to support such legislation and heeded just one Republican vote in the Senate. The Lieutenant Governor called a caucus of the nine majority Republican Senators and marshalled total opposition to Civil Rights Legislation. This Democratic Administration has been calling for such legislation at every session since 1959. (The personal views of the Lieutenant Governor as reflected in public statements made by him on this matter are of such a disgraceful character that I shall not repeat them here.)

The Republicans called for QUALITY EDUCATION. We are all interested in education. The Lieutenant Governor's heralded solution, oddly enough, turns out to be substantially identical with a proposal made by this administration in 1963, and again in 1965. The proposal did not have any support from the Lieutenant Governor on either occasion. He and his Party actually opposed the special session for education and parks in 1964. They have yet to endorse the proposed aid to education called for in the special session to start next Monday.

THE REPUBLICANS now are anxious to further RE-ORGANIZE Government. The sweeping Democratic proposal in 1963 was substantially

reached their height at the date of the foundation of the Mesbahiya for he had subdued Central Morocco and had made himself the most powerful sovereign in Western Islam. He sent rich gifts and entertained equal relations with the sultans of the east end of Africa. He married a daughter of the king of Tunis and upon the death of her father annexed his dominions to Morocco. He died June 21, 1351, after a reign of twenty-one years.

passed with the one needed Republican vote over the adamant and aggressive opposition of the Lieutenant Governor. Senator James Slattery, as a result, was almost read out of the Republican Party.

Our opponents say they want MORE INDUSTRY; a commendable goal. A very vigorous and effective bi-partisan industrial program was instituted in 1959, and has been instrumental in moving Nevada into number one national ranking in per capita manufacturing industrial growth. We want to do more and do it better, but we would have been delighted had the Lieutenant Governor seen fit at any time to help with the program. Rather than participate, he has treated the effort over the years with disdain.

These then are the major planks in the Republican platform, all commendable. The question naturally arises--where have they been while the Democrats were doing the very things they now propose? Where was the Lieutenant Governor and the Republican spokesmen during these years when Nevada has been labeled a "Success Saga"--leading the nation in growth, at or near the top in per capita income, broadening and strengthening our economic base without increasing general taxes, assuming leadership in affairs of the West and the Nation? They were fighting, kicking, opposing nearly every progressive measure; foretelling doom, predicting imminent disaster. Now that the hoped for disasters have not occurred, the official Republican position seems to acknowledge the record but avers that it is "in spite of" the Democratic Administration. If such is the case, it is hard to imagine that we could have had any better bad luck.

IT MIGHT BE relevant here to mention one thing that did NOT happen at the Republican convention. Yesterday, in Washington, D.C., I picked up the Washington Post and found this article. "Nevada Race-Odds Tight" is the headline. Two photographs appear. Under the photographs appear these words, "If One Wins, The Other Loses." The photographs are of me and--no, not the Lieutenant Governor--Frank Sinatra. The uninformed and casual reader would immediately assume that the race was between Sinatra and Sawyer. The story then makes it clear that Sinatra will win if the Republican candidate does. In thinking the matter over, I pondered the possibility that Mr. Sinatra actually was the candidate merely appearing by proxy under another name. If persistent rumors throughout the State are to be given credence, a number of undesirables who have had no success in bending or breaking the rules of gaming control do indeed have much at stake in this race. How many really are running in this race under the name of the Republican candidate? The failure of the Lieutenant Governor to propose a resolution calling for continuance of strong gaming control may indeed be significant.

Overall, I think congratulations are in order to the Republican Party in Nevada for having put a toe into the water of the 20th Century. They did recognize, for example, the unfortunate influence the John Birch Society has played in Party affairs. This recognition took the form of a savage attack upon their erstwhile companions in the form of a resolution ringing with denunciatory words and phrases of the most violent nature. It was suggested that the Birchers in addition to turning "brother against brother" were also turning "white against Negroes" and Gentile against Jews". These amazing revelations so dramatically disclosed were, I am sure, shocking to the average Nevadan, who for the

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LAS VEGAS VOICE

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER (Published every Thursday) DEDICATED to the INTERESTS and ASPIRATIONS for a BETTER LIFE of the NEGRO CITIZENS of the STATE of NEVADA

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958 West Owens Ave. (Golden West Shopping Center) Las Vegas, Nevada
Telephone: 642-5308

ADVERTISING RATES FURNISHED UPON REQUEST

Price per copy - 15¢ * One year - \$6 * Two years - \$10
(Application for 2nd Class Mailing Permit pending at Las Vegas, Nevada)