Earl Raab

AMERICAN BLACKS AND ISRAEL

The evolution of American black attitudes towards Israel has a political importance in itself. But it also provides some key insight into the general currents of thought that might threaten American support of Israel. And it provides a special insight into the relationship between anti-semitism and anti-Israelism.

Before 1967

The 1967 war in the Middle East was a watershed for American black attitudes towards Israel, as it was for so many other contemporary developments affecting the Jews. However, as in the other cases, there were prior factors as well.

Before 1967, there was not much expressed black interest in Israel, and what there was tended to be favorable. Before the establishment of the state, the Zionist movement was regarded sympathetically by leading American black leaders, out of their own impulses towards self-determination. W.E.B. DuBois wrote in 1919 that "the African movement means to us what the Zionist movement must mean to the Jews." (1) In 1941 he wrote that Palestine was "the only refuge that the harassed Jewry had today." (2)

During Israel's War of Independence, according to Menachem Begin, Dr. Ralph Bunche told him, "I can understand you. I am also a member of a persecuted minority." (3) With some reservations about the "self-segregated" nature of Israel, as expressed by Walter White of the NAACP, the relatively few comments of black leadership were generally favorable towards the establishment of the state.

During the following fifteen years or so, American blacks were understandably preoccupied with their own struggle for freedom. For the most part, the black press was mute about the 1956 war in the Middle East, and there was very little treatment of Israel, critical or otherwise.

The Development of "Third World" Ideology

An explicit "Third World" ideology began to significantly emerge among American blacks during the so-called Black Revolution of the early 1960s. The decade of the "Civil Rights Revolution" was coming to a close. It had begun with the Supreme Court decision outlawing school segregation; with the establishment of anti-discrimination laws and agencies in most Northern and Western states; with the organized protests in the South. And the hallmark national civil rights legislation was about to come o fruition.

But black consciousness was now at the boil. The centuries-old resentment was now fully out of the closet and at high pitch. The centuries-old degradation was now unbearable. The civil rights revolution did not seem now like a revolution at all, but, at best, the setting of the stage for generations-long rehabilitation. There was no mood among blacks for such generational patience. The mood was for immediate reparations, immediate dignity and "black pride." This mood was, of course, most intense among young blacks, who were beginning to attend colleges in something like their proportion in the population, about a quarter of a million by 1964.

During this period of radicalization, the intellectual thread of "Third World" ideology emerged. At its core this ideology held that the racially oppressed people of the world -- black, brown and red -- had been colonized by white European and American imperialists; the black struggle in America was only part of that global Third World struggle; the remedy was to bring down the imperial powers, beginning with the United States.

This was, of course, an old line among ideological radicals. In the 1950s, Richard Wright wrote of the impending revolution of "Asians and Africans in the New and Old Worlds," upon whom "White Christian civilization" had hurled itself. But it was not until the Black Revolution of the early 1960s that Third World ideology became standard fare for black intellectuals. It was a rare young black leader on the university campus who did not read or know about Frantz Fanon's seminal book subtitled "The Handbook for the Black Revolution That is Changing the Shape of the World." (4) He wrote that the "Third World today faces Europe like a colossal mass ..." (5) The Third World included American blacks; Europe included America.

"The poets of negritude will not stop at the limits of the continent," wrote Fanon. "From America, black voices will take up the hymn with fuller unison. The 'black world' will see the light and Busia from Ghana, Birago Diop from Senegal. Hampate Ba from the Soudan, and Saint-Clair Drake from Chicago will not hesitate to assert the existence of common ties and a motive power that is identical." (6)

Israel was not a notable target of Third World ideology in its earlier years. But the stage was set with the passing addition of the Arab nations to the Third World roster. Although he found some fault with local Arab nationalism, Fanon noted that "the majority of Arab territories have been under colonial domination ... Today in the political sphere the Arab League is giving palpable form to (the) will to take up again the heritage of the past and bring it to culmination." (7)

In the shadow of the war against Nazism, it was still not comfortable for the radicalized movements to attack Israel -- or the Jews generally. However, the cracks

in this reticence began to appear in the early 1960s, starting with some negative
ideological linkage between American Jews and the plight of American blacks. The
breakdown of this reticence paved the way for ideological anti-Israelism.

The Reshaping of Black Anti-Semitism

There was not much attention to any phenomenon of black anti-semitism in the
U.S. before the 1950s.. For one thing, the larger field of anti-semitism was too over-
whelming. In the 1930s, indeed, the vaunted "Grand Political Coalition" was forged
behind Franklin D. Roosevelt, and included at its most liberal edge the nationally
organized elements of te labor movement, the blacks and the Jews. It was this liberal
coalition which stayed together during the 1950s to spearhead the "civil rights revo-
lution."

