



# THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

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Series A: Writings and Addresses. 1947-1991

Box 5, Folder 6, "Black-Jewish Relations" address with Jesse Jackson, 11 March 1987.

## BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS: ADDRESS WITH REV. JESSE JACKSON

QUEENS COLLEGE, NEW YORK

March 11, 1987

President Kenney, Rev. Jackson, Dr. Hevesi, Dr. Schwarcz, friends: Let me say at the outset that one of the most practical projects in Black-Jewish relations that Jesse Jackson and I could do would be to organize a Black-Jewish collection plate for an audience like this. I don't know about Jesse's experience in Baptist churches, where I have spent a good deal of time with many Baptist friends, but it began to look like Yom Kippur in a Baptist service tonight.

I want to pay tribute here to the respect for scholarship, especially Biblical scholarship, that is implicit in the way in which this evening has been organized. There was a wonderful story told during the Second Vatican Council, at which I was honored to be present, while the Catholic Church was facing up for the first time in some 1900 years to what has been its relationship to the Jewish people. Admirably, the Church leaders faced what had to be faced, repented of what had to be repented, changed what had to be changed. During the course of the Council someone told me a story about the late Blessed Pope John XXIII. It was his inspiration to organize the Second Vatican Council, which literally changed the course of the history of the Catholic Church over the past 1900 years. Before he was elevated to the papacy, Archbishop Roncalli served as an Apostolic Delegate to the Balkans, in Istanbul. And then after that, he was brought to France, where he there served as Apostolic Delegate to the French government, representing the Pope in France. As the story happened, Monsignor Roncalli, as he was then called, developed a

very warm and intimate friendship with the Chief Rabbi of France, Rabbi Jacob Kaplan. According to this account, Monsignor Roncalli and Chief Rabbi Kaplan had been invited by the President of France to a banquet. They came together into a large reception hall, and they were chatting, making small talk, exchanging pleasantries. Then someone rang the gong for the banquet, for them to walk through the reception hall into the main dining hall. And, as this story has it, when the Chief Rabbi came to the door, before entering into the banquet, he turned to Monsignor Roncalli and said, "Your Excellency, after you. You first." Monsignor Roncalli, who was very fond of the Rabbi, turned to him and said, "No, Your Excellency, Chief Rabbi, you first." And this went on for perhaps five minutes, back and forth, a diplomatic Alfonse and Gaston routine. Meanwhile, people were piling up behind them, waiting to go through the door. Finally, Pope John -- then Monsignor Roncalli -- in his characteristic Italian, earthy, peasant way, grabbed hold of the arm of Chief Rabbi Kaplan and began to shove him through the door exclaiming, "No, Chief Rabbi, the Old Testament before the New Testament," and shoved him into the banquet hall. Well normally I would appear after Jesse Jackson, after he has, in his powerful, charismatic, mesmerizing way, taken over an audience, and I would feel like a shlemiel after that, trying somehow to take hold of what was left over of the audience. But I guess this is an act of pure academic scholarship, the Old Testament, the Hebrew scriptures, before the New Testament.

The invitation to speak here was extended to me by the Honorable Allan Hevesi, Assistant Majority Leader of the New York State Assembly, and Professor of Political Science at Queens College. He noted in introducing me that we share wonderful memories of association with his late blessed father, who served the American Jewish Committee with



distinction. The invitation from him and from Professor Ernest Schwarcz, Dean of Jewish Studies at the College, is deeply appreciated. Their establishment and support of the Queens Black-Jewish People-to-People Project is both a symbol and a substantive contribution to a vital, compelling goal that hopefully all of us here tonight share: the overcoming of misunderstanding and the advancement of knowledge, mutual respect, and cooperation between the Black and Jewish people and their communities, in the context of a profound common concern for the welfare of our beloved American democratic republic. Let me be clear at the outset about my mandate as I see it this evening. I speak here as an individual, only for myself, exercising my democratic right of free speech. While I believe that I may express the feelings and views of many in the Jewish community, what I am about to say does not represent the official positions of the American Jewish Committee, and certainly not those of the American Jewish community, which is characterized by diversity and a plurality of views, as is true of every other religious, racial or ethnic group in our democratic society.

Why are we here this evening? Why is there such an impressive turnout of people from this community coming together tonight at Queens College? This is not an easy evening, either for the Reverend Jesse Jackson or for myself. If the bigots and extremists in our society had their way, this evening would not have taken place. The fact that Jesse Jackson and I made our own separate decisions to share this platform in the face of threats, slanders and intimidations, is a statement of our determination to reject hatred, bigotry, and verbal violence from whatever quarter it is issued. We do not and we will not ignore the troublesome and disturbing episodes in Black-Jewish relations in the recent past. What our purpose is tonight, as I see it, is to try to find a better way, a more constructive



way, for Blacks and Jews to live and work together, as they have done -- we must not forget -- for much of their history during the past twenty-five years. I asked, why are we here tonight? And I want to try to answer that question out of my reflections and my experiences during the past quarter century or more.

In 1968, I became involved with Catholic and Protestant leaders in trying to relieve the suffering of the victims of the Nigerian-Biafran conflict. That exposure, day in and day out, to so much destruction of human lives, with tens of thousands of deaths of Muslims and Christians, and the incredible starvation of thousands of innocent children, transformed my life. While the Jewish agenda, the cause of Soviet Jews who suffer oppression still; the cause of Israel and of peace in the Middle East between Jews and Arabs; the Black Jews of Ethiopia, who still suffer incredible oppression and poverty among other Ethiopians, are constantly at the core of my consciousness, since that experience of 1968. I have been driven to dedicate much of my waking hours to the problem of world refugees, world hunger, and international human rights. There are about some 12 million refugees in the world today, some six million of them in Africa, the largest refugee problem in the world; most of them living in desperate conditions. The searing fact is that most of these refugee tragedies to which I have been exposed or have been involved are the result of religious, racial, ethnic and tribal conflicts. In the Sudan several years ago, nearly a million Black Christians and Animists were massacred by Arab Muslim tribes of the north. In Uganda, President Idi Amin and his tribesmen slaughtered some half million Black Christians, half of them Anglican, half of them Roman Catholic. In India, there are unending slaughters of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs; in Sri Lanka, Tamils and Sinalese destroy each other -- all in the name of God and nation. The Iran-Iraq war has resulted in the deaths of an estimated

quarter million human beings, many of them children 12 to 14 years of age, who are told that by their martyrdom they have assured themselves a certain ascent to Paradise.

Lebanon, once the citadel of Arab Christendom; Lebanon, once to the Arab Christian world what Israel is to world Jewry; the model of pluralism in the Middle East as Lebanon, has been is now a daily abattoir. And who loses sleep over Ireland where, for more than decades, Protestants and Catholics have been destroying each other? Religious, racial and ethnic hatreds have become the engine of an epidemic of dehumanization in the world. Nowhere is that dehumanization more palpable and tragic than in South Africa. In October 1985, I went on a mission with the American Jewish Committee, our leaders, to South Africa. We met with a great many representatives from every segment of that blighted society, from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Black union leaders, the leaders of the government, business, and the Jewish community. It is a nightmare, an abomination, to experience the chemistry of nationalist arrogance and religious bigotry. Two fundamental religious lies have dominated the vices of Western civilization, including that of South Africa, which is a Western country. Jews have suffered and have been destroyed by the 1900-year-old religious lie of Deicide, the absurd notion that the Jewish people collectively killed Christ, and therefore must endure unending punishment and exile. And some fundamentalist Christians even to this day preach the obscenity that the Nazi Holocaust was God's ultimate punishment of the Jews for having allegedly killed Christ. But apartheid is another such religious lie. In the Dutch Reform churches it has been taught for generations as gospel truth that the Black people have been cursed by God with the curse of Ham, the forebear of Black people in the Biblical story. Segregation and apartheid have thus been justified as doing God's will. I saw the demonic power of that religious lie, as I



watched from afar in Soweto; in 1985, dozens and dozens of young Afrikaans leaping out of their armored troop carriers, shooting Black youths at will. These young Afrikaans, fresh off the farms, their heads filled with their church lessons, have been raised in a culture of religious and racial hatred and bigotry that has been indulged without limit. Where were they to learn that the life of a Black child is as precious in the eyes of God as their own?

The late psychoanalyst, Dr. Erich Fromm, in his monumental last work, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, called such behavior "group narcissism." As in the dynamics of individual narcissism, a group attributes to itself all virtue and assigns to the "out" group all vice--everything that is eerie. Such a group becomes totally self-centered. It sees itself as naturally superior and sees the other as inferior, infidel, heretic, deserving of destruction. Dr. Fromm identified such group psychopathic behavior as being responsible for much of the group aggression, terrorism, and violence that pockmarks the world today. The cost in human lives that the human family is paying for such religious and racial hatred all over the world is staggering, beyond human comprehension. In a nuclear missile age, such psychopathology without control could conceivably, God forbid, trigger a nuclear holocaust.

Blacks and Jews, all Americans, need to acknowledge that America is different, has been different, is different. For the past 200 years our national and religious leaders have struggled mightily to establish an open, democratic, pluralist society. The true genius of America rests not on sending our automobiles and Coca-Cola around the world; the true genius of America rests in the reality that each religious, racial and ethnic group comes to the common American table by right, as first-class citizens, and not by sufferance. Each group--religious, racial, ethnic--has its own agenda, appropriately; its own needs and



priorities; and has a right to receive a fair and sympathetic hearing; has a share in the American table. While advocating its own agenda, at the same time each of us has a simultaneous, a collateral and overarching obligation to serve the common welfare. American democracy is founded on a social compact which is a very fragile instrument. Watergate and Irangate have taught us how fragile that compact can become. That compact needs to be continuously nurtured by an intense commitment to civility and mutual respect. That does not prevent nor preclude constructive criticism of each other's positions, or holding different views. By indulging religious or racial bigotry, reckless and uninhibited racial epithets, or anti-Semitic defamations, can beat this precious, fragile social compact into the ground, into dust. My friends, America is the only nation on earth that has not been despoiled by religious wars. We have not had a 30-year war; we have not had 100-year wars of a religious character, as one finds all over the European landscape. We have had far too much of racism, and anti-Semitism, of lynchings and verbal violence, and let me tell you that the canard, the obscenity, that Zionism is racism is just such an expression of defamation and verbal violence.

At their height, and at their most productive, Black-Jewish relations in the 1960s and 1970s were a paradigm of democratic pluralism at its best. The essential reason for that extraordinary, indeed historic, cooperation was once formulated by our colleague, Albert Vorspan who, in an op-ed piece in The New York Times, recalled how, in 1964, the late Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. was challenging, together with Jesse Jackson and Andrew Young and many others, racial discrimination in public accommodations. In Saint Augustine, Florida, there was a fierce resistance from the sheriff and the police, as well as from the White Citizens' Council and the Ku Klux Klan. Martin Luther King sent a telegram to

the conference of the Central Congress of American Rabbis that was then meeting in Atlantic City, appealing for their help. Within hours, that very day, sixteen rabbis came to Saint Augustine where they joined Dr. King and his brothers and sisters. They entered the Black church and joined in common prayer and mutual solidarity and then went off to try to integrate a lunch counter in the face of incredible hatred, contempt, anti-Semitism and racial obloquies. All of them--Martin Luther King and the crowd around him, as well as the sixteen rabbis--were forced by electric cattle prods into a cell in the prison of Saint Augustine. A number of them had their lives threatened. Why did these rabbis engage in acts of civil disobedience? Why were they prepared to go to jail, almost spontaneously, at once? Vorspan wrote the following. He said, "The answer is simple: Martin Luther King, Jr. No other person could have evoked such an instantaneous and uncritical response from us. With Dr. King there was implicit trust, a profound bond and a mutual respect, and a deep sense of solidarity with his mission and that of his people. We respected him because he was intellectually keen, and a powerful orator." (His disciple, Rev. Jackson, is not too bad, either!) And, Vorspan adds, "We loved him because he cherished the glory of racial and religious diversity. He despised Black separatism as both wrong and counterproductive. He saw the Civil Rights revolution not as a Black rebellion, but as a covenant of White and Black, Christian and Jew, standing together for decency. To Doctor King, justice was a seamless web. Anti-Semitism and anti-Catholic prejudice, like racial bigotry, were anathema. His goal was not only justice for America's Blacks, but human rights for all peoples everywhere." Then Vorspan concludes, "If, as I believe, Meier Kahane is essentially a problem Jews must face and resolve, so the Reverend Louis Farrakhan is a central challenge to the integrity and the future of the Black community."



Black-Jewish relations are bigger than Louis Farrakhan or Meier Kahane, and we still have much in common to transcend our demagogues and our frictions. As Dr. King never tired of pointing out, Blacks and Jews have common enemies -- not just in the 1960s. Read The New York Times this week, on what is happening on sixteen major campuses in America; the racism that has begun to erupt again against Black students on college campuses. Read what is happening in the Farm Belt of America, where the Aryan Brotherhood, the Christian Identity Movement, and the Posse Comitatis, joining together with the Klan, are now trying to create the canard that the decline of farms in America, the breakdown of the family farm--one of the great tragedies of this country--is due to one reason only: The Jewish conspiracy of America has set out to buy out the farm land of America. It is the Jewish conspiracy that is responsible for the crisis in the farm belt." Racists and anti-Semites have not gone away. They're always beneath the surface.

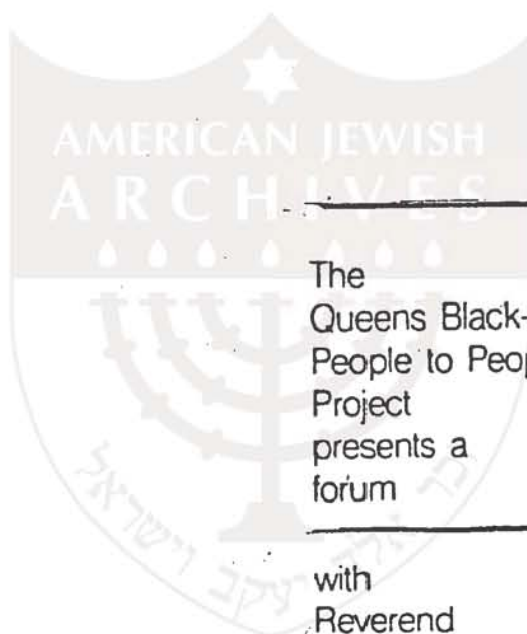
We have a shared history of oppression that gives us a shared vision of a compassionate and open society. And, my friends, we need each other. I spoke today to our Washington representative, Hyman Bookbinder, about problems relating to South Africa. And he talked to me about the incredible closeness, the incredible cooperation between congressmen who are Blacks and Jews, and he said, "No two other groups in the United States Congress vote together as consistently for their respective agendas as do the Jewish and Black congressmen in the United States Congress."

