

VT-885 Transcription

Marc H. Tanenbaum and Jesse Jackson discussion of Black-Jewish relations: Part I. 11 March 1987.

Speaker:

Good evening [00:01:00] ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Queens Black-Jewish People to People Projects, 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 world of peace by establishing a series of forums in which combinations of churches and synagogues, members of civic organizations, and representatives [00:02:00] 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 the events take place at the community level. Still, we have (inaudible) a new large-scale project to speak out, not only through the neighborhoods of

Queens, but far beyond it as well. [00:03:00] Religious leader as political activist, 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 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 our Dr. George Priestley, professor of political science and director of the Latin American area studies program in the college to introduce our president, Shirley Strum Kenny.

**George Priestley:**

[00:04:00] Good evening, ladies, gentlemen, friends. The committee has asked me to introduce our president, Shirley Strum Kenny. President Kenny is in her second year at the college, building on what is clearly one of the best and [deepest?] faculty in the nation. She has charted a new direction for the college and in the process of setting up the mechanism for curriculum development, recruitment, and other processes at the college. On this occasion, it is particularly positive -- on this occasion, it is particularly appropriate for me to pronounce -- on this occasion, it is particularly appropriate to note her positive pronouncement of affirmation and commitment to major changes [00:05:00] on the college, especially in view of a multiracial and multiethnic community. Tonight's occasion is

also a testimonial to the president's and the college's interest in providing a proper context toward the discourse of race and ethnic relations, the elusive American dilemma. With you, President Kenny.

**Shirley Strum Kenny:**

Thank you. 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 problems that affect all of us. I grew up Jewish in Tyler, Texas. I grew up aware of the prejudices that Jews experience and those that blacks experience. [00:06:00] 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 become. We are two peoples who have said, "Never again." We have said, "We shall overcome." We have suffered measurably 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 energy on hatred within the league of the persecuted is to squander energies that must be put [00:07:00] 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 (inaudible) that Queens College has the great privilege of hosting a forum in which we can listen, we can learn, in which the spark of others' 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. [00:08:00]

**Speaker:**

Thank you, President Kenny. I have much pleasure in calling on Professor [Alan Hathru?] who will introduce Mrs. Brenda White, a member of the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York.

**Alan Hathru:**

On behalf of the Black-Jewish People to People committee, it gives me great honor and pleasure to introduce the Honorable Brenda Farrow White. The Honorable Brenda White is a member of the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York -- [two?] black members, (inaudible) [00:08:55]. She is a graduate of [00:09:00] Wellesley College and the University of California

Law School. Mrs. White is a practicing attorney with the Brooklyn-based law firm of [Simpson and Devinsky?]. Without further ado, I introduce the Honorable Brenda White.

**Brenda White:**

President Kenny, Reverend Jackson, Rabbi Tanenbaum, honored guests, friends. On behalf of the Board of Trustees of City University of New York, I bring you greetings. City University is the largest urban university in the nation with 20 campuses, including the law school and the medical school. Our student population numbers over 180,000. And I must say the most -- the largest black, Hispanic, Jewish, and Italian American student population of any university in the [00:10:00] United States. We at City University are concerned about -- indeed we have made it our priority -- quality in the academy. That quality, in the words of our chancellor, Joseph Murphy, stems from what he calls a willingness to attack a status quo. To think, to write, to speak critically about power (inaudible), and power (inaudible). This forum tonight gives us just that opportunity. Sitting on this platform are two nationally recognized religious leaders, one black and one Jewish. Their roles have expanded from the realm of religion to the arena of politics. As political activists, they are both outstanding leaders in human relations in America. Their views and ideas are critical to the ongoing

dialogue between the black and Jewish communities. There are a number of legitimate approaches [00:11:00] 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 the (inaudible).

**Speaker:**

Ladies and gentlemen, at this stage, I would like to call on a true friend, a dear colleague. He is 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, (inaudible) [00:12:00], and I'm glad to express to him a heartfelt thanks for his support in making this project possible. Ladies and gentlemen, I have much pleasure in presenting you Professor Alan Hevesi who will be the moderator of this evening's forum.

**Alan Hevesi:**

Thank you very much, and ladies and gentlemen, welcome. This is a special evening. And I think it's going to have a very particular meaning for everyone here, and maybe for lots of people who are not here. I want to personally thank Queens

College; President Kenny, who is an outstanding leader; [Dean Ernie Schwartz?], 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 People to People -- [00:13:00] 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've organized that is we have requested that anyone who has any interest in asking a question to please fill out the little white 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 name, which will make a half a dozen of you happy and the rest of you very angry that you didn't get an opportunity. Let me tell you something very briefly about this project. [00:14:00] It really had its genesis, if I may, in a meeting in a private home right outside of Fitzgerald Gymnasium here at the college. The home of [Bill Schnerer?], 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 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 community. And out of the meeting came a suggestion, partly my idea and partly the idea of a very good friend of mine, a former senator, at the time a senator, later a congressman for a short period of time, still a distinguished community leader, [Al Holden?]. And by the way, Al is over here; we might as well recognize him. I've taken the liberty of introducing [00:15:00] Al Holden with the proviso that I'm not going to introduce anybody else as prominent. There are many prominent people here, primarily for the reason that I would forget an extensive portion of them, and I'm in enough trouble already. But Al was an initiator of this project. When we decided that we would pair off (inaudible) [Edison?], later congressman Floyd [Flight?] and congressman Gary [Abbey?], assemblywoman [Betty Meyerson?] 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 other, the representatives of the other group. And we've been doing that with some consistency,