But as the blacks became more politicized. and as the black intellectuals became
more radicalized, traditional patterns of daily-life conflict between the Jews and
the blacks were made more explicit. often in retrospect.

James Baldwin, a social democrat who inveighed against anti-semitism. wrote:
"When we were growing up in Harlem, our demoralizing series of landlords were Jewish
and we hated them. We hated them because they were terrible landlords that did not
take care of the building ... Our parents were lashed down to futureless jobs in
order to pay the outrageous rent, and we knew that the landlord treated us this way
because we were colored and he knew that we could not move out. The grocer was a
Jew and being in debt to him was very much like being in debt to the company store.
The butcher was a Jew and, yes, we certainly paid more for bad cuts of meat than
other New York citizens and we often carried insults home along with the meat. We
bought our clothes from a Jew and sometimes our second-hand shoes and the pawnbroker
was a Jew -- perhaps we hated him most of all." (8)

There was nothing new about this litany of complaints which referred to the
well-publicized periods when Jews moved out of the urban ghetto areas just ahead
of the blacks, retaining the ownership of most of the buildings and shops in those
areas. Kenneth Clark, another black opponent of anti-semitism. wrote in 1946: "The
antagonism towards the Jewish landlord is so common as to have become almost an integral
aspect of the folk culture of the northern urban Negro ... and all his obvious ills
are attributed to the greed and avarice of the Jewish landlord." (9)

Those negative black attitudes towards Jews showed up on the various surveys
and typically in the landmark survey done by the University of California Survey
Research Center in 1964. This survey found that blacks were significantly more likely
than whites to accept economic stereotypes about Jews. For example:

	(percentage accepting)	
	Whites	Blacks
Jews use shady practices to get ahead.	40	58
Jews are shrewd and tricky in business.	34	46
Jews are as honest as other businessmen.	35	27 (10)

Summarizing the results, the authors found no significant difference in "non-economic anti-semitism" between whites and blacks, but found that 54 per cent of the blacks ranked "high" on a scale of economic anti-semitism, as against 32 per cent of the whites. While the level of anti-semitism, as measured by this kind of economic stereotype, drops heavily for both groups as their educational level rises, nevertheless blacks continued to be higher on economic anti-semitism than whites at their same educational level. (11)

However, these measures of black anti-semitism, based on daily-life ghetto experience, became pertinent to black anti-Israelism only when they began to take on, or were used by the ideological attack which later characterized Third Worldism. Before that, they were rather taken for granted as the result of a conflict which would wither away as the Jewish ghetto landlords and shopkeepers and their memories would disappear.

But James Baldwin himself noted the symbolic ingredient in that earlier economic anti-semitism, when he titled his 1967 article "Negroes Are Anti-Semitic Because They Are Anti-White." The use of the Jew as a stand-in for the white as the target of black anger became more common. It was in the course of this development that anti-semitism came significantly out of the closet in the U.S. after World War II.

It was probably not until the summer riots of 1964 that the issue of black anti-semitism came to general attention. Cries of "Let's get the Jews" were reported by the press. According to one report, 80 per cent of the furniture stores, 60 per cent of the food markets and 54 per cent of the liquor stores burned and looted in the Watts riots were owned by Jews. (12)

That was the old daily-life conflict, but in the hands of new black ideological activists, anti-semitism was again becoming a permissible expression in America. And there was a new kind of economic conflict as the black middle class began to grow. In the bitter Brooklyn fight, emerging black teachers and established Jewish teachers were at swordpoint and a nasty anti-semitism developed. In 1969, a Jewish viewpoint was expressed about the dangers of this kind of emergent ideological anti-semitism among blacks:

"This is not the anti-semitism which the black population shares with the white population. It is, rather, the abstract and symbolic anti-semitism which Jews

instinctively find more chilling. Negroes trying to reassure Jewish audiences repeat-
edly and unwittingly make the very point they are trying to refute. 'This is not
anti-semitism.' they say. 'The hostility is toward the whites. When they say Jew,
they mean white.' But that is an exact and acute description of political anti-semitism.
'The enemy' becomes 'the Jew'. 'the man' becomes 'the Jew' ... But the ideology of
political anti-semitism has precisely always been poetic excess, which has not prevented
it from becoming murderous ... Then, too, 'Third World' anti-semitism is becoming
more of a staple, at least among the ideologues where it counts most." (13)