And they are addressing a common agenda: protecting the poor, the increasing poverty, especially among the underclass, from the social cuts which have taken place during the last four years; working together on the problems of unemployment, on family life, on education, on fair housing; drugs, crime, violence; resisting together the violations of



the separation of church and state, which continues to mount, from the radical Right, week after week; together working for the security of the State of Israel, speaking out for Soviet Jews and others denied their human rights; opposing together apartheid in South Africa and racism at home. Despite the irritation of the conflicts that cloud Black-Jewish relations, even on such anguished issues as affirmative action, where there can be legitimate and constructive criticism, there is still a bond that links Jews and Blacks together. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. forged a Black-Jewish bond in love, devotion, blood and dreams. The greatest homage we Jews can pay to his memory, that superb religious leader as political activist, is to nurture and strengthen that bond which was and must remain a blessing for America and for the world. I can only hope and pray that this shared evening with Jesse Jackson, whom I've known for many years, will mark a turning away from the aberration and the deviation from Black-Jewish relations of the past, and will return us to the highway of justice, mutual respect, mutual support and solidarity, for the sake of the Black and Jewish people of our nation and, above all, for the well-being of this great American democratic society which we love. Thank you.

BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS —  
PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE



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The  
Queens Black-Jewish  
People to People  
Project  
presents a  
forum

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with  
Reverend  
Jesse L. Jackson  
and  
Rabbi  
Marc H. Tanenbaum

March 11, 1987  
at 7:30 p.m.

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Queens College/CUNY  
The Queens Black-Jewish/People to People Project

Welcome                      **Dean Ernest Schwarcz**  
Project Chairman

Greetings                    **Shirley Strum Kenny**  
President, Queens College  
—introduced by  
*Professor George Priestley*

Moderator's                **Alan G. Hevesi**, Assistant Majority Leader,  
Remarks                    New York State Assembly and  
Professor of Political Science  
—introduced by  
*Professor Alem Habtu*

THE RELIGIOUS LEADER AS POLITICAL ACTIVIST

Presentation                **Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum**  
Director of International Relations  
American Jewish Committee

Presentation                **Reverend Jesse L. Jackson**  
President, National Rainbow Coalition

Questions and              Speakers and Audience  
Discussion

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EXCERPTS FROM ADDRESS BY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM, DIRECTOR  
OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE  
AT BLACK-JEWISH FORUM, WITH THE REV. JESSE JACKSON, AT  
QUEENS COLLEGE, NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1987, 7:30 P.M.

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The invitation extended to me by the Honorable Alan Hevesi, assistant majority leader of the New York State Assembly and professor of political science at Queens College, and by Professor Ernest Schwarcz, dean of General Studies at this college, is deeply appreciated. Their establishment and support of the Queens Black-Jewish/People to People Project is both a symbol and a substantive contribution to a vital goal that hopefully all of us here tonight share -- the overcoming of misunderstanding and the advancement of knowledge, mutual respect and cooperation between the Black and Jewish communities, in the context of a profound concern for the welfare of our beloved American democratic republic.

Let me be clear at the outset about my mandate -- as I see it -- this evening. I speak here as an individual, exercising my democratic right of free speech. While I believe that I may express the feelings and views of many in the Jewish community, what I am about to say does not represent the official positions of the American Jewish Committee and certainly not those of the American Jewish community, which is characterized by diversity and a plurality of views as is true of every other religious, racial or ethnic group in our democracy.

Why are we here this evening before this large assembly? This is not an easy evening either for the Reverend Jesse Jackson nor myself. If the bigots and extremists in our society had their way, this evening would not take place. The fact that Jesse Jackson and I made a decision to share this platform in the face of threats, slanders, and intimidations is a statement of our determination to reject hatred, bigotry and verbal violence. We do not and we will not evade the troublesome and disturbing episodes in Black-Jewish relations in the recent past, but our purpose tonight, as I see it, is to try to find a better way, a more civil and constructive way for Blacks and Jews to live and work together, as they have done for much of their history during the past 25 years.

Why are we here tonight? I want to try to answer that question out of my reflections and life experiences during the past quarter century or more. In 1968, I became involved with Catholic and Protestant leaders in trying to relieve the suffering of the victims of the Nigerian-Biafran conflict. That exposure to so much destruction of human lives, with tens of thousands of deaths of Muslims and Christians and incredible starvation of thousands of innocent children, transformed my life.

While the Jewish agenda -- Soviet Jewry, Israel, peace in the Middle East between Jews and Arabs, the Black Jews of Ethiopia -- are constantly at the core of my consciousness, since 1968 I have been driven to dedicate much of my waking hours to the problems of world refugees, world hunger, and international human rights.

There are about twelve million refugees in the world today, some six million of them in Africa -- the largest refugee problem in the world -- living mostly in desperate conditions. The searing fact is that most of these refugee tragedies are the result of religious, racial, ethnic, and tribal conflicts. In the Sudan, several years ago, nearly a million Black Christians and animists were massacred by Arab Muslim tribes of the North. In Uganda, President Idi Amin and his Nubian tribesmen slaughtered some 500,000 Black Christians, half of them Anglicans, half Roman Catholic.

In India, there are unending slaughters of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. In Sri Lanka, Tamils and Sinhalese destroy each other. The Iran-Iraq war has resulted in the deaths of an estimated quarter million people, many of them children, 12 to 14 years old. Lebanon, once the citadel of Arab Christendom and the model of pluralism in the Middle East, is now a daily slaughter-house. And who loses sleep over Ireland where for more than a decade Protestants and Catholics have been destroying each other?

Religious, racial and ethnic hatreds have become the engine of an epidemic of dehumanization in the world. Nowhere is that dehumanization more palpable and tragic than in South Africa. In October 1985, I went on a mission with American Jewish Committee leaders to South Africa. We met with a great many representatives from every segment of that blighted society -- from Archbishop Tutu, black union leaders, the Sash legal aid society, to leaders of the government, business, and the Jewish community.

It is a nightmare, an abomination, to experience the chemistry of nationalist arrogance and religious bigotry. Two massive religious lies have dominated Western civilization, including that of South Africa. Jews have suffered and have been destroyed by the 1,900-year-old religious lie of "deicide" -- the absurd notion that the Jewish people collectively killed Christ, and therefore must endure unending punishment and exile. Some Fundamentalist Christians preached the obscenity that the Nazi holocaust was God's ultimate punishment of the Jews for having allegedly killed Christ.

Apartheid is another such religious lie. In Dutch Reformed Churches, it has been taught for generations as gospel truth that the Black people have been cursed by God with "the curse of Ham." Segregation and apartheid have thus been justified as doing God's will. I saw the demonic power of that religious lie as I watched from afar young Afrikaans leaping out of their "hippo" armored troop carriers in Soweto and shooting black youths at will. These young Afrikaans, fresh off the farms and filled with their church lessons, have been raised in a culture of religious and racial hatred. Where were they to learn that the life of a black child is as precious in the eyes of God as their own?

The late psychoanalyst, Dr. Eric Fromm, in his monumental last work, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, called such behavior, "group narcissism." As in the dynamics of individual narcissism, a group attributes to itself all virtue, and to the outgroup all vice. Such a group becomes totally self-centered and sees itself as naturally superior, and sees the other as inferior -- "an infidel, a heretic" deserving of destruction. Dr. Fromm called such group conflict "psychopathic" behavior that is responsible for much of the group aggression, terrorism, and violence that pockmarks the world today.



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The cost in human lives that the human family is paying for such religious and racial hatreds all over the world is staggering. In a nuclear-missile age, such psychopathology when out of control could conceivably, God forbid, trigger off a nuclear holocaust.

#### AMERICA IS DIFFERENT

Blacks and Jews, all Americans, need to acknowledge that America is different. For the past 200 years, our national and religious leaders have struggled mightily to establish an open, democratic pluralist society. The true genius of America rests in the reality that each religious, racial, and ethnic group comes to the common American table by right, not by suffering.

Each group -- religious, racial, ethnic -- has its agenda, its own deeply felt priorities, and has a right to receive a fair and sympathetic hearing at the shared American table. While advocating its own agenda, each of us has a simultaneous and overarching obligation to serve the common welfare.

American democracy is founded on a social compact which is a fragile instrument. Watergate and Irangate underscore that fragility. That compact needs to be continuously nurtured. That does not preclude constructive criticism, for holding differing views. But indulging religious or racial bigotry, reckless and uninhibited racial epithets or anti-Semitic defamations can beat this precious, fragile social compact into the dust.

America is the only nation on earth that has not been despoiled by religious wars. Yet we have had far too much of racism, anti-Semitism, lynchings, and verbal violence. Indeed, the infamous canard that "Zionism is racism" is just such an expression of defamation and verbal violence. If we are to prevent the Balkanization of America, or the regression to any form of the group hatred that pockmark so many other parts of the world, we -- each of us, Jesse Jackson and myself, each of us in this audience -- must commit ourselves to the course of civility and dialogue, in a spirit of mutual respect and helpfulness. And we must spontaneously -- out of our own ethical convictions and democratic values -- repudiate the scurrilous attacks of demagogues. Of such moral courage and integrity is credibility made.

#### BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS

At their height and most productive, Black-Jewish relations in the 1960s and 1970s were the paradigm of democratic pluralism at its best.

The essential reason for that extraordinary, indeed, historic cooperation was well formulated by my colleague, Albert Vorspan, in an OP-Ed piece in The New York Times. He recalled how, in 1964, the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was challenging racial discrimination in public accommodations in St. Augustine, Florida. There was a fierce resistance, and he appealed to the Central Conference of American Rabbis for help. Within hours, 16 rabbis came to St. Augustine where they joined Dr. King and his people. For entering the black church and for integrating a lunch counter, they were all cattle-prodded into a cell; a number had their lives threatened.



Page Four

Why did these rabbis engage in acts of civil disobedience and prepare to go to jail? Vorspan wrote: "The answer is simple: Martin Luther King, Jr.

"No other person could have evoked such an instantaneous and uncritical response from us. With Dr. King, there was implicit trust, a profound bond of mutual respect, and a deep sense of solidarity with his mission.

"We respected him because he was intellectually keen and a powerful orator, loved him because he cherished the glory of racial and religious diversity. He despised black separatism as both wrong and counterproductive. He saw the civil rights revolution not as a black rebellion but as a covenant of white and black, Christian and Jew, standing together for decency.

"To Dr. King, justice was a seamless web: anti-Semitism and anti-Catholic prejudice, like racial bigotry, were anathema; his goal was not only justice for America's blacks but human rights for all peoples everywhere."

Vorspan adds:

"If, as I believe, Meir Kahane is essentially a problem Jews must face and resolve, so the Rev. Louis Farrakhan is a central challenge to the integrity and future of the black community...But black-Jewish relations are bigger than Louis Farrakhan or Meir Kahane, and we still have much in common that transcends our demagogues and our frictions. As Dr. King never tired of pointing out, blacks and Jews have common enemies; we have shared a history of oppression. That gives us a shared vision of a compassionate and open society.

"We need each other. Black and Jewish Congressmen are advancing a common agenda -- protecting the poor from Reagan social cuts, resisting violations of the separation of church and state, supporting the security of Israel, speaking out for Soviet Jews and others denied their human rights, opposing apartheid in South Africa and racism at home. Despite the irritations and conflicts that cloud black-Jewish relations -- even on such anguished issues as affirmative action -- there is still a bond that ties Jews and blacks together."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. forged a Black-Jewish bond in love, devotion, blood and dreams. The greatest homage we Jews can pay to his memory -- that superb "Religious Leader as Political Activist" -- is to nurture and strengthen that bond which was -- and must remain -- a blessing for America and for the world.

I can only hope and pray that this shared evening with the Rev. Jesse Jackson will mark a turning away from aberrations and deviations in Black-Jewish relations of the past, and will return us to the highway of justice and mutual respect, for the sake of the Black and Jewish peoples of our nation, and for the well-being of all Americans.

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ADDRESS BY THE REV. JESSE JACKSON, PRESIDENT OF  
THE RAINBOW COALITION, AT BLACK-JEWISH FORUM,  
WITH RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM, DIRECTOR OF  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE,  
AT QUEENS COLLEGE, NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1987

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Thank you to Queens College for your sponsorship of this important evening, and for your ever gracious hospitality. And thank you to Alan Hevesi: for developing the idea of the Black-Jewish dialogues, for ensuring its support, and most of all for your own personal leadership. This community is fortunate to have you: in your district, in the Assembly, and in the classroom.

You have asked me to begin by speaking of the religious figure as a political leader -- a tradition going back at least as far as Moses, that great leader whose life is also a symbol of interracial cooperation. Fleeing the court of Pharaoh, Moses went to Midian. He married Zipporah, an African woman, and named their child Gershon, because, he said "I have been a stranger in a foreign land." It was Moses, the Jewish child raised by an Egyptian princess, who led his people out of Egypt to freedom.

As political leader, Moses spoke up to Pharaoh -- told the truth to Pharaoh and braved his wrath -- then led the Jewish people across the Red Sea on the way to the promised Holy Land. As religious leader, Moses spoke up to this same people -- when he came down from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments and found them worshipping the golden calf.

And this is the finest tradition of religious leaders -- to speak the truth, to stand up to imperial authority when necessary and to speak out to one's own congregation when appropriate but always to be prepared in God's name to speak the truth as you know it.

American history begins with religious figures serving as political leaders. Led by their ministers the Pilgrims dared that dangerous voyage across the Atlantic in search of religious freedom -- and yet, ironically, what they valued for themselves they denied to others, forbidding dissension, persecuting Quakers, demanding adherence to a strict sectarian line.