it's not an all over Queens idea, assemblyman Daniel Feldman, for example, invited assemblyman [Aldan?] to an Orthodox synagogue in Brooklyn, and the process is extending [00:16:00] 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 community, not leaders -- leaders can meet all the time -- but communities together to 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 the hostility that does exist unfortunately, and it exists too much in this city. If we don't deal with it, it's going to overwhelm us. The purpose is to have people together who identify their mutual needs. To have Jewish people understand what the black experience has been, slavery, discrimination, oppression, lynching, and apartheid [00:17:00]. Because we have 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 the Jewish communities have allowed some measure of freedom and prosperity, in almost every case it never lasted. And the 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 the kind of experiences that all of us have to feel. And we felt the best way to feel them is to have people together, mixing, understanding, recognizing that they have much more in common than we have in disagreement, even though we're going to disagree on some issues. [00:18:00] And 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 get angry, a bigot can hate, it answers all questions, no thought, no caring, no need for reconciliation, no need to deal with complexity. It's easy to be a bigot. It is tougher to fight bigots, 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, to form a coalition of two people with a long history of being victims. So that's our purpose, to declare

war on bigotry. And to do that, you can go out in a preliminary step [00:19:00] on what I think will be a long-term project here at Queens College as well as 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, there'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 own heart, because my father worked with them for 25 years. *Newsweek* described him as the American Jewish community's foremost apostle to the Gentiles, soliciting support from all factions of the Jewish Community. He was the only Rabbi at the Vatican Council II, and a consultant at that extraordinary change of policy of the Catholic Church toward the Jewish community. He's Chairman of the New York Board of Rabbis and Jewish-Christian Relations Committee. He [00:20:00] organized numerous institutes and seminars and congresses. He's done social work at the relief effort to provide relief resulting from the -- for the victims of the Nigerian and the African conflict. He is the co-founder of the Inter-Religious [Colloquium?] 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 tremendous number of monographs, articles, and books, the most distinguished leader of our community, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

**Marc Tanenbaum:**

President Kenny, I'm a longtime colleague [00:21:00] whom I knew before when as Jesse Jackson, (inaudible) 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 suggesting an experience in a Baptist churches where I spend a good deal of time with my Baptist friends, but, it looks like Yom Kippur, an overflow service tonight. I want to [00:22:00] begin at the outset and pay tribute to the respect for scholarship, Biblical scholarship that's implicit in the way in which this evening has been organized. There is a wonderful story told during Vatican Council II, when I was present while the Vatican was facing up for the first time in some 1,900 years, what has been the relationship of the Catholic church to the Jewish people, and what had to be faced, what had to be repented from, what had to be changed. During the course of the council, someone told me a

story. The late blessed Pope John XXIII, whose inspiration this was to organize Vatican Council II, which literally changed the course [00:23:00] of the history of the Catholic Church for the past 1,900 years. Before he was elevated to the papacy, he served as the apostolic delegate in the Balkans in Istanbul. And then after that he was brought to France, where he there served as the apostolic delegate to the French government, representing the Pope in France. And as the story has it, Monsignor Roncalli, 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 Roncalli and Chief Rabbi Kaplan had been invited by the government of France to a banquet. The government (inaudible). They came together in this large reception hall and they were chatting, making [00:24:00] 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 through the door for entering into the banquet, and Monsignor Roncalli was at his side holding his elbow and the Chief Rabbi turned to Monsignor Roncalli and said, "Your Excellency, after you; you first." And Monsignor Roncalli, who was very fond of the Rabbi, directly said, "No, your Excellency, Chief Rabbi, you first." And this went on for like five minutes back and forth, Alphonse and Gaston routine; meanwhile they're

holding up traffic, nobody could move through the door. Finally, Pope John, then Monsignor Roncalli, in his characteristic, Italian, earthy, peasant way, grabbed hold [00:25:00] of the arm of Chief Rabbi Kaplan, eventually shoved 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, and after he has in his powerful charismatic, mesmerizing way, taken over his audience, and I would feel like a schlemiel after that (inaudible), take hold of what was left over of the audience. But I guess as an act of pure academic scholarship, the Old Testament or the Hebrew Scriptures before the New Testament. Let Jesse do all the work. The invitation extended to me by the honorable Alan Hevesi, assistant majority leader of the New York State Assembly, and professor of political science of Queens College, and Dean (inaudible), we have wonderful memories of association with his late blessed father who served the American Jewish Committee with distinction. The invitation from (inaudible) from Professor [Ernie Schwartz?], Dean of [Jewish Studies?] 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 role and 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 [00:27:00] by the communities. In the context of a profound, common concern for the welfare of our beloved American democratic republic. Let me 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. One might 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 position 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 [00:28:00] ethnic group in our democratic society. Why are we here this evening? Why is there such an impressive turnout of people in this community coming together tonight at Queens College? This is not an easy evening, neither for 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 [00:29:00] 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. 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 -- we must not forget -- as they have done for much of their history during the past 25 years. I ask why are we here tonight. And I'm going to try to answer that question out of my reflections and life experiences during the past quarter century or more. [00:30:00] 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 [00:31:00] incredible oppression and poverty, among other [dealings?], 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 problems of war refugees, world hunger and international human rights. There are about some 12 million refugees in the world today, some 6 million of them in Africa. The largest refugee problem in

the world. Most of them living in desperate conditions. The serious fact is, that most of these refugee tragedies to which I have been exposed or been involved are the result of religious, racial, ethnic and tribal conflicts. In the Sudan several years [00:32:00] 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 Sinhalese 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 was Israel [00:33:00] is to world Jewry, the model of (inaudible) in the Middle East as they might have been, is now a daily abattoir. 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 on New Year's to South Africa. We met with a great many representatives from every segment of that blighted society where Archbishop Tutu, black union leaders, the (inaudible) Society, the leaders of the government, business, and the Jewish community. [00:34:00] 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 which is a Western country. 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. And some fundamentalist Christians believe to this day, preaching the obscenity that the Nazi Holocaust was God's ultimate punishment on the Jews for having collectively killed Christ. But apartheid [00:35:00] is another such religious lie. In the 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; the forbear 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, watched dozens and dozens of young Afrikaans leaping out of their (inaudible) armored troop carriers there in Soweto, shooting black youths and widows.

