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REV. LOUIS FARRAKHAN, THE DEVIL, AND THE JEWS

by Marc H. Tanenbaum

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The real danger posed by the recent, highly-publicized speeches of the Rev. Louis Farrakhan, I believe, is that he is beginning to be treated as big-time media entertainment.

Audiences appear to be intrigued by the Farrakhan psychodrama -- the bizarre scene of frowning bodyguards in bow-ties; the bravura rhetoric and its outrageous apocalyptic imagery; the wholesale frisking of an entire audience, the mindless, uncritical excitement of the media over another circus "happening." The danger is that mesmerized preoccupation with the theater obscures or diminishes the content of what Farrakhan is really preaching -- his precise ideology, his geo-political world-view, his propaganda warfare.

A study of Farrakhan's speeches and writings since the 1950's discloses that he has a coherent world-view that at its core is rabidly anti-white, anti-American, anti-Semitic and anti-Israel. Defenders of American democracy, and certainly the Jewish community, cannot afford to dismiss Farrakhan as if he were some minstrel act. Should he continue to gain large audiences and increased media exposure -- and should the PLO and Libya's Khadafy continue to pour added millions of dollars into his coffers -- Farrakhan might well become a significant source of poisonous pollution of the wells of American democracy. And he could certainly become a focal rallying point, especially among young blacks, for vicious anti-Semitic and anti-Israel hatred in the United States and abroad.

At the core of Farrakhan's ideology is a "white devil theory." First propounded by Elijah Muhammad, "prophet" and founder of the Black Muslim movement, this myth tells of an evil scientist named "Yakub" who worked for some 600 years in his laboratory on the lonely fortress island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. After innumerable experiments and many generations of selective breeding of light-skinned blacks, Yakub created an entirely new race of man -- "the degenerate white devil" who is the enemy and who must be violently destroyed.

In the 1950's, early in his career in the Black Muslim movement, when Farrakhan was known as Louis X. Wolcott, he wrote and recorded a song that became a smash hit among black nationalists. Its title -- "A White Man's Heaven Is a Black Man's Hell." Farrakhan was a loyal and dedicated disciple of Elijah Muhammad, unswervingly committed to his black nationalist-separatist policies.

When Elijah Muhammad died, his son Warid D. (Wallace) Muhammad took over the movement and radically changed its outlook. He abandoned the nationalist-separatist ideology; he invited Caucasians, previously vilified and barred from membership, to join the newly-renamed American Muslim Mission, and he urged the faithful to support actively the American democratic system. He also advocated dialogue between Black Muslims and Jews.

In 1978, Farrakhan left the American Muslim Mission, strongly opposing Wallace Muhammad's integrationist views. He then formed the Nation of Islam and advocated a return to separatist, self-help policies of Elijah Muhammad. In his subsequent sermons, Farrakhan impassionedly called for the liberation of black people throughout the world and renewed Elijah Muhammad's call for violent retribution against whites. "The white man is our mortal enemy."

Thus, the first key to understanding the real Farrakhan is that he shares the ideological vision of other Islamic fanatics, notably Ayatollah Khomeini and Libya's Muammar Khadafy. Like them, he believes there will be an inevitable confrontation between the "children of light" (fundamentalist Muslims) and "the children of darkness" (the white devilish Western world, termed by Khomeini and Khadafy as "the Great Satan.")

Farrakhan has translated that cosmic vision of Armageddon into concrete political programs studded with appeals to violence. In an address before the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee on March 17, 1984, he stated that the Palestinians and Black people in America were "oppressed" and they should take matters into their own hands. Farrakhan declared

"At some point in time you force the oppressed to speak the only language that the beast can understand, and that is the language of violence ...We are living in the time of the fulfillment of the Scriptures of the Prophets of the Bible and the Holy Quran, and the earth is to be bathed in blood, because the governments of the nations of the earth are like beasts and they refuse to listen to the legitimate and just demands of the people."