But there are other examples, too, of early religious figures who preached and practiced tolerance. The Baptist Minister Roger Williams founded the Colony of Rhode Island on the principles of religious tolerance. The Quaker leadership of Pennsylvania fleeing persecution at home, offered sanctuary to others -- and not coincidentally, fair play to native Americans -- an American first and too long an American oddity.

Religious figures stepped to the front lines of leadership in the fight to abolish slavery: John Brown, Frederick Douglass, both deeply religious, they used their talent, public platforms, pulpits and their moral authority to speak out against the evil of slavery, to insist that this nation live up to its own best principles of freedom and equality.



Meanwhile in fields and cabins, slaves told each other the story of the Exodus secretly at night, a symbol of hope and redemption. In the Black communities of slaves and freemen alike, the religious leader was most often also the political leader; the natural result in small cohesive communities with their own internal social structure but little or no economic resources or political authority.

There are similarities between these Black communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe during the same time. There too the rabbi was likely to serve as teacher, civic authority and negotiator with the outside world. Who better could articulate the hopes and goals of his community? Who better, in the tradition of Moses, to speak out to civil authorities on behalf of the oppressed?

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum and I come to this meeting to speak from our different perspectives; but we begin by acknowledging our common experience. As Jews and as Afro Americans, our people have known what it is like to be slaves. Of all the people in the world, we explicitly remember that experience, reminding ourselves and our children that we were slaves -- in the land of Egypt and the United States.

And as we remember slavery, we celebrate emancipation. We value and take joy in our freedom, knowing that it is brought to us by God's grace and protected by constant human vigilance.

Jews and Blacks have traveled different journeys, but we share a common history; the experience of oppression.

Both our people have suffered from harsh and painful government. For Blacks, that meant slavery -- legislated and enforced by government followed by years of institutionalized, legalized discrimination -- again, enforced against us by the agencies of our own government.

For Jews, the memory is of the Holocaust, the horror of rulers gone mad, the murder of millions of human beings, from babies to grandparents -- and the search for safety and refuge from which too many of the world's governments turned away. For both of us, the memories are fresh and the lesson clear. Because we have suffered from the murderous attacks of bad government, -- carried out in the name of the law, carried out by people even wearing the uniform of the law -- because we have experienced the horror of governance for evil, we are totally committed to the standards of government for good.

Because we have felt the pain and shed the blood of race hatred, we understand the need for interracial understanding and cooperation. Because we have mourned the fallen in the war of hatred and prejudice, we must pledge ourselves again to fight for the triumph of knowledge and love.



Let me share with you a story from recent history that will make our message clear. When President Reagan announced his plans to travel to Bitburg, I was shocked. Shocked that in spite of appeals from government officials and the public, he would be adamant and remain so insensitive to the feelings of those who had lived through that history. In formulating my own response to his trip, I spoke to people who were authorities on the Holocaust, here and abroad. I spoke to Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Laureate -- a Nobel Laureate who certainly merits our greatest gratitude and congratulations on an honor well deserved -- as well as U.S. Dr. Paul Parks of Boston, the former State Education Superintendent in Massachusetts, an engineer and veteran.

Dr. Parks, a distinguished African-American, told me of his own personal experience as a soldier in the United States in the United States Army in 1945. As a member of the Corps of Engineers, he was with the Black Battalion that was the first to enter Dachau. When those troops approached this death camp, which were so eerie and silent, they were frightened. They thought it was a military camp; it was a death camp. They saw the piles of bodies and knew they were in the presence of an incomprehensible tragedy and consummate evil. But they also assumed that German soldiers were hiding within the camp's walls, waiting to attack them.

Inside those silent buildings, the remaining Jewish prisoners were huddled in fear. They hear the approaching footsteps and assumed the worst, that German soldiers were returning to finish them off. Then, cautiously peering out, they realized these soldiers were black and could not be Nazis. The prisoners, most of whom had never seen a Black, rushed out when they saw them. In stark disbelief and in passionate relief, they embraced. They were in trauma. Both were in shock. Both stood momentarily paralyzed on the cutting edge of history. Mutual fear and insecurity had been transformed into mutual security and rescue.

Blacks got to the Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps first. There are stories here that must be told.

It is the spirit of those moments of triumph that must be recaptured and nurtured and never let go. For in those moments were messages not just for Blacks and Jews, but for the suffering and rejected everywhere. For the entire community of the suffering and the survivors, including the Hispanics, Asians, Arabs, native Americans, Central Americans, and the people of the Carribbean.

This true story of Dr. Parks and Dachau is one of the most important lessons of our time. In their ignorance, inmates and liberators each thought the other was the enemy. Separated by the death camp's walls, they feared the worst. But when they opened their eyes, they saw for themselves, they realized the truth. That we must look at each other squarely -- and recognize our allies. Walls and ignorance keep us apart. We must tear down the walls, open our eyes, smile through our tears, and open our hearts and arms to one another.

And so today when we look at the situation here at home, we see examples of racial conflict that are even more chilling because they involve the young for whom we have such high hopes. We can find many examples of walls of ignorance and fear, which breed insecurity and hatred, that manifests itself in acts of blind and mean violence. Caught in the prism of racism, we see natural allies kept apart.

It is because I believe so strongly in that which we have in common that I came here tonight to talk about our common future -- our cooperation for the common good. It is because I believe so strongly in the ability of people of good will to reason together that I urge us all tonight to focus our sights not on those issues on which we may differ but on the large issues on which we agree. And it is because I believe so strongly in the need for us to work together that I want to speak to you tonight about some of the myths that divide us.

Yes we have real problems and real concerns. No resident of Queens, no resident of New York, no thoughtful citizen of the United States can deny that we have problems and conflicts between groups. But let us also be aware that some of these problems are exaggerated: that some of these conflicts have been exacerbated; that some of the so-called issues are better exposed as modern-day myths.

What are these myths? Let me list three.

First is the myth that among the biggest problems facing Blacks and Jews are those posed by extremists within each group. The sociologists would refer to this as blaming the victim. In reality this is a political diversion, an attempt to distract our attention to the real problems for both of us caused by attacks from outside. And make no mistake -- the real extremists out there are aiming at both of us. The neo-Nazis in Idaho who want to build an Aryan Nation are full of hate toward Blacks and Jews. The Director of Communications in President Reagan's White House, who argued against the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, also opposes the prosecution of Nazi war criminals. Even if we had less in common we would be reminded of our common interest by the enemies we share.

The second myth is that Black/Jewish relationships are so fragile, in such bad shape, that they are somehow worse than relations between other ethnic groups.

Why is it that so much public attention is being focused on the relations between Blacks and Jews? Why is it always our relationship that is being tested, monitored and critiqued? The day after the killing at Howard Beach, did we hear calls for investigation of Italian-Black relations. When so few white ethnics in Chicago voted for Harold Washington, did we see newspaper articles about Irish-Croatian-Italian-German-ethnic Black relations? Even the hardest friendship would be endangered by constant laboratory testing and public monitoring. We remain under watch and investigation!!



The fact that our relationships have lasted as long as they have in the face of this pressure is a testament to its strength and durability.

And finally, I want to speak about the third -- and potentially the most dangerous myth. That the positive relationship is over; that divisions between Blacks and Jews have split the old Roosevelt coalition.

In fact, Jews and Blacks continue to work together for social justice at home and abroad. In the Congress, Black members and Jewish members work closely together, fighting for economic opportunity, for urban aid -- and for an end to Apartheid in South Africa.

On the floor of Congress and voting booth, Jews and Blacks vote very much alike. In 1984, despite the self-interested predictions of those who would divide us, both Jews and Blacks voted for Walter Mondale. Last month in my home city of Chicago, where a great Mayor Harold Washington is seeking reelection, Jewish voters supported Harold Washington in numbers far greater than any other ethnic group. In public opinion polls and in the polling place, Blacks and Jews demonstrate similar commitment to the values of social justice, civil rights, and human dignity.

Those are the myths, but there are other factors which are not myths. It is not a myth to say that Blacks and Jews may differ -- but it is also time to say to one another that we can express our differences aloud and still be friends. Friendship does not require choral speaking -- friends do not have to live in an echo chamber. If we speak in terms of civility; if we frame the debate within the terms of tolerance; if we extend to one another the respect we owe to one another. Allies can be honest and speak out, without fearing that our alliance will be destroyed. It is not a myth to say that there are issues on which Blacks and Jews may differ -- so long as we remember the many more on which we agree.

The bonds between us have been forged over many years of common experiences and goals. Because we have arrived, at the same time at this place in history, does not mean we have not traveled different paths to reach this place. If sometimes our different experiences lead us to different conclusions, that does not invalidate the importance of our values.

Thus, Blacks and Jews have very different reactions to the word quotas. For Blacks, a quota can be a door to opportunity. For Jews, the quota system has meant a ceiling on success. But because we differ on quotas does not mean we can't agree on affirmative action, opening the way for minorities and women to participate in every phase of American life.

Even reaching America was a very different experience for Blacks and for Jews. For Jews, leaving Europe to come to the United States was to leave oppression and arrive at freedom. For Blacks the experience was reversed, leaving Africa to come to the United States meant leaving independence and being forced into slavery. Thus the very word immigration has a different meaning to us. But both of us can agree that political refugees deserve the right to immigrate, and both of us will fight for these rights.



Whether the prisoner is Jacob Timmerman in the jails of Argentina or Anatol Shchransky in the Soviet Union, or Nelson Mandela in South Africa -- we believe that the Government of the United States should speak out on behalf of those unjustly jailed -- not make alliances with their jailers.

That is why, when I went to Geneva with a peace delegation from the United States and had the chance to speak to Premier Gorbachev, I raised the issue with him about Soviet Jews. That is why earlier this month I met outside the White House with Koreans protesting the brutality of their own South Korean Government. And that is why so many of us, Black and Jew, white and Hispanic, marched together and were arrested together outside the South African embassies across this country -- because on the issue of human rights, we are united.

Look around this room

Look at the person sitting next to you

Look at the people sitting in your row

And in front of you

We are the people who care...the people who make the effort to come out tonight -- to share with each other our feelings and commitment...The people who want to reach out and work together.

Our enemy is not within this room but outside...among those who try to stop communication...to spread fear and distrust ...to set us against one another because they oppose our principles of social justice and human dignity.

And so they try to set us against one another.

Look at this building...think about the value of this College, and the first rate education experiences this school made available. Think about the dedicated teachers who teach here like Barry Commoner, Alan Hevesi and Mike Harrington. Think about how much education has contributed to the health of our nation and the strength of our society.

But there are those who want to cut back education. The President's budget proposes to trim 5 billion dollars from the Federal Education Budget, to narrow grants in favor of loans, to lessen the number of classes that can be taught, of scholarships available, of textbooks that will be used. The enemy is not within this room but is outside among the people who talk about excellence but try to cut back education.

Look at the young people with us tonight. Think of our own hopes and goals when we were their age. Think of what they mean to us, to all of us, as a society and as a nation. But what sort of future can they expect when decent jobs are shrinking, when America's economic base is weakened, when opportunities for employment and education are disappearing.

The enemy is not within this room but outside, among those people who would deny our young people the chance for a better life.

When we understand that the enemy is outside, then we understand too that our allies are inside. For us inside this room let there be no question that the alliance is real, the goals are shared, and that our directions will be forward. I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Even pages cut off in originals



RABBI TANENBAUM/REVEREND JACKSON

March 11, 1987

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SCHWARCZ: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Queens Black-Jewish People to People Project, welcome to Queens College and to our first major forum. The Queens Black-Jewish People to People Project grew, quite simply, out of a desire to reach out, to open channels of communication, and to promote understanding between the Black and the Jewish communities. The Project seeks to create a continuing dialogue between Black and Jewish groups in the borough of Queens by establishing a series of forums in which congregations of churches and synagogues, members of civic organizations, and representatives of professional organizations come together to listen to leaders from Black and Jewish groups, and to interact with each other. The goal of these activities is the creation of associations, cooperative ventures, and friendships between Black and Jewish groups, thereby fostering understanding, compassion, and harmonious inter-ethnic relations. The Project is a grassroots organization, and as such, most of our events take place at the community level. Still, we have planned two large-scale projects to speak out not only to the neighborhoods of Queens, but far beyond it as well. "Religious Leaders and Political Activists," tonight's forum, is one of these. You are probably as eager as I to hear the speakers, so I will take only this moment to thank them both for being

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with us this evening, and to thank the members of our committee who have worked so hard to see this forum realized.

I would like to call on Dr. George [Priestly], Professor of Political Science and Director of the [..... Program] at the College, to introduce our president, Shirley Strom Kenney.

RIESTLY: Good evening, ladies, gentlemen, friends. The committee has asked me to introduce our President, Shirley Strom Kenney. President Kenney is in her second year at the College. Building on what is clearly one of the best and deepest faculties in the nation, she has chartered a new direction for the college, and is in the process of setting up the mechanism for curriculum development, recruitment and other processes at the College. On this occasion, it is particularly appropriate to note her positive pronouncement of affirmation and commitment to major changes at the College, especially in view of our multi-racial and multi-ethnic community. Tonight's occasion is also a testimony to the President's and the college's interest in providing a proper context for the discourse of race and ethnic relations, the elusive American dilemma. President Kenney.

KENNEY: I want to welcome you to Queens College for our Black-Jewish People to People Project. I look forward to sharing with you this opportunity to listen, to think together, to shape ideas and jointly seek solutions to the problems that affect all of us.

I grew up Jewish in Tyler, Texas. I grew up aware of the prejudices that Jews experienced, and those that Blacks experienced. The Klan didn't care for either Blacks or Jews. But I did not envision that anyone could believe that our problem was each other. It was many years later, in the North, that I encountered that possibility, and it was a great shock. The tensions between Blacks and Jews are particularly hard to understand because of all we have in common. We are two peoples who have said "Never again," who have said "We shall overcome," who have suffered immeasurably merely by virtue of the accident of our birth. We face enemies, but we cannot afford to expand the compass of our enemies by turning on each other. For us to waste our energies on hatred within the league of the persecuted is to [scorn] the energies that must be put to real use. One thing is certain: Without solidarity, our cause is lost.