These young Afrikaans, fresh off the farms, their heads filled with their church blessings, had been raised in a [00:36:00] 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 psychologist Dr. Erich Fromm, in his monumental last work *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, calls such behavior "group narcissism." As in the dynamics of individual narcissism, a group attributes to itself all virtue, and it consigns to the out group, all vice, everything (inaudible). 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 calls such group conflict psychopathic behavior [00:37:00] that is responsible for much of the group oppression, terrorism and violence that pockmarks the world today. The cost in human lives that the human faculty is paying for religious and racial hatreds all over the world is staggering, beyond human comprehension. In a nuclear missile age, such psychopathology when out of control could conceivably, God forbid, trigger off 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, [00:38:00] democratic, moral society. The

true genius of America rests not on sending out 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 sufferers. Each group -- each group, religious, racial, ethnic -- has its own agenda, appropriately, its own deeply felt priorities, and has a right to receive a fair and sympathetic hearing as a share in the current (inaudible). While advocating its own agenda, at the same time each of us has a simultaneously collateral, overarching obligation to serve [00:39:00] 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 this compact can become. That compact needs to be continuously nurtured by the intense commitment to civility and mutual respect. That does not prevent nor preclude constructive criticism of each other's positions, or [hope in?] different 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 ground, into dust. My friends, America is the only nation on earth [00:40:00] that has not been despoiled by religious war. We have not had 30-year wars, we have not had 100-year wars over religious character as one time 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.

(break in audio)

...person's natural demagogues and of such moral courage and integrity his credibility is (inaudible). At their height and at their most productive, black-Jewish [00:41:00] relations in the 1960s and the 1970s were a paradigm of democratic moralism at its best. The essential reason for that's extraordinary. Indeed, historic cooperation was well formulated by our colleague [Al Horseman?], 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 -- that Dr. Martin Luther King was challenging the 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 [00:42:00] that was then meeting in Atlantic City of the Central Conference 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 they went off to try to integrate a lunch counter in the face of incredible hatred, contempt, anti-Semitic and racist (inaudible). All of them, Martin King and all around him, and the 16 rabbis were all forced by electric cattle prods into a cell in the prisons of St. Augustine. [00:43:00] A number of them had their lives threatened. Why did these rabbis engage in acts of civil disobedience? Why were they that prepared to go to jail? Almost spontaneously, at once? (inaudible) follows. He said the answer is simple. Martin Luther King, Jr. No other person could have evoked such an instantaneous and unfettered response from us. With Dr. King there were implicit trust, a profound bond of 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 was not too bad either. [00:44:00] (inaudible), 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 wear?]. Anti-Semitism and anti-Catholic prejudice, like racial bigotry, were anathema. His goal was not only justice for Americas blacks, but human rights for all peoples

and peace everywhere. And then Horseman adds, if as I believe, [00:45:00] Meir 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 a black community. Black-Jewish relations are bigger than Louis Farrakhan or Meir Kahane. And -- and we still have much in common that transcends our demagogues and our frictions. Dr. Hayden 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 has begun to erupt again against young black students [00:46:00] on college campuses. Read what is happening in the farm belt of America where the Aryan Brotherhood, the Christian Identity movement and the Posse Comitatus, 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 true 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 farm belt. They have not gone away. They're always beneath the surface. We have a shared history of oppression. That gives us a shared vision on a compassionate and open society. And, my friends, we need each other. I spoke today to our Washington [00:47:00] representative, [Bob 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 the Jews, and he said no two other groups of the United States Congress vote together as consistently with their respectful agendas as the Jews and black congressmen in the United States Congress. And they are advancing a common agenda protecting before 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 [00:48:00] housing, drugs, crime, violence, resisting together the violations of the separation of church and state which continue to mount from left to right, week after week. Together working for the security of state of Israel, speaking after Soviet Jews and others denying their human rights, opposing together apartheid in South Africa and racism at home. Despite the irritations 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.

[00:49:00] 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 aberrations and the deviations of 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 peoples of our nation, and above all for what will be of this great American democratic society which we love. [00:50:00]

Thank you.

**Alan Hevesi:**

Thank you very much, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum. As I was listening to you, Rabbi, you touched a nerve, a 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 1960s. I was a student at Queens College at the time, and as you spoke, three names popped into my head. Names that we should not forget, and some of us who work at [00:51:00] the college should remember, Cheney, Schwerner, and Goodman. Three young people in the flush of their commitment to principle and idealism, two of them Jewish and one of them black, who went south to fight in the Civil Rights Movement nonviolently, and were murdered in the South because of their commitment. [Maybe

that's?] what we should focus on, that kind of renewal. It's very (inaudible) to tell people to make that kind of sacrifice. Ladies and gentlemen, it is 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 [00:52:00] Operation PUSH: People United to Serve Humanity. I remember reading about it then. What struck me 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. This gentleman later organized a push for excellence in educational program. He has been the 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 1986 election. As a politician, I note that he received three and a half million votes in the primaries, 22% of the vote in the Democratic primary. He won four states and Washington, DC. He is a renowned orator, [00:53:00] thinker, philosopher, community leader, not without controversy, but certainly one of the great leaders in America today. Ladies and gentlemen, the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