And it was the juncture of this "symbolic anti-semitism" and Third World ideology.
the restraints against expressive anti-semitism having been loosened, that presaged
the strain of black anti-Israelism in America. It was in 1964 that Malcolm X, the
black nationalist leader, formerly of the Black Muslim movement, said:

"These (Jewish) people conduct their businesses in Harlem, but live in other
parts of the city. They enjoy good housing. Their children attend good schools and
go to colleges. This the Negroes know and resent. These businessmen are seen by the
Negroes in Harlem as colonialists, just as the people of Africa and Asia viewed the
British, the French and other businessmen before they achieved their independence."
(14)

As a matter of fact, Malcolm X was one of the first to put all the Third World
pieces together, including anti-Israelism. He expressed his anger at "the Jews who
with the help of Christians in America and Europe drove our Muslim brothers (i.e.,
the Arabs) out of their homeland where they had been settled for centuries, and took
over the land for themselves." (15) Malcolm X also pointed out that the aid sent
to Israel to support its aggression against the Third World was taken from the pockets
of American blacks.

After the 1967 War: Full-Fledged Third World Ideology

But it was the 1967 war which gave momentum to the full scope of Third World
ideology. After all, it was only after 1967 that Israel could be fully cast in the
role of "colonializing" power. There had been some previous murmurs of approval for
Nasser in Third World circles, as in Malcolm X: and some generalized sympathy for
Arab attempts to decolonialize themselves, as in Frantz Fanon -- but by and large
these were circles that would have been uneasy with too vigorous support of some
of the old feudal Arab regimes. However, the Palestinian Arabs were another matter.
They and their cause were quickly gathered into the Third World conceptual fold.
And, for the first time, Israel was clearly a major client of the U.S. in the Middle
East. The ideological mold was set.

Shortly after the end of that war in 1967, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), one of the leading black activist organizations, issued a newsletter whose purpose was to discuss the problem of the Palestinians, who were described as Third World brothers to the blacks. The following "facts" were presented, among others:

"The Zionists conquered the Arab homes and land through terror, force and massacres."

"Israel was planted at the Cross--roads of Asia and Africa without the free approval of any Mid-Eastern, Asian or African country."

"The U.S. government has worked along with Zionist groups to support Israel so that America may have a toe-hold in that strategic Middle-East location, thereby helping white America to control and exploit the rich Arab nations."

"The famous European Jews, the Rothschilds, who have long controlled the wealth of many European nations, were involved in the original conspiracy with the British to create the 'State of Israel' and are still among Israel's chief supporters (and) the Rothschilds also control much of Africa's mineral wealth." (16)

Among the radicalized black groups of the period which adopted some version of the full Third World syndrome were the Black Panthers, who came out in support of "Arab guerrillas in the Middle East." In 1970, that party's international coordinator, Connie Mathews, explained some of the connections:

"The white-left in the U.S.A. is comprised of a large percentage of the Jewish population. Before the Black Panther party took its stand on the Palestinian People's struggle, there were problems, but the support of the white--left of the Black Panthers was concrete. However, since our stand, the white-left started floundering, and it has become undecided. That leaves us with no alternative then but to believe that a large portion of these people are Zionists and are therefore racists." (17)

Third World Ideologues vs. Grass Roots

It is necessary and important to make distinctions between these ideological developments among black intellectuals, and the black population at large -- without dismissing the importance of that ideology.

First of all, it must be noted that neither a coherent Third World ideology, nor a Third World ideological movement has ever captured the black population at large. At the end of 1965, as the black revolution was reaching its highest pitch, and in the metropolitan non-South where the ideological black revolution most thrived, 8 out of 10 blacks chose the pragmatic National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as that civil rights group which "is doing the most at the present time to help Negroes." One out of ten had designated the Congress of

Racial Equality (CORE), known then for its militant activity on behalf of desegre-
gation. The Muslims received only 3 per cent of the positive response. (18) In fact,
among the half of all American blacks who ventured disapproval for any black leader,
97 per cent expressed disapproval of Malcolm X. (19) And when American blacks were
asked whether the United States was "worth fighting for," in case of another war,
9 out of 10 answered affirmatively, scarcely a response worthy of radical Third World
ideology. (20)

With respect to these responses to radical ideology in general, two population
characteristics of the American black population must be taken into account: education
and religion.