If we are to overcome, we must work together, and that is why I am so pleased that Queens College has the great privilege of hosting a forum in which we can listen, we can learn, and in which the spark of other's ideas can illuminate our own, in which we can share our views with open minds and open hearts. For as long as I can remember, civil rights has been the agenda of our time, for all of us. Together, Blacks and Jews, determined to prevent persecution in the future, we can make a difference. I look forward to working with all of you. Thank you.

HWARCZ: Thank you, President Kenney. I have much pleasure in calling on  
ofessor [Allan Hapgood], who will introduce [Brenda White], a member of the  
ard of Trustees of the City University of New York.

OFESSOR: On behalf of the Black-Jewish People to People Committee, it is a  
reat honor and pleasure to introduce the Honorable Brenda [Carroll] White. The  
onorable Brenda White is a member of the Board of Trustees of the City  
iversity of New York, one of two Black members; [we have some ways to go].  
e is a graduate of [Wellesley] College, and the University of [.....].  
s. White is a practicing attorney with the Brooklyn-based law firm of Simpson  
and Deritz]. Without further adieu, I introduce the Honorable Brenda White.

HITE: President Kenney, Reverend Jackson, Rabbi Tanenbaum, honored guests, and  
riends: On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York,  
bring you greetings. City University is the largest urban university in the  
ation, with 20 campuses, including a law school and a medical school. Our  
tudent population numbers over 180,000, and I must say the largest Black,  
ispanic, Jewish, and Italian-American student population of any university in  
he United States. We at City University are concerned about -- indeed, we have  
ade it our priority -- equality in [the academy]. Now, equality, in the words  
f our Chancellor, Joseph [Bergman], stands for what he calls "willingness to  
ttack the status quo, to think, to write, to speak critically about [power  
.... and power .....]."



This forum tonight gives us just that opportunity. Sitting in this platform tonight are two nationally recognized [religious] speakers -- one Black, one Jewish. Their goals have expanded from the realm of religion to the arena of politics. As political activists, they are both outstanding leaders in human relations [and .....]. Their views and ideas are critical to the ongoing dialogue between the Black and Jewish communities.

There are a number of legitimate approaches to the goal of understanding racial and ethnic tensions, and reducing those tensions accordingly. Tonight, we take one of those approaches by listening carefully to the views of two persons who can give us insight into an area that we all must commit ourselves to learning more about. I thank you for attending [this evening].

SCHWARCZ: Ladies and gentlemen, at this stage I would like to call on my true friend, a dear colleague; he's a member of the Political Science Department at the College, and a political leader of the first and finest quality, the Assistant Majority Leader of the Assembly of New York in Albany, and I would like to express to him our heartfelt thanks for his support in making this project possible. Ladies and gentlemen, I have much pleasure in presenting Professor Alan Hevesi, who will be the moderator of this evening's forum.

HEVESI: Thank you very much, Ernie. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome! This is a special evening, and I think it's going to have a particular meaning for

everyone here, and maybe for lots of people who are not here. I want to personally thank Queens College President Kenney, who is an outstanding leader, and an Ernie Schwarcz, who has been a dear friend and a terrific administrator for many, many years here at Queens College for putting together this most distinguished project, the Black-Jewish People to People Project, of which this forum this evening is one part.

Just by way of logistics, we will have a format. It's simple, but I think it will afford us the best opportunity to exchange views. Each of our distinguished speakers will address you this evening, after which we will have some opportunity for them to answer your questions. The way we organized that is we have requested that anyone who has an interest in asking a question to please fill out the little form that's in your program. All the form asks for is your name and your seat number, and hand it to an usher. The forms will be placed in a basket, and the basket will be brought up here, and I will put my hand into the basket blindfolded and pull out the names, which will make a half dozen of you happy and the rest of you very angry.

Let me tell you something very briefly about this Project. It really has its genesis, if I may, in a meeting in a private home right outside the Fitzgerald Gymnasium here at the College, the home of Bill Schnerr, who is the Queens Chairman of the American Jewish Congress. He called together a group of legislators, Black and Jewish, over a year ago -- about a year and a half ago,



and I make to note for the record, well before Howard Beach -- in order to deal with the potential friction, tension, hostility that one could feel here in New York between the Black and Jewish communities. And out of that meeting came a suggestion, partly my idea, and partly the idea of a very good friend of mine, a former Assemblyman -- at the time an Assemblyman, later a Congressman for a short period of time, still a distinguished community leader -- Al [Walden]. By the way, Al is over there; we might as well recognize him. I take the liberty of introducing Al Walden with the proviso that I'm not going to introduce anyone else who's prominent -- there are many prominent people here -- primarily for the reason that I would forget a substantial portion of them, and I'm in enough trouble already. But Al was an initiator of this project. We decided that we would pair off Walden and Hevesi, and later Congressman Floyd Flake and Congressman Gary Ackerman, Assemblywoman [Netty Mayers] and Assemblywoman Helen Marshall, to go into synagogues and churches and community groups and expose our Jewish constituents to Black leaders, and our Black constituents to Jewish leaders, not that we would end up agreeing on major issues, but so there would be some measure of understanding, some connection between us, and the process of humanizing the representatives of the other group. And we've been doing that with some consistency. It's not only a Queens idea; Assemblyman Daniel Feldman, for example, invited Assemblyman [Al Van] to an Orthodox synagogue in Brooklyn, and the process is extending throughout the city. Out of that came the idea,

accepted by the New York State Assembly in terms of a proposal to fund this project, to create the Queens Black-Jewish People to People Project, and here we are. Our goal is to get communities -- not leaders; leaders can meet all the time -- but communities together, understand the humanity of their colleagues, to understand that whatever the color of skin, whatever the method of worshipping, whatever the cultural background, we are all people, with similar experiences and similar needs, and to try to cut through that hostility that does exist, unfortunately, and it exists too much in this city, and if we don't deal with it, it's going to overwhelm us. The purpose is to have people together who identify these mutual needs; to have Jewish people understand what the Black experience has been: slavery, discrimination, oppression, lynching, and apartheid, because we had apartheid in the United States, in my lifetime, in your lifetime, up until very recently, and there are pockets of it now. We didn't call it apartheid; we called it something else. But that's the reality for Black people. And for Black people to understand what the significance of being a Jew is in the United States. Jews have done fairly well as an ethnic group here, but historically, Jews have not done well. The occasional moment when Jewish communities have been allowed some measure of freedom and prosperity, in almost every case, it never lasted. And Black people should understand the Jewish experience, with oppression, and discrimination, and pogroms, and being driven out of countries, and the Holocaust -- wholesale



slaughter. These are common experiences that all of us have to feel, and we felt the best way to feel them was to have people together, mixing, understanding, recognizing that we have much more in common than we have in disagreement, even though we're going to disagree on some [things]. The bottom line of this project is that we are here militantly to fight bigots, to fight racists, to fight anti-Semites, to fight bigots. It is easy to be a bigot. It is a simple process. A bigot is generally a person with the lowest self-esteem, who has a need to hate someone else in order to compensate for their own lack of self-value. And a bigot doesn't have to think. A bigot can be inaccurate, a bigot can hate; it answers all the questions, no thought, no caring, no need for reconciliation, no need to deal with complexities. It's easy to be a bigot. It is tougher to fight bigotry, but that's what this project is for: to do the tough things, to understand each other, to know where we're coming from, to try to agree, and to form coalition of two peoples with a long history of being victims.

So that's our purpose -- to declare war on bigotry -- and to do that, we have brought, a preliminary step in what I think will be a long-term project here at Queens College and in Queens County, two of the most distinguished clergymen and community leaders in this country. Two really outstanding human beings, two really extraordinary people, not without controversy -- certainly,

here's controversy, but when you're in public life and you're a leader, you take risks; and when you take risks, controversy follows, and that's healthy.

It is my great honor to introduce the first speaker, who is the National Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee, an organization dear to my heart because my father for them for 25 years. *Newsweek* described him as "the American Jewish community's foremost Apostle to the Gentiles," soliciting support for all factions of the Jewish community. He was the only rabbi at the Vatican Council [III] and a consultant in that extraordinary change of policy in the Catholic church towards the Jewish community. He is Chairman of the New York Board of Rabbis Jewish-Christian Relations Committee; he organized numerous institutes and seminars and congresses. He's done social work; he led the relief effort to provide relief for the victims of the Nigeria-Biafra conflict. He is the co-founder of the Interreligious Council on World Hunger, and so on and so on and so on.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure for me to introduce to you a prize-winning radio commentator, lecturer, author of a tremendous number of monographs, articles and books, the most distinguished leader in our community, Rabbi Mark Tanenbaum.

TANENBAUM: President Kenney, and a long-time colleague whom I knew [before .....], Jesse Jackson, Dr. Hevesi, Dr. Schwarcz, friends: Let me say at the outset that one of the most practical projects in Black-Jewish relations that

occurred to me this evening as I walked into this platform, suggested that maybe the first thing Jesse Jackson and I ought to do is organize a Black-Jewish collection plate for an audience like this. I don't know about [Jesse's] experience in Baptist churches, [where I spend a good deal with many Baptist friends], but it began to look like Yom Kippur in the [.... service] tonight.

I want to begin at the outset to pay tribute to the respect for scholarship, Biblical scholarship, that's implicit in the way in which this evening has been organized. There was a wonderful story told during Vatican Council II, when I was present while the Vatican was facing up for the first time in some 1900 years to what has been the relationship of the Catholic Church to the Jewish people, what had to be faced, what had to be repented, what had to be changed. During the course of the Council, someone told me this story. The late Blessed Pope John XXIII, whose inspiration it was to organize Vatican Council II, which literally changed the course of the history of the Catholic Church over the past 1900 years. Before he was elevated to the papacy, he served as an [Apostolic] delegate to the Balkans, in Istanbul. And then after that, he was brought to France, where he there served as an Apostolic delegate to the French government, representing the Pope in France. And as the story happened, Monsignor [Ronkolig], as he was then called, developed a very warm and intimate friendship with the Chief Rabbi of France, Rabbi Jacob [Kaplan]. And according to this account, Monsignor Ronkolig and Chief Rabbi Kaplan had been



invited by the President of France to a banquet held in [.....]. They came together in this large reception hall, and they were chatting, making small talk, exchanging pleasantries. Then someone rang the gong for the banquet, for them to walk through the reception hall into the main dining hall. And, as this story has it, the Chief Rabbi [came] to the door, before entering into the banquet, and Monsignor Ronkolig was at his side, holding his elbow, and the Chief Rabbi turned to Monsignor Ronkolig and said, "Your Excellency, after you. You first." And Monsignor Ronkolig, who was very fond of the Rabbi, turned to him and said, "No, Your Excellency, Chief Rabbi, you first." And this went on for like five minutes, back and forth, Alfonse and Gaston routine; meanwhile, they're piling up traffic of people trying to go through the door. Finally, Pope John -- then Monsignor Ronkolig -- in his characteristic Italian, earthy, [peasant] way, grabs hold of the arm of Chief Rabbi Kaplan, begins to shove him through the door, exclaiming, "No, Chief Rabbi, the Old Testament before the New Testament," and shoved him into the banquet hall. Well, normally I would appear after Jesse Jackson, after he has, in his powerful, charismatic, mesmerizing way, taken over an audience, and I would feel like a shlemiel after that, trying somehow to take hold of what was left over of the audience. But I guess this is an act of pure academic scholarship, the Old Testament, the Hebrew scriptures, before the New Testament. Let Jesse's mother worry.

The invitation extended to me by the Honorable Allan Hevesi, Assistant Majority Leader of the New York State Assembly, and Professor of Political Science at Queens College, and indeed he is right; we have wonderful memories of association with his late blessed father, who served the American Jewish Committee with distinction. The invitation from him and from Professor Ernest Schwarcz, Dean of Jewish Studies at the College, is deeply appreciated. Their establishment and support of the Queens Black-Jewish People to People Project is both a symbol and a substantive contribution to a vital, compelling goal that hopefully all of us here tonight share: the overcoming of misunderstanding and the advancement of knowledge, mutual respect, and cooperation between the Black and Jewish people and their communities, in the context of a profound common concern for the welfare of our beloved American democratic republic. Let me be clear at the outset about my mandate as I see it this evening. I speak here as an individual, only for myself, exercising my democratic right of free speech. While I believe that I may express the feelings and views of many -- perhaps most, I don't know -- in the Jewish community, what I am about to say does not represent the official positions of the American Jewish Committee, and certainly not those of the American Jewish community, which is characterized by diversity and a plurality of views, as is true of every other religious, racial or ethnic group in our democratic society.

Why are we here this evening? Why is there such an impressive turnout of people from this community coming together tonight at Queens College? This is not an easy evening, either for the Reverend Jesse Jackson nor for myself. If the bigots and extremists in our society had their way, this evening would not have taken place. The fact that Jesse Jackson and I made our own separate decisions to share this platform in the face of threats, slanders and intimidations, is a statement of our determination to reject hatred, bigotry, and verbal violence from whatever quarter it is issued. We do not and we will not [obey] the troublesome and disturbing episodes in Black-Jewish relations in the recent past. What our purpose is tonight, as I see it, is to try to find a better way, a more [simple] and constructive way, for Blacks and Jews to live and work together, as they have done -- we must not forget -- as they have done for much of their history during the past 25 years. I asked, why are we here tonight? And I want to try to answer that question out of my reflections and my experiences during the past quarter century or more.