**Jesse Jackson:**

(inaudible), Schwartz, Rabbi Tanenbaum, friends gathered on this historic occasion tonight. (inaudible), me of course I want to be here, it's the place to be. It's a critical mass. Relations in this nation will have across America and the world. I speak for myself; the views perhaps represent the most memorable [and great?] coalition friends [beyond it?]. I want to thank Queens College for its sponsorship of this important evening and for your gracious hospitality. Especially to you, Alan Hevesi, far longer -- more than the developing the idea of black-Jewish dialogues, but your (inaudible) support, and most of all through your own personal leadership and integrity. You're a very necessary person. [00:55:00] This community is fortunate to have you in your district and the [simpler?] acts in the classroom. You asked me to end by speaking of the religious figure as a political leader. And this is 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 in 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 political leader, Moses spoke up to Pharaoh, told the

truth [00:56:00] to Pharaoh and braved his wrath, then led the Jewish people across the Red Sea on the way to the promised land. A religious leader, Moses spoke up to the same people when he came down from Mount Sinai, with the Ten Commandments, and found them worshipping the golden calf. And this is my tradition of religious leaders: to speak the truth, to stand up to the imperial authority when necessary, and to speak out to one's own congregation (inaudible), 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 [00:57:00] what they valued for themselves, they denied to others. Forbidding dissention, persecuting Quakers, (inaudible), to strict sectarian life. There were other things examples, too, of early religious figures preached and practiced tolerance and respect. The Baptist minister, Roger Williams, who founded the colony of Rhode Island on the principles of religious tolerance. The Quakers [who settled?] of Pennsylvania, fleeing persecution at home, offered sanctuary to others. And not coincidentally, (inaudible) to Native Americans. And remember who comes first [and too long in American polity?]. Religious figures stepped to the front line in leadership in the fight to abolish slavery. John Brown, Frederick Douglass, both deeply religious, used

their talents, public platforms, pulpits, [00:58:00] 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 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 free men alike, the religious leader was most often the political leader. The natural result of small cohesive communities with their own internal social structure, political -- and economic resources of 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, [00:59:00] and negotiator for the outside world. Who better to articulate the hopes and goals of this community? Who better in the tradition of Moses to speak out the civil authorities on behalf of the oppressed? Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum and I come to this meeting this week from our 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 charge in our freedom, knowing that it is brought to us by God's grace [01:00:00] and protected by constant human vigilance. Jews and blacks have traveled different journeys. We share a common history, the experience of oppression. Both our people have suffered from harsh and painful (inaudible). With blacks, that means slavery, legislated and enforced by government, 45 years which socialized and legalized discrimination, again, enforced by the agencies of our government. For Jews, the memories of the Holocaust. The horror of rulers gone mad. The (inaudible) 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. The (inaudible) a fresh and a lesson clear.

[01:01:00] Because we've suffered from (inaudible) attacks of bad government carried out in the name of the law, carried out by people even wearing a uniform of the law, because we have experienced a horrible governance for evil, we must be totally liberated from (inaudible) of government of recent history.

We'll make our message clear. When President Reagan announced his plans to travel to Bitburg and forgot the Second World War, I was shocked. Shocked that despite appeals of government officials and the public, he would be adamant and remain so insensitive to the feelings of those who had lived [01:02:00] through that history. In formulating my own response to this

trip, I spoke to people who were part of this on the Holocaust here and abroad. I spoke to [Henry Rezell?], the local lawyer, a local lawyer who certainly merits our greatest gratitude and congratulations, for the [long and well deserved?]. As well as US Dr. Paul [Park?] of Boston. The former state education superintendent in Massachusetts, and engineer, a veteran, an African American. Dr. Park, a distinguished African American, told me of his own personal experience as a soldier in the United States Army in 1945. As a member of the Corps of Engineers, he marched with the black battalion that was the first to enter Dachau. [01:03:00]. When those troops approached this death camp, which was so eerie 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, remaining Jewish prisoners who were huddled in fear. They heard 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 that. In [stunned?] disbelief and (inaudible) relief, they embraced.

They were (inaudible). Both were in shock. Both stood momentarily paralyzed on the cutting edge of mystery. Mutual fear and insecurity had been transformed into mutual security and rescue. Blacks got to the Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps first. These are stories that must be told, and felt, and [talked?]. It is a spirit of those moments of triumph that must be recaptured and nurtured and never let go. Written in those moments were messages not just for blacks and Jews, but for suffering and rejected everywhere. [01:05:00] But in our community, all the suffering and the survivors, the Hispanics, the Asians, the Arabs, Native Americans, Central Americans, and the people of the Caribbean. This true story about (inaudible) at Dachau is one of the most important lessons of our time. In the (inaudible) 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 that kept us apart. We must tear down the walls, open our eyes, smile through our tears, open our hearts to one another [01:06:00] to give or gain what we want. And so today, when we look at the situation here at home, we see examples of racial conflict. They're even more chilling because they involve the young in whom we have had, and 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 a prism of racism, we see natural allies kept apart. It's because our beliefs are stronger in that which we have in common that I come here tonight to talk about our common future, our cooperation for the common good. It's because our beliefs are stronger in the ability of people of good will to reason together, (inaudible) tonight to focus our sights not on the issues which we may differ, but on the large issues [01:07:00] on which we agree. It's because I believe so strongly on the need for us to work together, I want to speak to you tonight about the rifts that divide us. Yes, we have real problems and real concerns. No resident of Queens, of New York, no vocal citizen in this nation tonight, can deny that we have problems and conflicts between groups. And most of you are aware that some of these problems are exaggerated. Some of these problems have been exacerbated. Some of the so-called issues are better 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. The sociologists refer to this as blaming the victim. In reality, this is a political diversion and attempt to distract our [01:08:00] attention from the real problems for 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 (inaudible) who want to build an Aryan nation are full of hatred toward blacks and Jews. Direct communications in President Reagan's White House, who argues against the celebration of Dr. King's birthday, also [close off?] 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 the relationship between (inaudible). Why is that so much public attention is being focused on the relationship between blacks and Jews? Why is it always [01:09:00] our relationship that's being tested, monitored, critiqued, investigated? The day after the killing at Howard Beach, the media calls for investigation of Italian-black relations. With so few (inaudible) in Chicago (inaudible) Harold Washington, do we see newspaper articles about black-Irish, black-Croatian, black-Italian, black-German relations? Even the hardest friendship would be invaded by a constant laboratory testing, public monitoring, and investigation. We remain on the 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. [01:10:00] And finally, I speak about the third, particularly the most dangerous myth, that the positive relationship is over. Rifts 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 the Jewish members work closely together fighting economic opportunity for urban aid and for the end of apartheid in South Africa. On the floor of Congress and in the voting booth, Jews and blacks tend to vote very much alike. In 1984, despite the self-interested prediction of those who would divide us, both Jews and blacks voted for Walter Mondale and (inaudible) than any other two groups. Last month, at my home in the city of Chicago, where a great mayor, Harold Washington, is seeking [01:11:00] 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 (inaudible) to the values, social justice, civil rights, and human dignity. Those were 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 the time to say that to one another, and we've expressed our differences aloud, but still be friends with mutual respect. Friendship does not require formal speaking. Friends do not live in (inaudible). If we speak in terms of civility, if we frame the debate within the term of tolerance, if we stand with one another in the respect we hold for one another, [01:12:00] 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, as long as we remember that many more exist on which we agree. The bond between us has been forged over many years of common experiences og goals. Because we have arrived at the same time at this place in history does not mean we have not traveled a different path to reach this place. For sometimes our different experiences lead us to different conclusions, that does not invalidate the importance of our (inaudible). Blacks and Jews have very different reactions to the world of (inaudible). For blacks, a quota can be a door to opportunity. For 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 [01:13:00] for minorities and women to participate in every phase of American life. Even [rich America?] wants a different experience for blacks and for Jews. The Jews leaving Europe to come to America want to leave oppression and arrive in 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. Both of us will agree that political refugees

