Rabbi Baruch Korff with President Nixon at rally last month.

By Morton Kondracke

President Nixon might have preferred having his old friend, Donald Kendall of Pepsi Cola, lead a national campaign of the faithful in his defense. Instead he got a doughty retired rabbi from Rehoboth, Mass., who is doing a much better job.

In classic corporate style, Kendall got a leadership full of national notables together—including comedian Bob Hope, the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, Mamie Eisenhower and industrialist David Packard—and founded Americans for the Presidency, Kendall's group placed ads in 145 newspapers, raising $200,000. From larger individual contributors whose names it will not disclose, it got another $150,000. It has opened an office in the high-rent district of Washington, hired the former congressional relations director of the Cost of Living Council, and put together a new ad campaign to be mounted in the near future.

Rabbi Baruch Korff, on the other hand, began with $1,200 he had saved for a vacation, took out a bank loan of $3,000, got a friend to contribute $2,000, and bought an ad in one newspaper, The New York Times.

He opened a $100-a-month office in Providence, R.I., and founded a group called the National Citizens Committee for Fairness to the Presidency, whose leadership contains names no more notable than actress Anne Baxter, Mrs. Herbert Stein, wife of the chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, and Maj. Gen. Julius Klein of Chicago.

From the committee's modest beginnings last summer, a pre-Nixon movement has blossomed that now includes 523 supporting groups containing, Rabbi Korff estimated, 2,500,000 members growing at the rate of 35,000 to 30,000 per week.

Kendall organization, by comparison, has gathered some 35,000 supporters, according to its field director, Robert E. Bradford.

The White House's official liaison man for "supporting groups" on the impeachment is not making a real effort to track them, and is often unaware of the activity in his state or even in the same city.

The Washington Post, however, has been the object of furious criticism and threats from President Nixon, who has vowed to end "bogus" support groups and to "destroy any organization or person who spreads false information.

A few days after this threat, the Post learned that an effort was being made to establish a "National Committee Against the Trail of the President.

The committee is described as "a weight about the President's neck that will remind him of the day he had to testify before a grand jury.

Korff's group claims to be "a movement of citizens who are opposed to the destruction of our government at a time when the country is in its greatest hour of need.

The committee is not affiliated with any political party and is not seeking to change the government.

Korff, a rabbi at a New York City synagogue, is a man of simple faith and unassuming manner.

He believes in the power of prayer to influence events, and he has been known to break into song when describing the course of history to his congregation.

Korff is a man of few words, but he is known for his eloquent speeches and his ability to communicate complex ideas in a clear and concise manner.

He is a respected leader in his community and has been involved in various civic and religious organizations throughout his career.

Korff's commitment to his faith and his dedication to his community are evident in everything he does. He is a man of great integrity and a true servant of his community.
the man who became Pope John XXIII to make them Christians in order to save their lives."

After the war, Korf said, "I worked with Menachem Begin (now a member of the Israeli parliament) and aided the Stern group and the Irgun in smuggling arms."

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and refugees" into Palestine.

He acknowledged, in interviews now, that the Irgun Zvi Leumi and Stern gangs were terrorists, and he does not approve of the deaths they caused, but said: "After all, the United States was not handed its freedom on a silver platter, either."

Korf would not stand for a comparison to be drawn between his aiding terrorists in a cause in which he believed—the birth of Israel—and Dr. Ellsberg's engaging in "theft" in the cause which he claims he was serving—salvation of democracy in the United States.

"You cannot remotely equate that cause with the other cause," he said. "The Irgun—this was to salvage the remnants of genocide, to stoke for the injustice of the whole world and rebuild a nation.

"How can you remotely equate this to Ellsberg? Here's an individual who did more to further American involvement in Vietnam than many of his peers. Let's suppose he had a change of heart. Do you turn traitor? Do you become a spy? You can have a change of heart without perfidy, without that. You cannot equate the birth of a nation with an Ellsberg."

In his current cause, Korf said that it is the presidency that he is trying to preserve, not merely Mr. Nixon.

"Those whose hatred we are trying to counteract not only wish to destroy Richard Nixon," he said, "but the presidency. Richard Nixon is a link in the chain of the presidency, and when you weaken that link, you will destroy the chain."

Mr. Nixon, he said, is the victim of a "vendetta" by the press and, perhaps, of a conspiracy by "the unknown element of the CIA."

Now, he said, Mr. Nixon is being judged by a group— the Judiciary Committee—that is stacked against him.

"Who shall ascend to the mountain of the Lord, who shall sit in His holy place— he who has a clean hand and a pure heart," said the rabbi.

That standard, he said, Judge Chairman Kop. Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.) does not meet, by virtue of having received campaign contributions from "the arch-deacon of impeachment, George Messay," president of the AFL-CIO.

In July, Korf said, his committee's rally, "will focus on the malignancy in the House Judiciary Committee," meaning the members who, he said, have declared themselves in favor of impeachment.

"Those who have not been affected should quarantine the malignancy," he said, "meaning that the purpose of the rally will be to cause undecided committee members to force the seven who have declared their position to disqualify themselves."