In 1968, I became involved with Catholic and Protestant leaders in trying to relieve the suffering of the victims of the Nigerian-Biafran conflict. That exposure, day in and day out, to so much destruction of human lives, with tens of thousands of deaths of Muslims and Christians, and the incredible starvation of thousands of innocent children, literally transformed my life. While the Jewish agenda, the cause of Soviet Jews who suffer oppression still; the cause



of Israel, the cause of peace in the Middle East between Jews and Arabs; the Black Jews of Ethiopia, who still suffer incredible oppression and poverty among other Ethiopians, are constantly at the core of my consciousness, since that experience of 1968, literally I have been driven to dedicate much of my waking hours to the problem of world refugees, world hunger, and international human rights. There are about some 12 million refugees in the world today, some six million of them in Africa, the largest refugee problem in the world, most of them living in desperate conditions. The [searing] fact is that most of these refugee tragedies to which I have been exposed or have been involved are the result of religious, racial, ethnic and tribal conflicts. In the Sudan several years ago, nearly a million Black Christians [and Animists] were massacred by Arab Muslim tribes of the north. In Uganda, President Idi Amin for life and his [Nubian] tribesmen slaughtered some half million Black Christians, half of them Anglicans, half of them Roman Catholics. In India, there are unending slaughters of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs; in Sri Lanka, Tamils and Sinalese destroy each other -- all in the name of God [and nation]. The Iran-Iraq war has resulted in the deaths of an estimated quarter million human beings, many of them children 12 to 14 years old, told that by their martyrdom, they've assured themselves certain ascent to Paradise. Lebanon, once the citadel of Arab Christendom; Lebanon, once to the Arab Christian world what Israel is to world Jewry; the model of pluralism in the Middle East as Lebanon has been is now the

daily abbatoir]. And who loses sleep over Ireland, where for more than a decade, Protestants and Catholics have been destroying each other? Religious, racial and ethnic hatreds have become the engine of an epidemic of dehumanization in the world. Nowhere is that dehumanization more palpable and tragic than in South Africa. In October 1985, I went on a mission with the American Jewish Committee, our leaders, to South Africa. We met with a great many representatives from every segment of that blighted society, from Archbishop Tutu, Black union leaders [with the .... Legal Aid Society], the .... of the government, business, and the Jewish community. It is a ...., an abomination, to experience the chemistry of nationalist arrogance and religious bigotry. Two [....] religious lies have dominated Western civilization, including that of South Africa, which is a Western country. Jews have suffered and have been destroyed by the 1900-year-old religious lie of .... the absurd notion that the Jewish people collectively killed Christ, and .... before must endure unending punishment and exile. And some fundamentalist Christians even to this day preach the obscenity that the Nazi Holocaust was God's ultimate punishment of the Jews for having allegedly killed Christ. But apartheid is another such religious lie. In the Dutch Reform churches, it has been taught for generations as gospel truth that the Black people have been cursed by God with the curse of Ham, the forebear of Black people in the Biblical story. Segregation, apartheid, have thus been justified

as doing God's will. I saw the demonic power of that religious lie, as I watched from afar in Soweto, in 1985, watched dozens and dozens of young Afrikaans leaping out of their [hippo armored] troop carriers, there in Soweto, shooting Black youths at will. These young Afrikaans, fresh off the farms, their heads filled with their church lessons, have been raised in a culture of religious and racial hatred and bigotry that has been indulged without limit. Where were they to learn that the life of a Black child is as precious in the eyes of God as their own?

The late psychoanalyst, Dr. Erich Fromm, in his monumental last work, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, called such behavior "group narcissism." As in the dynamics of individual narcissism, a group attributes to itself all virtue and assigns to the ["out"] group all vice, everything [that's eery]. Such a group becomes totally self-centered and sees itself as naturally superior, and sees the other as inferior, an infidel, a heretic, deserving of destruction. Dr. Fromm called such group conflict psychopathic behavior that is responsible for much of the group aggression, terrorism, and violence that pockmarks the world today. The cost in human lives that the human family is paying for such religious and racial hatred all over the world is staggering, beyond human comprehension. In a nuclear missile age, such psychopathology without of control could conceivably, God forbid, trigger off a nuclear holocaust.



Short

Blacks and Jews, all Americans, need to acknowledge that America is different -- has been different, is different. For the past 200 years, our national and religious leaders have struggled mightily to establish an open, democratic, pluralist society. The true genius of America rests not on sending our automobiles and Coca-Cola around the world; true genius of America rests in the reality that each religious, racial and ethnic group comes to the common American table by right, as first-class citizens, and not by suffering. Each group -- religious, racial, ethnic -- has its own agenda, appropriately, its own needs and priorities, and has a right to receive a fair and sympathetic hearing, has a share in the American table. While advocating its own agenda, at the same time each of us has a simultaneous, a collateral and overarching obligation to serve the common welfare. American democracy is founded on a social compact which is a very fragile instrument. Watergate taught us how fragile. Irangate has taught us how fragile that compact can become. That compact needs to be continuously nurtured by an intense commitment to civility and mutual respect. That does not prevent nor preclude constructive criticism of each other's positions, or holding different views. By indulging religious or racial bigotry, reckless and uninhibited racial epithets, or anti-Semitic defamations, can beat this precious, fragile social compact into the ground, into dust. My friends, America is the only nation on earth that has not been despoiled by religious wars. We have not had 30 year wars; we have not had 100

year wars of a religious character, as one finds all over the European landscape. We have had far too much of racism, and anti-Semitism, of lynchings and verbal violence, <sup>END</sup> and let me tell you that the [canard], the obscenity, that Zionism is racism is just such an expression of defamation and verbal violence.

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... attacks of demagogues, and of such moral courage and integrity is credibility made of. At their height, and at their most productive, Black-Jewish relations in the 1960s and 1970s were a paradigm of democratic pluralism at its best. The essential reason for that extraordinary, indeed historic, cooperation was once formulated by our colleague, [Albert Vorsman], who, in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, recalled how, in 1964, the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was challenging, together with Jesse Jackson and Andrew Young and many other friends and colleagues, Dr. Martin Luther King was challenging racial discrimination in public accommodations. In St. Augustine, Florida, there was a fierce resistance from the sheriff and the police, as well as from the White Citizens' Council and the Ku Klux Klan. And Martin Luther King sent a telegram to the conference that was then meeting in Atlantic City of the Central Congress of American Rabbis, and he appealed for their help. Literally within hours, that very day, 16 rabbis came to St. Augustine, where they joined Dr. King and his brothers and sisters. They entered the Black church and joined in common prayer and mutual solidarity, and then went off to try to integrate a

unch counter in the face of incredible hatred, contempt, anti-Semitist and  
acist [obloquies]. All of them -- Martin King and all around him, and the 16  
abbis -- were all forced by electric cattle prods into a cell in the prison of  
t. Augustine. A number of them had their lives threatened. Why did these  
abbis engage in acts of civil disobedience? Why were they [.... prepared] to  
go to jail, almost spontaneously, at once? Vorsman wrote the following. He  
said, "The answer is simple: Martin Luther King, Jr. No other person could  
have evoked such an instantaneous and uncritical response from us. With Dr.  
King, there was implicit trust, a profound bond and a mutual respect, and a deep  
sense of solidarity with his mission and that of his people. We respected him  
because he was intellectually keen, and a powerful orator." His disciple is not  
too bad, either. And, Vorsman adds, "We loved him because he cherished the  
glory of racial and religious diversity. He despised Black separatism as both  
wrong and counterproductive. He saw the Civil Rights revolution not as a Black  
rebellion, but as a covenant of White and Black, Christian and Jew, standing  
together for decency. To Dr. King, justice was a seamless web. Anti-Semitism  
and anti-Catholic prejudice, like racial bigotry, were anathema. His goal was  
not only justice for America's Blacks, but human rights for all peoples [.....]  
everywhere." Then Vorsman adds, "If, as I believe, [Meier Kahane] is  
essentially a problem Jews must face and resolve, so the Reverend Louis



Farrakhan is a central challenge to the integrity and the future of the Black community."

Black-Jewish relations are bigger than Louis Farrakhan or Meier Kahane, and we still have much in common to transcend our demagogues and our frictions. As Dr. King never tired of pointing out, Blacks and Jews have common enemies -- not just in the 1960s. Read the *New York Times* this week, on what is happening on 16 major campuses in America, the racism that's begun to erupt again against young Black students on college campuses. Read what is happening in the Farm Belt of America, where the Aryan Brotherhood, the Christian Identity Movement, and the [Posse Kamitantis], joining together with the Klan, are now trying to create the canard that the decline of the farms of America, the breakdown of the family farms -- one of the great tragedies of this country -- is due for one reason only: The Jewish conspiracy of America has set out to buy out the farmland of America. It is the Jewish conspiracy that is responsible for the crisis in the farmbelt. They have not gone away. They're always beneath the surface.

We have a shared history of oppression that gives us a shared vision of a compassionate and open society. And, my friends, we need each other. I spoke today to our Washington representative, [Hy Buchbinder], about problems relating to South Africa. And he talked to me about the incredible closeness, the incredible cooperation between congressmen who are Blacks and Jews, and he said,

No two other groups in the United States Congress vote together as consistently  
or their respective agendas as do the Jewish and Black congressmen in the  
United States Congress."

And they are addressing a common agenda: protecting the poor, the  
increasing poverty, especially among the underclass, from the social cuts which  
have taken place during the last four years; working together on the problems of  
unemployment, on family life, on education, on fair housing; drugs, crime,  
violence; resisting together the violations of the separation of church and  
state, which continues to mount, from the radical Right, week after week;  
together working for the security of the State of Israel, speaking out for  
Soviet Jews and others denied their human rights; opposing together apartheid in  
South Africa and racism at home. Despite the irritation of the conflicts that  
cloud Black-Jewish relations, even on such anguished issues as affirmative  
action, where there can be legitimate and constructive criticism, there is still  
a bond that links Jews and Blacks together. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. forged  
a Black-Jewish bond in love, devotion, [blood and dreams]. The greatest homage  
we Jews can pay to his memory, that superb religious leader as political  
activist, is to nurture and strengthen that bond which was and must remain a  
blessing for America and for the world. I can only hope and pray that this  
shared evening with Jesse Jackson, whom I've known for many years, will mark a  
turning away from the aberration and the deviation from Black-Jewish relations of

the past, and will return us to the highway of justice, mutual respect, mutual support and solidarity, for the sake of the Black and Jewish people of our nation, and above all, for the well-being of this great American democratic society which we love. Thank you.

HEVESI: Thank you very much, Rabbi Mark Tanenbaum. As I was listening to you, Rabbi, you touched a nerve, an historical nerve, in making reference to that coalition of Jews, Blacks and others that was the experience early on in the Civil Rights movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s. I was a student at Queens College at the time, and as he spoke, three names popped into my head, names that we should not forget, some of us who are connected to the College should remember: Cheney, Shwerner and Goodman. Three young people, in a flush of their commitment to principle and idealism -- two of them Jewish, one of them Black -- who went South to fight in the Civil Rights movement, non-violently, and were murdered in the South because of their commitment. Maybe that's what we need to focus on, that kind of spirit that would compel people to make that kind of sacrifice.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's a great privilege for me to introduce a gentleman who was appointed by Martin Luther King early on in his career as Director of Operation Breadbasket, which was the economic arm of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Later, in 1971, organized Operation PUSH -- People United to Serve Humanity. I remember reading about it then. What struck



was the theme of this self-help organization, if I may characterize it, the theme of it was people -- poor people, oppressed people, victims -- fighting their way out of their victimization by themselves, not depending on others but on their own self-worth, on their hard work, on their own value. The gentleman who organized a Push for Excellence in Education program. He has been a leader in the Black community for several decades. In 1983, he began his candidacy for President of the United States. He was a leading candidate in the 1984 election. As a politician, I note that he received three and a half million votes in the primaries, 22 percent of the total of the Democratic primary; he won four states and Washington, D.C. He is a renowned orator, thinker, philosopher, community leader -- not without controversy, but certainly one of the great leaders in America today. Ladies and gentlemen, the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

~~ATTN:~~ Dr. Kenney, Dean Schwarcz, Rabbi Tanenbaum, friends gathered on this historic occasion tonight: Tonight, I too am here because I want to be here.

This is the place to be a critical mass]. Relations in this nation [will have an impact] upon America and the world. I speak for myself. The views, perhaps, represent most members of the Rainbow Coalition and friends [beyond

that]. I want to thank Queens College for sponsorship of this important evening, for your gracious hospitality, [and in a special way] to you, Alan Hevesi, for, along with [Brother Walden], developing the idea of Black-Jewish dialogues, for

ensuring their support, but most of all, for your own personal leadership and integrity. You're a very necessary person. This community is fortunate to have you, in your district, in the assembly, and in classroom.

[....] we begin by speaking of religious speaker as political leader, a tradition going back at least as far as Moses, that great leader whose life is also a symbol of interracial cooperation. It was Moses, the Jewish child raised by an Egyptian princess, who led his people out of Egypt to freedom. The Bible says, [fleeing] the court of Pharaoh, Moses went to Midian, and married [Zipporah], an African woman, and named their child [Gershom], because, he said, "I am a stranger in a foreign land." As a political leader, Moses spoke up to Pharaoh, told the truth [to] Pharaoh and [braved] his wrath, then led the Jewish people across the Red Sea [on the way] the Promised Land. As a religious leader, Moses spoke up to the same people. When he came down from Mt. Sinai with the Ten Commandments, he found them worshipping the golden calves. And this is the finest tradition of religious leaders: to speak the truth, to stand up to imperial authority when necessary, and to speak out to one's own congregation when appropriate. Always be prepared in God's name to speak the truth as you know it.

American history began with religious figures serving as political leaders. Led by their ministers, the Pilgrims dared that dangerous voyage across the Atlantic in search of religious freedom, and yet, ironically, what

they valued for themselves, they denied to others: forbidding dissension, persecuting Quakers, and [demanding adherents] to strict sectarian lives. There are other examples, too, [that] early religious figures preached and practiced tolerance and respect. The Baptist minister, Roger Williams, founded a colony in Rhode Island on the principles of religious tolerance. The Quaker leadership of Pennsylvania, fleeing persecution at home, offered sanctuary to others, and not coincidentally, [fair play] to Native Americans, an American first, and too long an American oddity.

Religious figures stepped to the front line in the leadership in the fight to abolish slavery. John Brown, Frederick Douglass -- both deeply religious -- used their talents, [pulpit] platforms, pulpits, and their moral authority to speak out against the evil of slavery, and insist that this nation live up to its own best principles of freedom and equality. Meanwhile, in the fields and [encampments], slaves told each other the story of the Exodus secretly at night, a symbol of hope and redemption. In the Black communities of slaves and freemen alike, the religious leader was most often also the political leader, the natural result in small, cohesive communities with their own internal social structure, [political .....] economic resources, or political authority.