deserve the right to emigrate, and both of us will fight for these rights. Whether the person is Jacobo Timerman in the jail from Argentina, or [Amical Shiraz?] in the Soviet Union, or Nelson Mandela in South Africa, who believe that the government and the United States to speak up on behalf of those unjustly jailed, not (inaudible) with their jailers. That is why when I went to Geneva for the Peace Delegation of the United States and had the chance to speak with Premier Gorbachev, I raised the issue with him about Soviet Jews. That is why earlier this month, I met outside of (inaudible) with Koreans protesting the brutality of their own South Korean government. That's why so many of us, black and Jew, white and Hispanic, march together and were arrested together outside of the South African embassies across this country. On the human rights issue [01:15:00] 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 think (inaudible). You've come out tonight because you care, because we share. We have the choice not to be here. We chose to come because we care. My enemy is not within this room, but outside among those who try to stop communication and spread fear and distrust, set us against one another because we uphold 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 rate educational experience that this school made available [01:16:00]. Think about the dedicated teachers and people who teach here, like (inaudible). Think about how much education has contributed to the health of our nation and the strength of our society. For that, those who want to cut back education. The President's budget proposed to trim \$5 billion from the federal education budget, to narrow grants in favor of loans. For most of the [known?] classes that can be taught, are scholarships available, are textbooks that will be used. The enemy is not within this room, but outside among the people who talk about excess trying to cut back education. Look at the young people with us tonight. Think about our own hopes and goals when we were that age. Think of what they mean to us, to all of us as a society and nation. What sort of future can they expect [01:17:00] 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 will deny young people the chance for a better life. For (inaudible) the enemy is outside. When we understand that our ally is inside. When we get real strong on the inside and turn to each other and not on each other. We will know the site of our fight is not a piece of highway in Queens among the (inaudible). Even most of the road (inaudible), those extremes

that threaten and divide us all. The site of our fight is what Howard Beach (inaudible) converge. A black (inaudible). They closed our work without notice. A shipyard dumping goods made in slave labor South Africa (inaudible) undercut organized labor. A family farm. The farmers are (inaudible) from the land about mercy, Management of markets. A missile site. It's threatening the human race. These are tough times for us because we are under investigation. And I submit to you my friends, tonight, the blood and the religious ethics that bind us are stronger than the tensions that fray us. Thank you very much. [01:19:00]

HEVESI: Well, we were promised a special evening and I think we've been delivered a special evening. But it is not over.  
(break in audio)

HEVESI: I was asked to suggest that if you still have questions, there will be time for you to give them to the ushers, the problem is there's 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 of calling names, have you go to microphone number one the first name, the second name to microphone number two, then I'll keep calling names. This is at random. There are no prizes. [01:20:00] Ruth Bloom W33. Left side to this microphone please. Is it Earl Wellington Hasal, Jr., B39. Ruth Bloom. It's a big hall I

know you have to walk over to the microphone. Mr. Hasal, the lights are in our eyes, so please forgive me. Are you there, sir?

EARL WELLING HASAL, JR: Yes, I am.

HEVESI: All right, why don't you ask the first question. Ruth, why don't we go to the other mic. And you would please indicate to whom you are addressing your question.

HASAL: This question is addressed to Mr. -- Reverend Jesse Jackson. [01:21:00] (inaudible). I commended the fact that you ran for the presidency in the last election. In doing so you have a way of combining the minorities into a common cause, not just to get you elected as President of the United States, but combining us as a people to give us the power to vote. I found that highly commendable and I'd like to know, are you considering doing the same thing...

JACKSON: Yes. [01:22:00] Yes?

HEVESI: You'll have to put a (inaudible). Ruth Bloom.

RUTH BLOOM: Yes, yes sir, I'm here.

HEVESI: Is that Ruth Bloom?

BLOOM: Your Ruth Bloom.

HEVESI: I never even saw this lady before.