In 1960, about 8 per cent of all Americans and about 3 per cent of all blacks
aged 25 or more had completed 4 years of college; about 40 per cent of all Americans
and about 20 per cent of all black Americans over 25 had completed high school or
more. (21)

"Militancy" itself, as the expression of conscious values, has generally been
associated with educational level. In the 1964 study, it was found that blacks with
at least some college were three times more likely than grammar school graduates,
and about half again more likely than those with some high school, to be "militant."
(22) It was found that even among black college students, militancy was greatest
among those of higher-status backgrounds. (23)

And to an even greater extent, direct participation in ideological movements
has always been a function of education. Various studies indicated that the educational
and middle class status of activists in such groups as CORE and SNCC was dramatically
high. (24)

So, the particularly sharp educational gap in those years between the black
grass-roots and the college-educated black ideologues provided one explanation for
the failure of the ideologies to sweep through the grass roots. The religious status
of American blacks provided another clue. Church membership has been notably higher
among blacks than whites for reasons which have been much discussed. (25) In the
1960s, this pattern persisted. (26) And, among blacks, it was found that there was
a relationship between frequency of attendance at worship services and "militancy."
In the 1964 survey, 18 per cent of those blacks who attended church more than once
a week measured as "militant" as compared with 34 per cent of those who attended
less than once a month. (27)

However, there may be a tendency to overstate the significance of the "religious"
factor in itself, because of the relationship of education to religiosity and to

church attandance. In the 1964 survey, when education was held constant, not only
were church attendance patterns similar between whites and blacks, but the patterns
of fundamentalist religious beliefs were also similar. (28)

Nevertheless, the institutional importance of the black church remains clearly
disproportionate. The black population has twice as many churches per capita as the
white population. The church, which became a prime social center for American blacks
after emancipation, has remained so. In the communities around the nation, "black
leadership" has remained chiefly identified with religious leaders, never long challenged
by civil rights leaders and only recently challenged by emerging black political
leaders. As one of Martin Luther King's lieutenants put it, the church is "the most
organized thing in the Negro's life. Whatever you want to do in the Negro community,
whether it's selling Easter Seals or organizing a nonviolent campaign, you've got
to do it through the Negro church, or it doesn't get done." (29)

That is one of the reasons that Martin Luther King was able to establish such
a dramatic leadership in the black community. In 1962, asked "which person (on a
list of four) do you think has done most to help Negroes," 88 per cent of the metro-
politan non-South blacks identified Dr. King. Roy Wilkins of the NAACP was identified
by 6 per cent: James Farmer of CORE and Malcolm X were identified by one per cent
each. The choice of Dr. King was even higher in the South. (30)

Martin Luther King was no Third World ideologue. The black Christian church
in America, heavily fundamentalist in its formal lineaments, is not the most fertile
ground for the growth of radical Third World ideology. Both education and religion
have been factors in maintaining the gap between black ideologues and the grass roots.

The Continuing Role of Third World Ideology

Neither the radical Third World ideologues nor their organizations gained a
significant foothold among the black population in general. SNCC and CORE, after
they were captured by the ideologues, swiftly diminished in importance, as did the
Black Panthers. (That was reminiscent of the typical collapse in America of both
left wing and right wing groups. such as the Ku Klux Klan. when they have become
politically extremist.) The radical Black Muslims remain a fringe in the black popula-
tion. The mainstream black establishment. the leadership of the NAACP, the Urban
League. the black churches and the Congressional caucus all publicly condemned a
Third World ideology which included either anti-semitism or ideological anti-
Israelism.

Neverhtheless, the continuing effect of Third World ideology on black intellec-
tuals cannot be discounted, as illustrated by the saga of the SCLC and the dramatic
episodes involving Andrew Young and Jesse Jackson.

Martin Luther King, who founded the SCLC in 1957, was close to the Jewish community and a strong supporter of Israel. In 1967, three months after the war, a National Conference for New Politics was held in Chicago: its black caucus included many activist blacks, including representatives of the SCLC. The Third World "black militants" at the conference insisted on a resolution to condemn the "imperialist Zionist war," which passed handily. The resolution marked the beginning of the postwar momentum of black Third World ideology, noted above.

Martin Luther King responded to the protestations of the Jewish community by stating that the SCLC staff members who had attended the conference had been "the most vigorous and articulate opponents of the simplistic resolution on the Middle East question." (31) He then indicated that his support, and the SCLC support of Israel remained as firm as ever. However, he was attacked by a black writer. John A. Williams, as "a house Negro" who had been used by the bullying American Jewish community. And observers noted a schism within the SCLC. The SCLC never became a vehicle for Third World ideology and has never renounced its support of Israel, but after Dr. King's assassination, it has, at the least, become more "even-handed" with respect to the Middle East. It is the kind of even-handedness which makes the pro-Israel community feel some trepidation. Reverend Joseph C. Lowery, the president of the SCLC, while stating his commitment to a "strong, secure Israel," refers pointedly to the "pre-1967 borders," opposes the Camp David exclusion of the PLO from negotiations and calls for some reduction in American aid to Israel.