There are similarities between these Black communities in the 19th and early 20th century and the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe during the same



time. There, too, the rabbi was likely to serve as teacher, civic authority, and negotiator with the outside world. Who better to articulate the hopes and goals of his community? Who better, in the tradition of Moses, to speak out to civil authorities on behalf of the oppressed?

Rabbi Mark Tanenbaum and I come to this meeting to speak about different perspectives. We begin by acknowledging our common experience. As Jews and African Americans, our people have known what it is like to be slaves. Of all the people in the world, we explicitly remember that experience, reminding ourselves and our children that we were slaves, in the land of Egypt and the United States of America. As we remember slavery, we celebrate emancipation. We [value] and take joy in our freedom, knowing that it was brought to us by God's grace, and protected by constant [human] vigilance. Jews and Blacks have traveled different trails; we share a common history -- the experience of oppression. Both our people have suffered from harsh and painful government. For Blacks that was slavery legislated and enforced by government, followed by years of institutionalized and legalized discrimination, again enforced by the agencies of our own government. For Jews, the memories are of the Holocaust, [the horror of rules gone mad]. The murder of millions of human beings, from babies to grandparents, and the search for safety and refuge from which too many too many of the world's governments turned away. For both of us, the memories are fresh, and the lesson clear, [because] to suffer from the murderous attacks

f bad government, carried out in the name of the law, carried out by people  
wearing the uniform of the law; because we've experienced the horror of  
overnance for evil, we must be totally committed to the standards of government

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.... of recent history will make our message clear. When President  
eagan announced his plans to travel to Bitburg, and forgot the Second World  
war, I was shocked. [.....] that in spite of appeals from government officials  
and the public, he would be [.....] and remain so insensitive to the feelings of  
those who had lived through that history. In formulating my own response to  
his trip, I spoke to people who are authorities on the Holocaust, here and  
abroad. I spoke to Elie Wiesel, the Nobel laureate -- a Nobel laureate who  
certainly merits our greatest gratitude and congratulations for an honor well  
deserved -- as well as, in the U.S., Dr. [Paul Parks] of Boston, the former  
State Education Superintendent in Massachusetts, an engineer, a veteran, an  
African-American. Dr. Parks, a distinguished African-American, told me of his  
own personal experience as a soldier in the United States Army in 1945. As  
member of the Corps of Engineers, he was with the Black battalion that was the  
first to enter Dachau. When those troops approached this death camp, which was  
so eery and silent, they were frightened. They thought it was a military camp  
held by the Germans; it was a death camp. They saw the piles of bodies and knew  
they were in the presence of an incomprehensible tragedy and consummate evil.

But they also assumed that German soldiers were hiding within the camp's walls, waiting to attack them. Inside those silent buildings, the remaining Jewish prisoners were huddled in fear. They heard the approaching footsteps and assumed the worst -- that German soldiers were returning to finish them off. In cautiously peering out, they realized that these soldiers were Black, and could not be Russians. The prisoners, most of whom had never seen a Black, rushed out when they saw them. In [stark] disbelief and [impassioned] relief, they [embraced]. They were in trauma, both were in shock. Both stood momentarily paralyzed on the cutting edge of history. Mutual fear and insecurity had been transformed into mutual security and rescue. Blacks got to Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps first. These are stories that must be told, and [felt], and taught. It is the spirit of those moments of triumph that must be recaptured and nurtured and never let go. For in those moments are not just messages for Blacks or Jews, but for the suffering and rejected everywhere, for the entire community of the suffering and the survivors: the Hispanics, the Asians, the Arabs, Native Americans and Central Americans, and the people of the Caribbean.

This true story of Dr. Parks and Dachau is one of the most important lessons of our time. In their ignorance, inmates and liberators each thought the other was the enemy. Separated by the death camp's walls, they feared the worst. But when they opened their eyes, they saw for themselves, they realized



the truth: that we must look at each other squarely, and recognize our allies. Walls and ignorance have kept us apart. We must tear down the walls, open our eyes, smile [through] our tears, open our hearts to one another, to [give, redeem and move on].

And so today, when we look at the situation here at home, we see examples of racial conflict that are even more chilling because they involve the young, for whom we have had and have such high hopes. We can provide many examples of walls of ignorance and fear which bring insecurity and hatred, that manifest themselves in acts of blind and mean violence. [Caught in the prison] of racism, we see natural allies kept apart.

It's because I believe so strongly in that which we have in common I come here tonight to talk about our common future, our cooperation for the common good. It's because I believe so strongly in the ability of people of good will to reason together, [that there is .....] tonight to focus our sights not on the issues on which we may differ, but the large issues on which we agree. It's because I believe so strongly in the need for us to work together, I want to speak to you tonight about the myths that divide us. Yes, we have real problems and real concerns. No resident of Queens, of New York, no [thoughtful] citizen in this nation tonight can deny that we have problems and conflicts between groups. [..... where some of] these problems are exaggerated, some of these

conflicts have been exacerbated. Some of the so-called issues have been exposed as modern-day myths. Let me list three of these.

First is the myth that among the biggest problems facing Blacks and Jews are those posed by extremists within each group. Sociologists would refer to this as "blaming the victim." In reality, this is a political diversion, an attempt to distract our attention from the real problems to both of us caused by attacks from the outside. And make no mistake, there are extremists out there aiming at both of us: the Neo-Nazis [.....] who want to build an Aryan nation are full of hatred toward Blacks and Jews; [directors of communications] in President Reagan's White House who argued against the celebration of Dr. King's birthday; [.... opposed to the] prosecution of Nazi war criminals. Even if we had less in common, we would be reminded of our common interests by the enemies we share.

The second myth is that Black-Jewish relations are so fragile, in such bad shape, that they're somehow worse than relations between other ethnic groups. Why is it that so much public attention is being focused on the relations between Blacks and Jews? Why is it always our relationship that's being tested, monitored, critiqued, investigated? The day after the killing in Howard Beach, did we hear calls for investigations of Italian-Black relations? When so few [White ethnics] in Chicago voted for Harold Washington, did we see newspaper articles about Black-Irish, Black-Croatian, Black-Italian, Black-

erman relations? Even the hardest friendship would be endangered by constant laboratory testing, public monitoring, and investigation. We remain under watch and investigation. The fact our relationships have lasted as long as they have, in the face of this pressure, is a testament to its strength and durability.

And finally I speak about the third, potentially the most dangerous, myth: that [because] the relationship is over, divisions between Blacks and Jews have split the old Roosevelt Coalition. In fact, Jews and Blacks continue to work together for social justice at home and abroad. In the Congress, Black members and Jewish members work closely together, fighting for economic opportunity, for urban aid, and for the end of apartheid in South Africa. [But before Congress], in the voting booth, Jews and Blacks tend to vote very much alike. In 1984, despite the [stiff] interest and predictions of those who would divide us, both Jews and Blacks voted for Walter Mondale in greater number than any other two groups. Blacks [.....] in the city of Chicago for a great mayor, Harold Washington, [received] re-election, Jewish voters supported Harold Washington in numbers far greater than any other ethnic group. In public opinion polls and in the [polling place], Blacks and Jews demonstrate similar commitment to the values of social justice, civil rights, and human dignity.

Those are the myths, but there are other factors which are not myths. It is not a myth to say that Blacks and Jews may differ. [There's always a time to say] to one another that we've expressed our differences aloud, and still be



friends with mutual respect. Friendship does not require choral speaking. Friends do not live in an echo chamber. If we speak in terms of civility, if we frame the debate within the terms of tolerance, in which dealing with one another with respect we owe to one another, allies that will be honest and speak out about fear that our alliance could be destroyed. It is not a myth to say there are issues on which Blacks and Jews may differ, as long as we remember that winning the war is the issue on which we agree. The bonds between us have been forged over many years of common experiences and goals. But because we have arrived at the same time at this place in history does not mean that we have not traveled different paths to reach this place. Sometimes our different experiences will lead us to different conclusions. That does not invalidate the importance of our values. Blacks and Jews have very different reactions to the word "quota." For Blacks, a quota can be a door to opportunity; for the Jews, the quota system has [put] a ceiling on success. But because we differ on quotas does not mean we can't agree on affirmative action, opening the way for minorities and women to participate in every phase of American life. Even reaching America was a different experience for Blacks and for Jews. For Jews, leaving Europe to come to America was to leave oppression and arrive at freedom; it was the experience of an immigrant, welcomed at Ellis Island and greeted by the Statue of Liberty. For Blacks, the experience was reversed. It was not an immigrant experience; it was a slave experience. Leaving Africa to come to

America meant leaving independence and being forced into slavery. Thus, the word "immigration" has a very different meaning to us.

But both of us agree that political refugees deserve the right to emigrate, and both of us will fight for these rights. Whether the prisoner is Jacob Fimmerman in a jail in Argentina, or Anatole Sharansky in the Soviet Union, or Nelson Mandela in South Africa, we believe that the government of the United States should speak out on behalf of those unjustly jailed, and not [legalize it] with their jailers. That is why I went to Geneva with the Peace Delegation of the United States, and had the chance to speak to Premier Gorbachev. I raised the issue with him about Soviet Jews. That is why earlier this month, I met outside of the White House with South Koreans, protesting the brutality of their own South Korean government. And that's why so many of us, Black and Jew, White and Hispanic, marched together and were arrested together outside of the South African embassies across this country. Because on the human rights issue, we must be united.

Look around this room. Look at the person sitting next to you, the people sitting in your row, in front of you. We're the people who care, the people who made the effort to come out to tonight because we care, because we share. We had the choice not to be here. We chose to come because we care. Our enemy is not within this room, but outside, among those who try to stop communication, to spread fear and distrust, set us against one another, because

they oppose our principles of social justice and human dignity, and so they try to set us one against another.

Look at this building. Think about the value of this college, [the first .....] educational experiences this school made available. Think about the dedicated teachers and people who teach here [a lot]: Barry Commoner, Alan Hevesi and Mike Harrington. Think about how much education has contributed to the health of our nation and the strength of our society. But there are those who want to cut back education. The President's budget proposes to trim \$5 billion from the federal education budget, [to narrow the branch in favored loans], to lessen the number of classes that can be taught, of scholarships available, of textbooks that will be used. The enemy is not within this room, but outside, among the people who talk about excellence and try to cut back education.

Look at the young people with us tonight. Think about our hopes and goals when we were their age. Think of what they mean to us, to all of us as a society and a nation. What sort of future can they expect when decent jobs are shrinking, America's economic base is weakened, opportunities for employment and education are disappearing. The enemy is not within this room, but outside, among those people who deny other people the chance for a better life.

When we understand that the enemy is outside, when we understand that our allies are inside, when we get real strong on the inside and turn to each other



nd not on each other, we will know the site of our fight is not a pizza parlor  
n Queens, among the [lost, the ..... and the maimed], or even a lonesome road  
n Georgia. Those are the extremes that threaten and divide us all. The site  
of our fight is where Howard Beach and Harlem converge; a plant gate that closed  
n workers without notice; a shipyard dumping goods made in slave labor in South  
frica [..... and undercut] organized labor; a family farm -- the farmers  
have been driven from the land without mercy, management or [markers]; a missile  
site, which threatens the human race.

These are tough times for us, because we are under investigation. And I  
submit to you, my friends, tonight that blood and religious ethics that bind us  
are stronger than the tensions that [bestrain] us. Thank you very much.

HEVESI: Well, we promised a special evening, and I think we delivered a special  
evening. But it is not over. I was asked to suggest that if you still had  
questions, there would be time for you to give them to the ushers. The problem  
is, there are so many in here now that I am convinced we're not going to get  
through all of these. So let me take the liberty, I'll call a name, have you go  
to microphone number one, the second name to microphone number two. This is at  
random. Ruth Blume, go to microphone number one, please. Earl Wellington  
Hazal, Jr., microphone number two. Mr. Hazal? The lights are in our eyes, so  
please begin. Are you there, sir?

HAZAL: Yes, I am.

HEVESI: Okay, why don't you ask the first question? And would you please indicate to whom you are addressing your question?

HAZAL: This question is for Reverend Jesse Jackson. I commended the fact that you ran for the presidency in the last election. In doing so, you had a way of combining [the] minorities into a common cause, not just in getting you elected as President of the United States, but reminding us as a people how to vote, and I found that highly commendable. And I'd like to know, are you considering doing the same thing in 1990?

JACKSON: Yes.

HEVESI: We're off to a very good start. Ruth Blume?

BLUME: Yes, yes sir, I'm here.

HEVESI: Is that Ruth Blume?

BLUME: Your Ruth Blume.

HEVESI: I never saw this lady before in my life!

BLUME: I want to address my question to Reverend Jackson. I had the pleasure of hearing you at the Democratic Convention in San Francisco. I was a delegate to the Convention, and I assure you -- and everyone here -- that the Reverend added great luster to the occasion. I'd like to preface my question by stating that I, too, am a member of a minority: I'm a Jewish woman, and as such, I am a minority person in the United States. The question that I want to pose is one that I think is in the minds of almost -- I shouldn't say almost; I would say a

large percentage of the audience here tonight -- you spoke about the risks of  
allying ourselves with our jailers. And yet there are so many people here -- in  
here, and in the literal and figurative outside of this auditorium -- who have  
the sense that in spite of the fact that we've heard so many admonitions tonight  
about rejecting the bigots, not hearing them, fighting them whether here or  
broad, many of us have known that you have identified and not denounced your  
association with Farrakhan, who we consider an arch-bigot. My point is this,  
sir: Everything that you said tonight I agree with. Much of what I've read  
that you have said where I haven't been in the audience, I agree with. But I  
feel that you are not fully advocating the cause of true liberty and respect of  
people to people until such time as you do that, and I can't understand why you  
have not to date, and are you going to tonight?

JACKSON: You've asked a question that I think is [very ..... and basic]; I can  
tell from how the audience responded. In my democratic tradition, I reserve the  
right to disagree with the positions taken by people that I don't agree with. I  
reserve that right, and I exercise that right. In my religious tradition, I  
make a distinction between someone's point of view and rejecting their person.  
I have no religious basis for that. I'm not that good myself. And so, in my  
own sense of tolerance, and as a matter of strategy, I think that it's a mistake  
for us to put, for emotional purposes or political purposes, Farrakhan in the  
center of our relationship, or to put Kahane in the center of our relationship.



