

One View of the President's Defender

To the Editor:

The recent "Appeals for Fairness" issued by Rabbi Baruch Korff's "National Citizens' Committee for Fairness to the Presidency" are so maudlin and so filled with distortion and fantasy that I feel moved to identify Rabbi Korff for your readers.

The Times devoted considerable attention to Rabbi Korff during the period of September through November 1947, after his abortive attempt to bomb London. Korff was arrested by the French police as he was preparing to take off from a private airport near Versailles.

Korff seems to have been as publicity hungry back in 1947 as he is today. The Times records that upon leaving the French courtroom after arraignment, he raised his hand in the "V" sign and cried to the photographers: "Pictures, pictures!" The whole affair was so bizarre that even the militant Hebrew Committee of National Liberation, with which Rabbi Korff was then affiliated, characterized it as a "spectacular foolish stunt."

A Times report written two days after his imprisonment tells of Korff's

shouting to reporters: "Tell America they are torturing me and making another Jesus Christ out of me." Korff's father, a self-styled "Grand Rabbi" in Boston, cabled Premier Paul Ramadier imploring that his son be freed before the affair turned into another Dreyfus case. Whether for this or other reasons, the French released Korff eleven weeks after his arrest.

Possibly it was his penchant for unauthorized bombing that drew Rabbi Korff to the defense of Richard Nixon, but the attempted bombing of London was not Korff's first grab for headlines. Earlier in 1947 he produced a highly melodramatic interview with a "Mr. Hillel," allegedly a Stern Group leader, in a New York hotel. The interview was staged with wires all over the floor, a mysterious F.B.I. man and with only Rabbi Korff able to see and question "Mr. Hillel"—all the elements of a movie thriller.

This, then, is the mock heroic rabbi who writes so movingly to "Dear Julie" about her illustrious father as a victim of "character assassination" [advertisement, Sept. 9 Week in Review]. I realize that freedom of the press requires printing even drivel on occasion, but I believe that your readers should be given the information necessary to make a proper assessment of Rabbi Korff's responsibility.

It was one thing to volunteer one's life in 1947, as so many Jews did, for the establishment of a Jewish state; it was quite another to grab headlines in Paris and compare oneself to Jesus and Dreyfus.

And today it is one thing to appeal for fairness to the President; it is quite another to solicit hundreds of thousands of dollars from people who might respect the title rabbi in order to buy headlines and justify corruption in the highest places.

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