BLOOM: I'd like to address my question to the 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. [01:23:00] 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'm going 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 aligning 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 heard so many admonitions tonight about rejecting the bigots, not hearing them, finding them whether they're here or abroad. Many of us [01:24:00] have known that you have identified and not renounced your association with Farrakhan, whom we consider a (inaudible).

JACKSON: Let her finish the question, please.

BLOOM: 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 hadn'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: Well, you've asked a question that I think [01:25:00] is very fundamental and basic. You can tell from all of this response. In my democratic tradition, I reserve the right to disagree with 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 the distinction between rejecting 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 believe that it is a mistake for us to put, for emotional purposes, or political purposes, Farrakhan in the center of our relationship, or put a hand in the center of our relationship. Please. They fit in the spectrum but they're not in the center, they're not the litmus test of who we are and what our challenges are. At the Congressional Black Caucus, 23 members that [front our black heirs?], there are almost 6,000 black elected officials that [make your?] religious denominations. Cannot the sum total of these groups and their relationship have more weight than that individual in the spectrum of things? I think that my strategy and tactics is a mistake. And I also do not measure my relationship with Jewish people by any one, or any group of individuals [01:27:00] as a litmus

test for our relationship. I do not do that. You know, I hope that the audience will respond, because I hope that we can continue this rather sacred dialogue in a real atmosphere of civility because we're trying to root out anxieties and fears to free up two people to get together and salvage our relationship. This is a rather serious setting tonight. And if we get into scoring and sparring and these loud clapping (inaudible) monsters, [01:28:00] we may miss something precious, a chance to make a breakthrough. That was a good question.

HEVESI: Eileen Garcia. I neglected to call the names of the next people in line, so I'll try to make up for it. Eileen Garcia the one microphone and Gilbert Benjamin and after them, Walter Hoffman and Bernard Goldberg. Eileen Garcia? Not at the mic. And I would admonish those who are approaching the mic, please ask questions, we are all sophisticated enough to get our point of view into a question without having a big speech. To whom do you address your question?

EILEEN GARCIA: (inaudible)

HEVESI: Pardon?

GARCIA: Rabbi Tanenbaum.

HEVESI: Rabbi Tanenbaum.

GARCIA: Good evening, I, I didn't think I was going to get

picked.

TANENBAUM: I'm sorry, I missed that.

GARCIA: I'm sorry, but I obviously didn't think I was going to get picked, so...

TANENBAUM: You won the lottery.

GARCIA: My question was concerning the two religious leaders here, you and also Reverend Jesse Jackson and your relationship. My question is of my children. They're in school. And it needs to be begin with this unity as small children. And in the public school that my daughter goes to, during the holidays, the way they get across these holidays, they'll bring all their Hanukkah and teach all that from the Old Testament, but the Christian side of it is Santa Claus, or Passover and Easter is the rabbit instead of the resurrection of our Lord or Christmas the birth of the Christ. And I don't object to my daughter coming home and singing the songs of Hanukkah or the story of Mordecai and all that, I don't, not at all, [01:30:00] but I would like also the Jewish children to understand what really our Christian holidays really mean. It's not Santa Claus, it's not the Easter Bunny. And could something be done in the public schools so that if they allow the Jewish tradition to be taught, then why not the Christian? Or Muslims, a lot of them don't believe in either of those.

And they feel, you know, alienated there, too.

TANENBAUM: I'm beginning to feel that it might be easier for me to talk about Louis Farrakhan. I thought the real problem you have with the number of Christian parents have, with which I identify, is 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, and 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, (inaudible). It is possible to talk about religious holidays with various religious-cultural groups from a cultural perspective. But out of my own experience, I learned first of all about Hanukkah in the home of my parents and word of mouth from traditional Jews. And in my own religious school where I went regularly and on Sabbath services and holy days, [01:32:00] 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 and Hanukkah observances. There was something distorted and inappropriate about that. I think the real issue for us is, let's stop making the

public schools a dumping ground for everything that 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 [01:33:00] a copout 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 about that necessary approach to putting this back in some perspective.

GARCIA: Thank you.

HEVESI: Mr. Bill Benjamin? To whom do you address your question?

BILL BENJAMIN: Both to Reverend and to Mr. Jackson. (inaudible) coalitions (inaudible) in history, they would be able to collectively work together and balance [01:34:00] tension throughout the county, in the United States and in foreign lands. Rabbi, when (inaudible) moderation that existed in Congress when you're voting together and blacks and Jews stay in consistent stands and sustain (inaudible). Jesse Jackson, or Reverend Jackson, excuse me, (inaudible) you encountered a lot of difficulty in gaining Jewish support, especially in New York. The upcoming conferences is coming close, and I'd like to know what measures are you going to take in seeing that either a Jewish or black person will

eventually become the Chief Executive Officer of the United States.

HEVESI: We understand your question [01:35:00] you want the teacher (inaudible) black or a Jew (inaudible). Am I correct?

BENJAMIN: I guess so.

JACKSON: Convince me to do it. One would be to (inaudible) the other community's support. That's the way it went. If you run I'll support you, and if I run, you support me. That was a real set-up, buddy, thank you.

HEVESI: Walter Hoffman. Are on the mic there?

WALTER HOFFMAN: Yes. I like the comment from someone that she, on the persecution of the Jews in Budapest. I ask that, because my mother left at age 14, 1906, [01:36:00] and her best shipmates and (inaudible) and Jewish girls. And of course she became (inaudible) we're good Americans, (inaudible). And I know your family unfortunately was touched by this terrible thing there.

HEVESI: I'll tell you what, in the interest of time since I am not the featured speaker here, I'll discuss that with you as it's very personal to me, (inaudible) and suffered in the Holocaust, but I would like to restrict the questions to Rabbi Tanenbaum or Reverend Jesse Jackson.

\_: Thank you.

HEVESI: Mr. Goldberg? And would Fred [Sitzerano?] come to the microphone and Michael Reese. George Goldberg?