They fit in a spectrum, but they're not in the center. They're not a litmus test of who we are and what our challenges are. There's a Congressional Black Caucus, 23 members; there are 20-odd Black mayors; there are almost 6,000 black elected officials; there are major religious denominations. Cannot the sum total of these groups and their relationship have more weight than an individual in the spectrum of things? I think that in my strategy and tactics, it is a mistake, and I certainly will not measure my relationship with Jewish people by any one or any group of individuals as a litmus test for our relationship. I will not do that. I hope [that the way the audience] is responding, that I hope we can continue this rather sacred dialogue in a realm atmosphere of civility, because we're trying to root out anxieties and fears, to free up two peoples to get together and salvage our nation. This is a rather serious setting tonight, and if we get into scoring and responding, and these loud clapping [.....], we may miss something precious, a chance to make a breakthrough.

HEVESI: Eileen Garcia, to one microphone, and Gilbert Benjamin. And after them, Walter Kaufman and Bernard Goldberg. Eileen Garcia? And I would admonish those who are approaching the mike, please ask questions. We are all sophisticated enough to get our point of view into a question, without having to make a speech. To whom do you address your question?

GARCIA: Rabbi Tanenbaum. Good evening. I'm sorry, but I honestly didn't think I was going to get picked.

ANENBAUM: You won the lottery!

ARCIA: My question was concerning the two religious [leaders here], you and  
everend Jesse Jackson, and also the relationship. My question is about  
children, who are in school, and it needs to begin with unity as small children.  
In the public school that my daughter goes to, during the holidays, the way they  
bring across these holidays, they'll bring over Chanukah and teach all that  
from the Old Testament, but the Christian side of it is Santa Claus. Or with  
Passover, and Easter is the rabbit, instead of the resurrection of our Lord, or  
Christmas the birth of Christ. I don't object to my daughter coming home and  
singing the songs of Chanukah, or the story of [Mordechai] and all that. I  
don't, not at all. But I would like also the Jewish children to understand what  
our Christian holidays really mean. It's not Santa Claus, it's not the Easter  
bunny. And this is something [you .....] in public schools, so that you're  
getting a lot of the Jewish traditions but not the Christians, or the Muslims.  
A lot of them don't believe in either of those, and they feel alienated in  
school.

ANENBAUM: I'm beginning to feel it might be easier for me to talk about Louis  
Farrakhan. I thought the real problem you had, and a number of Christian  
parents have with which I empathize, is that since Christmas is a time in which  
there's gift-giving on one night, and then Christian kids get involved with  
Jewish kids, and they get gifts eight nights a week, kids come home and say,

"Where's my other stuff?" With all respect, the assumption of your question is that the public school is the place for teaching the Christ story and the traditions of Christianity, in its richness and its fullness. It is possible to talk about religious holidays of various religious cultural groups from a cultural perspective. But out of my own experience, I learned first of all about Chanukah in the home of my parents, who were devout, traditional Jews, and in my own religious school, where I went regularly on Sabbath services and holy days. That's the place where I learned authentically about my authentic holidays. I did not need, and in fact, after a while, I began to find it offensive, when an evangelical teacher felt an obligation to teach me about [the story of the Maccabees in] Chanukah observances. There was something distorted and inappropriate about that. I think the real issue for us is, let's stop making the public schools the dumping ground for everything we're not doing ourselves. It is the obligation of parents, churches and synagogues to carry out their religious functions. And if they fail to do so, it really is a cop-out to expect the public school teachers to become surrogate parents and surrogate priests, ministers, nuns and rabbis. I hope that doesn't upset you, but I feel very keenly that that's a necessary approach to put this back in some perspective.

GARCIA: Thank you.

HEVESI: Gilbert Benjamin? To whom do you address your question?



ENJAMIN: Both the Reverend [and you]. It seems to me that [Black-Jewish relations .....throughout history ..... collectively work together .....] tension throughout the country, in the United States and in foreign lands. The rabbi pointed out that [.....] congressmen voting together, and Blacks and Jews are taking consistent stands [on the same agendas]. Jesse Jackson -- Reverend Jackson, excuse me -- he [counts a lot on] gaining Jewish support, especially in New York. The upcoming caucuses are coming closer. I would like to know what measures [are ..... going to take in seeing that either Jewish or black person will eventually .....].

HEVESI: We understand your question. You want a strategic assessment [of .....]. Is that correct?

JACKSON: The best way to do it is one group needs to run and the other group needs to support it. That's the way to win. Mr. Hevesi, if you run, I'll support you, and if I run, you'll support me. That's all.

HEVESI: Walter Kaufman. Are you at the mike, sir?

KAUFMAN: Yes. I'd like a comment from Senator Hevesi on the persecution of Jews in Budapest. I ask that, because my mother left Hungary at the age of 14 in 1906, and her [best] shipmates were [Calvins and Jewish .....]. And of course, she became a very good American [in ....] years. And I know your family unfortunately was touched by this terror [.....].

HEVESI: I'll tell you what. In the interest of time, since I am not a featured speaker here, I'll discuss that with you. It's very personal to me, being a Hungarian whose family suffered in the Holocaust, but I would like to restrict the questions to Rabbi Tanenbaum and Reverend Jackson. Mr. Bernard Goldberg? And would Fred Cinturano come to the microphone, and Michael Reese? Bernard Goldberg?

GOLDBERG: Reverend Jackson, I had a few hard questions. One of them was asked a while ago; that was in reference to Farrakhan. Your explanation to me was not too clear. I'd like you to expand on it a bit. The second one was, your association with the word "Hymie."

JACKSON: First off, we went through a rather long [expression] about the term "Hymie," which had no intent to do harm, or to maim or to hurt. It was [addressed .....] by anybody who's really interested in [..... and] going beyond it would not serve the purpose to go back and [..... it]. On the first matter, it seems to me that what we really must decide tonight is very fundamental to our advancement forward in the dialogue. If we want to go farther, we have enough trials before us and enough common threats to do so. If we do not want to go forward, we have enough reasons to justify not doing that, either. It's a very [formidable] decision that we have to make. There's an ad in [a magazine that was all over the country], the current Apple Computer advertising campaign. [And a friend of mine ..... it to me], this is a picture

of a black face with white lips and big eyes and [a .....] and a natural  
hairdo. And it says, "What Al Jolson did for movies, Apple does for computers."  
Now, this ad campaign was put together by Mr. Alan [Rosenstein], President and  
CEO of the [Omnicom] Group. We can let something like this become the  
centerpiece and further divide us, or we can come together and say that this is  
in bad taste and disgraces all of us. So we either use this to divide us, or we  
come together and fight it. It's our choice. In the matter of a few days, a  
very heavy Congressional [vote] is going to come out about the Israeli-South  
African connection, very heavy, very [.....]. We could use that occasion to say  
"I told you so" or we can use that occasion to come closer and somehow [do  
surgery] on that which is evil and maintain that which is good. The choice  
really is ours. If we choose to go forward -- the reason I came to this -- even  
forgiveness must be equal opportunity as we move forward. [You know, as Mr.  
Reagan opened his campaign] in Philadelphia, Mississippi, it's not known because  
there's a big air base there, a big plant, [this is where] they found Goodman,  
Schwermer and Cheney. His signal was so clear that the Klan [endorsed him .....  
that day]. Blacks picked up the signal real fast, and within a month, I  
challenged him face-to-face, and he backed off the Klan endorsement a little  
bit. But he didn't stop when he got to Bitburg, and he didn't stop then [with  
the ..... to Johannesburg], and then didn't stop when he made Rehnquist --  
Rehnquist! -- the [chiefest] justice, who signed the document ----- [..... a



member of that .....]? We have Rehnquist as chief Supreme Court justice?

[.....]

I'm here because I want us to relate, I want us to form a coalition and fight our common threats, and therefore I choose to [major on] that which unites us, and choose to try to get beyond that which divides us. But it really is our choice.

TANENBAUM: I said in my talk, I said it earlier [along], before Jesse Jackson made his decision to run for the first time for the presidency of the United States, when he and I had a meeting [with] one of my colleagues. There are few issues in public life that would be more meaningful to me than to be able to rebuild the Black-Jewish coalition with the same power of trust and intimacy and solidarity that we had in the 1960s, even into the early 1970s. I can't begin to tell you [that in detail], just a few things to say something about what that trust meant. There were some 12 Black children who were murdered [almost] mysteriously in Atlanta several years ago. You may remember that. We came down to Atlanta -- my own group, the American Jewish Committee -- and organized a memorial service for them, also a Black-Jewish meeting. And we had a meeting Daddy King, Martin's father. We didn't ask for this; we just stayed to pay tribute to him, and what he and Martin meant to us: clear, unequivocal, unambiguous, straightforward commitment of friendship and solidarity on everything that meant something to us, and we were equally clear and unequivocal

in our response [to them]. But Daddy King started off by saying, "This stuff about Farrakhan makes me sick. To hear Farrakhan talking about Judaism as a gutter religion"? What would we be without Judaism? What would we be without our Bible, without Moses, without the Exodus? To hear Farrakhan talking about sreal destroying the world, bringing Western Europe down?" And then he said to s, "Listen, let me tell you something. When we just got started with the Civil ights movement, and Martin King wanted to organize the first meeting of the lack movement in Atlanta, no hotel would open their doors to us. Only one otel was open to us. That hotel was owned by a Jewish man. He was the first ne to open the door for us." And then he said, "You know, the FBI and the nternal Revenue Service were the put on us to try to destroy us. And the nternal Revenue Service went over all our books, to try to prove that we were nvolved in fraud and embezzlement. [Nobody wouldn't touch us], except two eople: one was an accountant, who was a Jewish man; the second was a lawyer, e was a Jewish man who later got Martin out of jail." He said, "We don't forget our friends, and we will not let anybody defame them."

I accept what Jesse just said to us, in terms of wanting to look at the large picture in perspective. I think there's a mainstream, there is that history which is deep and profound, and we haven't even touched on that tonight. I recall the National Conference on Race and Religion in January of 1963, which brought together 1700 top religious leaders of America -- Greek Orthodox,

Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals, Jews, Blacks, Hispanics -- who met for the first time in the history of America on the issue of what we could do together to end racial discrimination. I served as Program Chairman of that conference. I had the privilege of extending the first invitation to Martin Luther King to the first national ecumenical meeting in America, at which he made a powerful speech side-by-side by Abraham Joshua [Heschel]. I know what that experience of trust and unequivocation and [the depth of commitment] which allowed for no [even marginality] of bigotry. Now, I simply have to say, I think that Jesse Jackson is an enormously gifted man. I think Jesse has made a fundamental historic contribution to the cause of social and economic justice in America. But I also have to say, with all friendship and respect, I think you're fooling yourself if you think that the issue of Louis Farrakhan is marginal [altogether .....]. And simply for this reason, Louis Farrakhan, when he comes to New York and comes to Madison Square Garden, 25,000 people give him a standing ovation when he utters the most vile anti-Semitic bigotry, that is not an isolated marginal event. And when he does it in Los Angeles and does it in Chicago and does it around the country, we are not dealing with a minor phenomenon. [Now, be quiet now]. I want to see Jesse succeed, for the sake of the Democratic party, for the sake of justice. It may well be that [I think he's right]: if Jesse Jackson becomes President of the United States, somewhere along the way there'll be a Jew after him, and maybe, God willing, there'll be a woman after



at. But we really want to turn the corner, if we really want to turn the corner, I want Jesse to feel free to say to us, "We're scared to death about Yisroel Meir Kahane. That man's preaching racism and death to Christians, and death to Arabs, and drive them out of Israel. They're scared to death of him." And I could say to him, "You're absolutely right, and you have a right to say to us, 'Where are you and what are you doing about it?' And we are insisting that this man have his community removed from the Knesset of Israel," which is happening. I want Jesse to be open for me to say to him, "I get scared to death when I see Louis Farrakhan filling up Madison Square Garden and going around the country, not just vulgar street anti-Semitism, but the worst kind of almost Nazi bigotry which makes demon of Jews -- "the synagogue of Satan," "the [.....] religion." That's not [innocent talk]. And when you tie that in with [Ghaddafi], then we have ideological problems of a very profound nature. We have got to deal with that [as almost a pathology]. If the Vatican and the Catholic church after 1900 years of preaching that kind of stuff, an imprint made on the culture of Western Christian civilization with that kind of imagery, that traditionalist church has the courage to face it and say that it is wrong, we reject it, we will not tolerate that being taught, preached about, by anyone anyplace, and adopts a Vatican declaration to declare that, we have a right to ask that, in appropriate ways, that be rejected with no ands, ifs or buts.

JACKSON: Anti-Semitism and racism should be rejected with no ifs, ands or buts, but as long as there's life, there's hope for individuals. And we do reject it. I still have to -- I'm not going to ask you to do anything about Kahane, because Kahane is a Jew, Kahane is a human being, and he is an elected official. He has a point of view that most Jews don't agree with, in this country or Israel. And I accept it for what you say it is: unrepresentative of who you are. Kahane does not scare me if he doesn't scare you. During the course of my campaign, Kahane wrote a letter to *USA Today*, and threatened to lead a demonstration on the house of my wife and children, and the press would not respond to it as serious. And some of his operatives, on the day my campaign opened, they threatened to interrupt and to obstruct the opening and had to be carried out. The media did not focus on that as offensive. Because of rather gross insensitivity, there came a great sense of fear in the [Black community], that people had to guard my house and my wife and children, and yet I still would not make Kahane the centerpiece of a serious dialogue. I know too many other Jewish people whose spectrum is too broad and too great. Tonight, in this room, is the Secretary of the National Baptist Convention USA, which has seven million members, Reverend [Franklin Richardson], who lives here in Queens. And his [present ..... the National ..... Church, the ..... Zion Church, the Church of God Christ, 23 .....], if groups of this magnitude and strength would begin to take questionable or anti-Semitic positions, that would be great

reason, from where my experience is, to feel terribly anxious. But we must determine what's to represent the train of thought where we live. We have to make some judgment. And just as you said trust you, you must trust me, and trust is always [..... I submit to you that] you are making a fringe centerpiece of a relationship with much depth and breadth, and almost nobody Black -- almost nobody Black -- believes that. Almost nobody Black believes that. And you must trust the collective intelligence of us to determine what we consider to be a dangerous trend or a non-dangerous trend. I say that as sincerely as I know how. We cannot be responsible for every expression, how every [strength arises out of .....]. And we will not tie you down [..... outstanding] Jewish names that are in the media who represent some real serious threats to life and limb and resources. And we refuse to make that a centerpiece for our relationship. We just refuse to do that, and I hope we never will. I hope we never will.