A chief obstacle to Farrakhan's vision of Islamic triumph at Armageddon is that for some 3,000 years there has existed another "children of light," namely, "the chosen people of Israel." For years -- much before his meteoric rise to prominence through association with Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign -- Farrakhan has devoted major time and energy trying to displace Jews as "the chosen people" and to replace them with blacks as the carriers of history.

His most recent version of that "new Israel" theory was expressed in his Los Angeles sermon of Sept. 15, 1985, in which Farrakhan proclaimed, "I am declaring to the world today that they (the Jews) are not the chosen people of God. I am declaring to the world that you, the black people of America and the Western Hemisphere, are the chosen people."

That combative, hostile conception is a version of what the late psychoanalyst, Dr. Erich Fromm, described as "group narcissism." In that intergroup dynamic, Dr. Fromm writes, "the narcissistic image of one's own group is raised to its highest point, while the devaluation of the opposing group sinks to the lowest. One's own group becomes a defender of human dignity, decency, morality, and right. Devilish qualities are ascribed to the other group, it is treacherous, ruthless, cruel, and basically inhuman."

Dr. Fromm terms such group narcissism a "semipathological phenomenon" that is "one of the most important sources of human aggression" and mass massacres in the world today." (The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, p. 230-1.)

Farrakhan's theological views is a vital reinforcement for the PLO and Arab rejectionist political ideology toward Zionism and Israel. If he succeeds in persuading his followers and fellow-travelers that God's covenant with the Jewish people is no longer valid, then by extension God's covenant with Israel's promised land is equally invalid. Farrakhan makes precisely that connection between theology and politics.

"Now that nation called Israel," he said on June 28, 1984, in Chicago, "never has had any peace in 40 years and she will never have any peace because there can be no peace structured on injustice, thievery, lying and deceit and using the name of God to shield your gutter religion under His holy and righteous name." He added, "The people of this earth will never again be deceived by those who come in the name of God, cloaking themselves in the robes of God, but are in fact members of the synagogue of Satan."

Ironically, while Farrakhan's racism is both anti-white and anti-Christian, he has in fact appropriated the medieval Christian mythology and apocalyptic rhetoric depicting the Jews as anti-Christ, the very incarnation of evil. As Joshua Trachtenberg has written in his classic study, The Devil and the Jews, "To the medieval mind, the Jew was not human, not in the sense that the Christian was." He was the devil's creature, a demonic and diabolic beast "fighting the forces of truth and salvation with Satan's weapons...And against such a foe, no well of hatred was too deep, no war of extermination effective enough, until the world was rid of the menace."

Farrakhan expressed that demonic view of Jews on July 31, 1984, in a ferocious speech before the National Press Club in which he stated, "Israel and Jews will prove to be the destruction of the Western world."

In that perspective, his admiring description of Hitler as "a great man...wickedly great" was not a casual comment. Nor was it accidental when Farrakhan was leader of the Nation of Islam in New York City in the early 1970s, that his Harlem mosque was one of the few places in the city where copies of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion (alleging an international Jewish conspiracy) could be easily purchased.

We need to understand clearly that all of Farrakhan's attacks on Jews, Judaism, and Israel since the 1970s are concentrated on one single purpose -- he is obsessively seeking to demonize Jews and Israel as the enemies of mankind who deserve violent destruction if mankind is to be saved. His attacks on alleged Jewish control of the mass media, of banks and industry, and of politicians are verbally violent expressions of that coherent theology and political ideology.

Farrakhan's notoriety, and the attention he is receiving in the media, contribute immeasurably to his being welcomed as a comrade-in-arms by the PLO and Libya's Khadafy. For the past decade, they have spearheaded the infamous "Zionism is racism" crusade against Israel and Jews. Their purposes are identical with those of Farrakhan -- the delegitimization of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Together, they are seeking to inflict on Israel and the Jews what they condemn the South Africans for doing to the blacks -- making the Jews the victims of apartheid on the world scene.



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