

Korff Fund Pays Nixon Fees

By Richard M. Cohen
Washington Post Staff Writer

An organization formed by Baruch Korff, the Massachusetts rabbi who tried last summer to rally the nation behind the presidency of Richard Nixon, has paid \$60,000 in legal fees for the former chief executive.

The organization, the President Nixon Justice Fund, eventually intends to pay Mr. Nixon's medical bills as well, according to Korff. The legal fees and medical expenses probably will total between \$400,000 and \$500,000, according to Korff, with about 80 per cent of that figure going for legal expenses.

Korff said the legal bills are being submitted directly to the fund by Herbert J. Miller Jr., Mr. Nixon's lawyer. "I have an understanding with Mr. Nixon," Korff said in a recent interview. "I get the bills and I pay them."

Miller said he was not involved in the billing procedure and referred a reporter to a partner in the law firm, who could not be reached yesterday for comment.

As of Nov. 1, Korff said, the fund still owed Mr. Nixon's lawyers \$120,000 and had no more than about \$5,000 in the bank by the middle of the month.

He displayed photo copies of checks sent to Miller's law firm, Miller Cassidy Larroca & Lewin, and copies of two bills the law firm had submitted. The first check, for \$30,000, was dated Oct. 4, and a second check, also for \$30,000, was dated Nov. 13.

Korff said he expects to get additional legal bills in the near future.

"I said to the attorneys and to all others who render bills, 'I want to be satisfied that the time and services are fully justified,'" Korff said. "But when I looked at the logs of time consumed by the law firm, it became time-consuming for me. I came to the realization that they fully deserved their fee."

Korff maintained that his organization was thriving as much as it had been when Mr. Nixon was an embattled president and Rabbi Korff his indefatigable and self-appointed defender. In contrast to last summer when the telephone was always ringing and Korff was granting interviews like a rock star newly-arrived in town, the phone rang just once during a recent hour-and-a-half interview and he was not interrupted by visitors.

Korff hinted that he had become disenchanted with Mr. Nixon's conservative supporters, saying, "Conservatives have earned a reputation for not retrieving their wounded from the battlefield. This is a severe defect which accounts for their miniature influence." He refused, however, to explain that statement, saying, "I wouldn't want to get into an ideological battle here."

Korff said he is continuing his activities at his own peril.



By Geoff Causton—The Washington Post

Rabbi Baruch Korff: "I get the bills and I pay them."

He said he is in poor health and had been delaying "going into the hospital for a month now."

"My family and friends are somewhat concerned," he said. "But this should be an indication of how I view my commitment."

When asked why his family and friends were concerned about his health, the 60-year-old rabbi at first said he would not discuss the matter. He later produced a slip of paper bearing the letterhead of a

Jerusalem physician which stated Korff's blood pressure as 200 over 100—a "moderately high" reading which should be treated, according to a Washington physician.

Later in the week, Korff reported that he would return to Massachusetts to enter a hospital.

Korff expressed allegiance to Mr. Nixon, defending him personally and as a symbol of the presidency. As for the man himself, Korff spoke of

Mr. Nixon in terms of admiration and affection.

"I learned to like him," he said. "I didn't dislike him before. Still, I didn't vote for him before 1972. I learned to like him, to love him, if you will, during the last ten months."

At the moment, Korff explained, he heads three separate citizens' committees, including the original National Citizens Committee for Fairness to The Presidency, the vehicle he used to rally support for Mr. Nixon while he was still president. That committee, Korff said, remains in existence, but most of its work has been supplanted by the President Nixon Justice Committee.

The original committee, for instance, lent the Justice Committee \$30,000 to pay the first of the former President's legal bills. Korff, who displayed a bank statement listing donors, contributed \$1,000 himself, he said.

In addition to the two committees, Korff and others have formed the United States Citizens' Congress with a paid membership, he said, of about 3,000. Membership dues vary from \$500 for charter memberships to \$10 for an annual student membership.

The USCC publishes a monthly newsletter, much of it devoted to criticism of the news media and comments on Mr. Nixon's legal, medical and legislative plight.

According to Korff, all the organizations are non-profit and he is unsalaried. He said he derives his income from his post as rabbi emeritus of a Massachusetts congregation and an appointed position he has as chaplain for various state agencies. He estimated his 1974 income at about \$15,000, down from about \$30,000 the year before.

The rabbi said the USCC provides him with a \$500-a-month apartment in the Mayflower Hotel and picks up some of the bills for his weekly commuting trip to Massachusetts where he spends the weekend. He said he has only one paid assistant, Barry Cooperstein, who earns \$150 a week. The rent for his offices, he said, is \$450 a month.

A glance at the bank statement listing contributors indicated that most of them donated in amounts of less than \$100. Donations in amounts over that were rare — Korff's own being one of the few. Korff estimated that he has raised about 10 per cent of his funds from fellow orthodox rabbis and their congregations. One \$100 contribution came from the Silver Spring Jewish Center.

Rabbi Korff said he is in frequent touch with San Clemente, although he refused to say whether he talks to Mr. Nixon, his family or his aides.