HEVESI: We should have Mr. Fred [Cinturano] at this microphone, and Mr. Michael Reese at the other? And would [Barry Friedman] and Al Saunders go to the mike? Mr. Cinturano.

CINTURANO: My question is for Dr. Tanenbaum. You mentioned before the danger of a collective narcissism, and then only a few minutes later, you repudiated the notion that Zionism is racism. My question, sir, is that, isn't Zionism an example of collective narcissism?



TANENBAUM: If you're prepared to deal with that as a serious proposition, I would react to it as a proposition. Liberation movements in Africa are all collective narcissisms.

CINTURANO: Can I ask it?

TANENBAUM: Sure. It's your nickel.

CINTURANO: As I understand it -- I'm not Jewish, but the core of Zionism is the definition of collective narcissism that you put forth: giving your own group all the human virtues. And I don't know if that's the core of all liberation movements.

TANENBAUM: Well, I don't know how much you have studied the history of the Zionist movement or the literature of the Zionist movement. My sense is you have read very little of it, and know very little about it, and I will be glad to send you some material about it. Let me just say that the Zionist movement, which began with the writings of Theodore [Herzl], who was a journalist in Vienna, who saw the impact of the [Dreyfuss] trial and the horrendous classic anti-Semitism that broke out all over France -- he was a correspondent there. He came to the decision that the future of the Jewish people who were vulnerable as victims, [as Dreyfuss were], could only be realized in a place of haven. And so that movement was organized for the sake of achieving liberation of Jews from prejudice and persecution and hatred, and set about to restore Jews in their ancient homeland of Palestine. Jews have prayed and worshipped in the

direction of Jerusalem and Palestine for nearly 4000 years. It is a movement of redeeming a people, and restoring a people to their homeland, of restoring a people to the soil, to a life of nature -- to become farmers again, which they were prohibited from doing in much of the Diaspora. We see that as the parent movement of most of the liberation movements that are taking place in much of the Third World today. It is analogous, almost to the core, with their ideology of the liberation of people from slavery and oppression.

EWESI: Time is getting short; we're close to the end. There are three people called to the microphone, and I think that will probably end the questions. And then I'm going to ask both Rabbi Tanenbaum and Reverend Jackson for any concluding comment they wish to make. At that microphone should be Mr. Michael Reese.

BESE: I am appalled at the rhetoric and the ideological smokescreen that has taken place by the speakers here tonight.

EWESI: All right, why don't you [tell us] how appalled you are in the context of a question.

BESE: One, I think, first of all, by a show of hands, from the Black community, I'd like to know, how many brothers and sisters in here support Louis Farrakhan?

HEVESI: Mr. Reese, please, we have dealt with some very heavy controversial issues frankly and candidly, [but we follow .....] is the only way to do it. Ask a question, please.

REESE: I'd like both you to respond to my statement, which is, if there is ever going to be an authentic relationship between Blacks and Jews, there has to be an ideological direction, as well as ideological clarity in how we are going to foster this type of relationship. Look at the nature of how we talk about oppression and how we've all been so oppressed. We understand that the nature of this oppression is due to the type of society we are living in. What type of active stands are we going to take together to rid this society, to transform this society, from the tactics that are oppressing us today? ----- ... you as a candidate and our relations with the Jewish community?

JACKSON: Well, nothing is preventing me from running for a third party, but I choose to build a coalition strong enough to defeat Reagan and his heritage. That's my [feeling]. And of course, I say respectfully that the challenge that we have before us tonight, [in this] pluralism, to take bits and pieces of broken relationships which will never be whole by definition, to take the best of what is within us and the worst of that which threatens us and coalesce around a common agenda. That's our choice, and it may be our only chance. The fact that even in the glorious Sixties, there was not this ideological marriage of [commonness] often referred to, there were tensions even then. But we simply



lose, in a scale of ten -- [say we] agreed on seven issues out of ten -- let's  
move on. We didn't focus on three and decide not to relate; we focused on the  
seven, which is the basis on any coalition. You focus, you maximize the pluses,  
minimize the minuses, and move on. And whether in a coalition between religious  
or ethnic groups, or a coalition or a partnership between husband and wife, if  
you choose, after X number of months, to focus on the areas of disagreement,  
you've got a divorce around the corner. If you choose to build on that which is  
even more giving, you will survive the tough times or difficult situations.  
Now, that is my view of coalition building, and I operate out of that frame of  
reference here today.

EVESI: Barry Friedman, to whom do you wish to address your question?

RIEDMAN: To the Reverend Jackson, please. Reverend, I am the President of the  
Jewish Activities Club here on campus, and we are attempting to establish a  
dialogue between the Black Student Union and our organization. The previous  
speaker, Mike Reese, is the President of the Black Student Union.

ACKSON: That's what makes Queens Queens.

RIEDMAN: And we do plan to meet in the future with them. We need your help.

The problem [is that] this is our campus, and unfortunately, none of the student  
leaders on campus were invited to this program. That statement aside, my second  
question, which has nothing to do with the first, is, what is your relationship  
with Yassir Arafat?

JACKSON: I don't have a relationship with him. I met him one time. That's the answer. I do not have a relationship with him. What I do know is in the Middle East, [our president promised to represent ..... security, and with a great bout of symbolism], this administration had all the right symbols and all the right rhetoric, but after seven years, there are more Israelis dead, more Arabs dead, more Americans dead, more Americans held hostage and more money spent, more chaos and less chance of peace. So the [purpose] of these symbols have been diversionary. My [way of thinking], having been [born under apartheid] in this country, our challenge is to work out relationships with our enemies, because, [while we may have it with our friends], you cannot get peace with an agreement with your friends. It's the enemies that must be neutralized or converted or otherwise a co-existence worked out with. And I say this about [Arafat], because it's another one of those charged issues. When [Reverend Lowry, Congressman Falljoy], a number of our leaders, who are trustworthy people, met with Arafat, [in .....] we said to him, "We support that you support Israel's right to exist with security, within the nationally recognized boundaries, and that your focus ought to be on a mutual recognition pact for mutual survival." We didn't take to him any money or [a gun]. We took to him a challenge for a mutual recognition thrust. That ought to be respected and not condemned. That's good judgment. That's the right thing to do. And so that's the nature of that relationship. We met once.

Now, as for you and Brother Reese -- where's Brother Reese at? Get up,

Michael.

FRIEDMAN: Can Brother Reese come stand next to me, please?

JACKSON: Brother Reese, come on out here! Come on down, Brother Reese, and

I'll get this thing going. Rabbi Tanenbaum and I, we can argue, but we're too

old to fight. Wait a minute, now; [let me ..... bring .....] back home

and then getting you all together. I feel [good about this]. See, now, that

wasn't hard!

Now, I want to tell you this real good, and it's very important. Please

hear this, friends. If the two of you want to develop a relationship, you will.

Now, I recommend that as you break down this barrier, have a little common

sense, to not put Kahane and Farrakhan on top of the agenda. Have that much

common sense, because you won't go no further than that. There's a whole agenda

of items, you know, like [normal relationships] in Queens -- you all can agree

on that, can't you? You all can agree that [people shouldn't be] killed at

pizza parlors, is that right? You can check off on that. Both of you all agree

that we should free South Africa. You can check off on that. Both of you all

agree that we should maintain college scholarships and not replace them with

loans. You both agree on that, don't you? The point is, there are eight or ten

items -- serious items -- that you agree on. [That's the ..... of tension:] how

you view ideology, history, personalities, Kahane, Farrakhan. If the base is



laid on issues of solid, honest-to-goodness survival, you'll have the strength to survive the areas of tension. But if you start with tension first, you'll never get to areas you agree on. But the key to it all is that you've got to want to have a relationship together. You've got to want to do that, and out of that flows everything else.

HEVESI: Our last question, prior to the final questions of our speakers, is from Al Saunders.

SAUNDERS: This question is addressed to both of the speakers. In view of the tough times tht we face here [..... now], could you tell us how you would resolve the differences between Blacks and Jews on the question of jobs, laws, and affirmative action? And keeping in mind the [business space] of the Blacks and the Jewish people [.....].

TANENBAUM: I came to the microphone first because Christians don't have a monopoly on charity, [and Jesse needs a little ..... a lot of work tonight]. This is an issue, as Jesse has already indicated, where Jews and Blacks, and indeed, people of goodwill generally in American society, I think have a very important potential contribution to make. The problems of unemployment, the growing change in the economic infrastructure in America, the decline of manufacturing, the decline of low-entry blue collar jobs, has become an absolute disaster, especially for Black young people in America. The transformation of our society increasiny as cities into information centers and

service centers has made us into dual cities, where only either the very wealthy or the very poor can survive. And it will get worse unless there is a common strategy worked out on how to provide fundamental [employment] to meet the fundamental job needs of many young people, most of whom -- the rate of unemployment among young Blacks is double that of the general White society. The poverty rate of children in America has now become grotesque. We know the fundamental challenges that we have to face, and this is one of the basic [contributions] that I believe that the Reverend Jesse Jackson will help contribute to the United States, to the American people, through the Democratic party, and I want to see him get a hearing for this. I think of many candidates, Jesse Jackson has come forward recently with an economic strategy for America that at least begins to make sense in terms of the real needs of the society. In any case, let me say a rather complicated thing simply: the Jewish community of the United States, through its national Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, representing perhaps some 21 American Jewish groups, is fundamentally and firmly and unalterably committed to support of affirmative action for minority groups in this country. The false [conflict in some ways] that has developed over the issue of goals and timetables; the central question is, affirmative action is on the books, and a great many governmental agencies have not been implementing affirmative action. Had they been implementing that as they were required by law, with vigorous watching the way in which they moved

forward to provide these opportunities, we would not need discussions over quotas. And that, I think, Blacks and Jews, among others, can help try to bring about in our government.

Before I conclude, and before we all disappear for the evening, I don't want this evening to pass by without Jesse Jackson knowing from me personally -- and I think in behalf of many of us who are here in the Jewish community -- that we did not take for granted his act of moral courage and decency when he made a major point -- not a minor point -- of coming before Gorbachev in Geneva and presenting to him the cause of human rights of Soviet Jews and other peoples. That commitment, plus others, represents the kind of core issues about which we have much to talk. And I hope that Jesse and I, among many others, will have opportunities to talk about many issues, including the Middle East and also domestic issues about which we [have begun] talking this evening.

For me, this has been an extraordinary experience, and I want to thank the President of the school and Dean Schwarcz and Al Hevesi for having made it possible for Jesse Jackson and me to [have a talkfest that all of you were listening in on]. Thank you.

JACKSON: Let me make three observations. One to you, Rabbi Tanenbaum, another chance for me to share debate and dialogue, let me assure you that I respect you very much, very much. Number two: central to my [argument and] strategy in the face of areas of tension, and my resistance<sup>2</sup> to allowing any one or two



ings, or people, to destroy us and our feelings, I appreciate the comment  
out my confronting Gorbachev in Geneva, and I did. The Nazism -- the Neo-  
zism -- [in .....] some years ago, [and the ..... white press saying that  
wish people had .....], my wife and family stood in the pulpit of the  
mple with the rabbis, because we chose to, as I confronted Gorbachev because I  
ose to, and walked down the dusty roads of Alabama and Mississippi together,  
cause we chose to, [and look at] the history of struggle and bloodshed and  
fe risk is just too much investment to allow anything to blow it away.

Lastly, there's a lot of pain in Black American [life], and Jewish  
friends, you must hear this. And Black friends, and brothers and sisters, hear  
his if you will, because what's happened in the last six months [may bring] the  
hole affirmative action/quota issue into real focus, it may be this. If there  
ere a debate about how many Blacks or Jews had seats in this auditorium  
night, and we start using some system to determine who should have what seats,  
ere they should sit, that assumes you have an auditorium. But if the whole  
auditorium burns up, then it's a moot issue. And right now, the auditorium is  
der siege. Ten years ago, this issue of [Bakke was raging]; Blacks were  
ensitive, because we knew that we had freedom but we didn't have equality, and  
e could not ever [shake our caste], identification of color -- we couldn't do  
othing to get past our caste. Ten years later, my friends, ten years later --  
the University of Chicago] had five percent Black students in 1976; today it's

2.5 percent and dropping. 1300 faculty members; 11 Black. Harvard -- 97 Black freshmen last September, down 30 percent in ten years. Princeton -- 1600 graduate students; 22 were Black. 645 faculty members; 7 Black. University of Michigan, 7.7 percent Blacks in 1976; 5.0 today. 2200 faculty members; 63 Blacks on a tenured track. So this whole cutback, the impact of [that] on us, has been to free up the nation of any conscious obligation to recruit, admit, train, hire and develop. So we have lost in these last ten years in a major way. But if that wasn't correct, Reagan's budget cut now of \$5 billion out of the \$19 billion educational budget -- that threatens those who are [..... on the game]. So now the struggle for Blacks and Jews must be [to .....] an education budget that's large enough to accommodate Blacks and Jews who want an education. [They're not gonna get enough of what ain't .....]. We need enough for everybody!

HEVESI: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to tell you that I'm very proud to be part of this program. I'm proud of you for being here, I'm proud of Queens College. I think the definition of decency is [a militant] opposition to bigotry. If the Rabbi and the Reverend and the two outspoken students can shake hands and agree to disagree, and agree to work together, we all can, and I believe -- wearing an academic hat, not a politician's hat -- that if these two communities can reform a coalition, politically and in every phase of life, both

communities will be able to say, for as long as that coalition lasts, "Never  
again." Thank you very much.

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