GEORGE GOLDBERG: Reverend Jackson. I had a few other questions [01:37:00], and one of them was asked a little while ago, but it was in reference to Farrakhan. Your explanation, to me, was not too clear on what (inaudible). The second one was, your association with the word "hymie."

JACKSON: Yes, sir. First of all, we went through a rather long close discussion of expressions about the term "hymie" which had no intent to do harm, but the man was hurt. (inaudible) by anybody who was really interested in dealing with and going beyond it, it would not serve any purpose to go back into that night. [01:38:00] Only the first -- it seems to me that what we really must decide tonight is very fundamental. To advance forward in the dialogue. If we want to go forward, we have enough trials before us and enough common threads 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 fundamental decision that we have to make. There's an ad out in the magazine in Milwaukee, it's all over the country, and it's the cover of Apple Computer advertising campaign. And (inaudible), [01:39:00] this is a picture of a, of a black face with white lips and big eyes and a [cut cigar?] and natural (inaudible). And it says

what Al Jolson did for movers the Apple does for computers. Now, this ad should campaign was put together by Mr. [Allen Rothchild?], president and CEO of the Omnicom Group. We can make -- we can let something like this become a civil case and further divide us, or we can come together and say that this is in bad taste and disgraces all of us. So maybe we can use this to divide us and we can come together fighting. It's our choice. In a matter of a few days, a very heavy congressional poll is going to come out about the Israeli-South African [01:40:00] connection and the (inaudible) very thorough. We can 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 why I picked this, even forgiveness must be equal opportunity if we move forward, you don't [disagree?] over this campaign in Philadelphia, Mississippi. It's not known because there's a big air base there or a big plant, it's where they found Schwerner, Goodman, and Cheney. His signal was so clear that the Klan (inaudible) 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 and lost that a little bit. But he didn't stop [01:41:00] until he got to Bitberg, and didn't

stop then when he vetoed sanctions on Johannesburg, and then he didn't stop when he made Rehnquist the Chief Justice who signed, who signed a document that Jews could...

(break in audio)

You got Rehnquist the Chief Supreme Court Justice and somebody (inaudible). I'm here because I want us to relate. I want to form a coalition and find our common threads. And therefore I choose to [major?] on that which unites us, and choose to try and get beyond things that divide us. But it really is our choice. [01:42:00]

TANENBAUM: I said in my talk, I've said it early on, before Jesse Jackson made a 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 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 wreath. And we had a meeting with Daddy King, Martin's father. We didn't ask for this, we just came to pay tribute to him and what he [01:44:00] and Martin meant to us. Clear, unequivocal, unambiguous, straightforward (inaudible) of friendship and solidarity on everything that meant something to us, and we were equally clear and unequivocal in our response to them. Let me start off by saying this stuff about Farrakhan makes me sick. Farrakhan talking about Judaism being a gutter religion. What would we be without Judaism? What would we be without your Bible, without Moses, without the Exodus? I hear Farrakhan talking about Israel destroying the world bringing the western Europeans down? Then he said to us, [01:45:00] let me tell you something. When we just got started with the Civil Rights Movement and Martin King wanted to organize the first meeting of the black movement in Atlanta, no hotel would open their doors to us. Only one hotel was open to us. That hotel was owned by a Jewish man. He was the first one to open the door to us. But then he said, you know, the FBI and the Internal Revenue Service were then put on us and tried to destroy us. And the Internal Revenue Service took over all of our books and try to prove that we were involved in fraud and embezzlement. Nobody would touch us.

Except two people, one who was an accountant [01:46:00] and a Jewish man, second was a lawyer, he was a Jewish man and (inaudible) out of jail. He said, we don't forget our friends. And we will not let anybody (inaudible). I said what Jesse just said to us, in terms of wanting to look at the larger picture and perspective, I think there is a mainstream, there is that history which is deep and profound, and we haven't even touched on that tonight. When I recall the National Conference on race and religion in January of 1963, which brought together 1,700 top religious leaders of America. Greeks, 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 [01:47:00] 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 gave a powerful speech side by side with Abraham Joshua Heschel. I know what that experience of trust, and non-equivocation, and the depth of commitment which allowed for no [even?] marginality. Now I simply have to say, I think that Jesse Jackson is an enormously gifted man. I think Jesse can make a fundamental historic contribution to the cause of social economic justice in

America. But I also have to say with all friendship and respect I think [01:48:00] you're fooling yourself if you think that the issue of Louis Farrakhan is marginal altogether (inaudible). And simply for this reason: Louis Farrakhan, when he comes to New York, 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 isolated marginalization. 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 (inaudible). And I've been 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 indeed he's right, and Jesse Jackson becomes president of the United States, somewhere along the way, there'll be a Jew after him and maybe, God willing, there will be a woman after that. [01:49:00]. But if you really want to turn the corner, if we really want to corner, I want Jesse to feel free to say to us, we're scared to death about Meir Kahane. That man's preaching racism, and death to Christians, and death to Arabs, and dropping out of Israel. They're scared to death of him. And I will say that 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

[annuity?] removed from the Knesset of Israel, which is (inaudible). But I want Jesse to be open for me to say to him, I've been scared to death. When I see a Louis Farrakhan filling Madison Square Garden and going around the country, not just vulgar street anti-Semitism, but the worst kind of almost Nazi bigotry which makes [01:50:00] demons of Jews. The synagogue of Satan, the gutter religion. That's not innocent at all, and when you tie that in with (inaudible), then we have ideological problems of a very profound nature. We have got to deal with that as almost a mythology. If the Vatican and the Catholic church, after 1,900 years of preaching that kind of stuff and impregnating the culture of western Christian civilization with that kind of imagery, that traditionalist church has the courage to face it, and say it is wrong, we reject it, we will not tolerate that being taught, preached about, by anyone, any place (inaudible) to be clear about. We have a right to ask that in appropriate ways, that we reject it with no ands, ifs, or buts.

JACKSON: Anti-Semitism and racism should be rejected with no ands if or buts. But as long as there is life, there is hope and a vision and we do what we can. I still have to. I'm not going to ask you to do anything about Kahane. You all have done it. Kahane is a Jew, Kahane is a human being,

Kahane is an elected official. He has a point of view that most Jews don't agree with in this country about Israel. And I accept it as what you say it is, unrepresentative of who you are. [01:52:00] Kahane does not scare me if it doesn't scare you. And when, during the course of my campaign Kahane wrote a letter to the US Secretary and threatened to lead a demonstration on my house on my wife and children and the (inaudible) said not to respond to it, that's serious. And some of his operatives, on the day my campaign open, they threatened to interrupt and to obstruct the opening, it had to be carried out, and 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. People had to guard my house and my wife and children, and yet I still [01:53:00] will not make Kahane a centerpiece on a serious dialogue. I know too many Jewish people whose spectrum is too broad, too great. Tonight in this room is the secretary, the (inaudible) USA, which has seven million members, Reverend Franklin Richardson (inaudible) and its president, Dr. [Jemison?]. The national AME Church, The AME Zion Church, Church of God of Christ. Been with three congressmen, all of them black. If groups of this magnitude and strength would begin to take questionable anti-Semitic positions, that would be a

great reason from where my experience is to feel  
(inaudible). But we must determine what's a representative  
trend [01:54:00] (inaudible). We have to make some guess in  
that. And just as you say trust you, you must trust me and  
trust is always risky. (inaudible) you don't make a friend  
a centerpiece of a relationship with less depth than  
breadth and almost nobody black. Almost nobody black  
believes that. Almost nobody black believes that. And you  
must trust that the (inaudible) intelligence of us  
determine what we consider to be a dangerous trend, or a  
non-dangerous trend. I said that sincerely (inaudible). We  
cannot be responsible for every expression, however  
strange, that arises in our community. And we will not --  
we will not tie [01:55:00] you down, you're blessed with  
outstanding Jewish names that are in the media represents a  
real serious threat to life, and men -- [01:55:09] and  
resources when we refuse to make that our centerpiece of  
our relationship with the Jewish community, which confuses  
the left, and I hope that we never will. I hope we never  
will.

HEVESI: We should have this as Frank Sitzzerano? At one  
microphone, is the mic, this microphone? Michael Reese and  
another and would Larry Freedman and Al Saunders go to the  
mic. Mr. Sitzzerano.

FRANK SITZERANO: My question is for Rabbi Tanenbaum. You mentioned before the danger of a [01:56:00] collective narcissism. And then only a few minutes later you repudiated the notion that Zionism is racism. My question sir, is then, that isn't, isn't Zionism an example of collective narcissism?

TANENBAUM: Well, if you're prepared to deal with it, it's a serious proposition, how would you react to this proposition? Liberation movements in Africa are all collective narcissisms.

SITZERANO: Are you asking?

TANENBAUM: Sure. Your nickel.

SITZERANO: The, as I understand it, I'm not Jewish, but the core of Zionism is the definition of collective narcissism [01:57:00] in everything that they put forth giving the (inaudible) the human virtues and I don't know if that's, it that's the core of all liberation movements, I think...

TANENBAUM: Well, I don't know how much you have studied the history of Zionism or the literature of Zion as a movement. My sense is you have read very little of it and know very little about it and I would be glad to send you some material about it. Let me just say that the Zionist movement which began with the writings of Theodor Herzl, who was a journalist in Vienna who saw the impact of a

Dreifus trial and the horrendous classic anti-Semitism broke out all over France, he was a correspondent there, came to the decision that the future of Jewish people who were vulnerable as victims as (inaudible), could only be realized [01:58:00] in the place of hatred. And so that movement was organized for the sake of achieving liberation of Jews from prejudice and persecution and hatred and separated out to restore Jews in their ancient homeland in Palestine. Jews have prayed and worshipped in the direction of Jerusalem and Palestine for nearly 4,000 years. It is a real movement of redeeming of people. Restoring people to their homeland, of restoring people to the soil, to a life of nature of becoming (inaudible) again as they were prohibited from doing in much of the (inaudible). We see that as the parent movement of most liberation movements that are any place in much of the third world of the day. It is analogous almost to the core with their ideology of the liberation of the people from slavery and oppression [01:59:00].

SITZERANO: I understand, sir. Thank you.

HEVESI: Time is getting short, we're close to the end and there are three people I've called to the microphone and I think that will probably end the questioning but then I'm going to ask if both Rabbi Tanenbaum and Reverend Jackson for any

concluding comments they wish to make. All right, that microphone should be Michael Reese.

MICHAEL REESE: Hi. I am appalled at the rhetoric and the ideological smoke screen that has taken place by the speakers here tonight.

HEVESI: All right why don't you finish how appalled you are in the context of a question.

REESE: One, I think [02:00:00] 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, we have dealt with some very heavy controversial issues frankly the candidate (inaudible).

REESE: Let's see.

HEVESI: Ask your question please.

REESE: I want both of you to respond to my statement. Which is, is there ever going to be an authentic relationship between blacks and Jews, there has to be an ideological direction as well as ideological clarity and have we are going to force this type of relationship. Look at the nature of how we talked about oppression and how we've all been so oppressed. Then we understand the nature of this "oppression" is [02:01:00] you choose. It's like the society we are living in. What type of active stance are we going to take together to bring this society to transform

this society, brother? The tactics that oppressing us  
today. Secondly...

HEVESI: Both speakers now understand. What would you like to  
respond?

REESE: I have, I have one more question.

[02:01:33]

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