In 1979, the SCLC leadership went to the Middle East. They had requested but were denied an audience with Israel's Prime Minister. But they met with Yasir Arafat, and pictures were taken of Lowery embracing Arafat and of the SCLC delegation linking arms with him and singing "We Shall Overcome." Reverend Walter Fauntroy, Chairman of the SCLC Board, said "Mr. Arafat appears reasonable and open to dialogue ...". (32)

Lowery, who opposed the 1975 UN "Zionism is racism" resolution, is no Third World ideologue. And it would obviously be a mistake to identify every anti-Israel pro-Palestinian Arab sentiment, or even every anti-Israel sentiment, as an exercise in Third World ideology. But the point is that the SCLC was moving in a different direction than mainstream America. The public opinion polls registered a rise in American favorable opinion towards Israel after 1967 which never receded significantly. Palestinian partisanship remained low among the American public. But the SCLC, without itself becoming a vehicle for Third World ideology, was moving in an opposite direction. It did so incrementally, and without becoming a vehicle for Third World ideology, but the movement reflected the effect of more radical forces in its midst, and in the black intellectual world. For example, in its 1979 trip, the SCLC authorized

only one black journalist, Samuel F. Yette, to make a public report, and that had an ideologically anti-Israel flavor. Among other things, Yette referred to the "world Zionists" who "decided to take all of Palesine for themselves ..." (33)

It is important to distinguish between the SCLC becoming an ideological Third World agency -- which it is not -- and the SCLC as reflecting the effects of a pervasive Third World intellectual climate. It would be equally important to make that distinction in the matter of the "Andrew Young affair." Andrew Young, like Martin Luther King, had been close to the Jewish community and had been an explicit supporter of Israel. As UN Ambassador, he met with Zhedi Labib Terzi, the PLO observer at the UN in 1979, although the U.S. had pledged not to have any dealings with an unreconstructed PLO. The Israeli government protested and the American Jewish community rumbled.

It is possible that there was an over-reaction to the meeting, which Young said was inadvertent and without substance. But it is also possible that the meeting was neither quite that inadvertent or insubstantial, since Young was reprimanded by the U.S. administration for giving a false report on the meeting, as well as for holding it. It is also probable that the meeting was given special significance because Young, a product of his particular intellectual environment, had previously given the impression of having some Third World tendencies. He gave that impression not because he hobnobbed with real Third World leaders, which was part of his job, but because of some of his public suggestions, such as that Cuban soldiers were helping to bring order to Angola, or that there were hundreds or thousands of political prisoners in the United States.

Still, Young was scarcely a radical Black Panther, and it was the reverberations from the Andrew Young affair, rather than the meeting with Terzi, which suggested the continuing viability of Third World ideology. Dorothy Pounds. a black columnist, questioned America's "pro-Israel stance" following this affair, and referred back to the Jewish landlords and grocers who "oppressed" American blacks, coupling the attack on them with an attack on Israel's "racism." (34) The mainstream black press reminded its readers that the Palestinians were a "darker-skinned people;" (35) and James Baldwin accused Israel of having been set up to safeguard Western interests. (36)

The more recent episode with Jesse Jackson, culminating in the 1984 Presidential election, was an even sharper example of the effects of Third World ideology. Jackson, a charismatic minister, had been part of the SCLC, but then had established his own operation, called PUSH, one of whose prime features was to motivate black youth towards excellence in school. This approach was quite agreeable to moderates, even

conservatives; Jackson was not a political radical. Catalyzed by the Andrew Young affair, Jackson took his own publicized trip to the Middle East. He was not received by Israeli government officials, who were not taken with private party intervention, but he did visit Israel as well as the PLO. His remarks were generally addressed to the plight of the Palestinian Arabs, and Israel's callousness towards them. He compared the condition of the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza with the conditions of black slavery in America. He complained that the U.S. government gave more money to Israel than to Palestinian refugees.

Jesse Jackson scandalized American Jews not so much by his private anti-semitic reference to "Hymies," for which he apologized, but for two episodes relating to Israel. In one case, one of his supporters, Louis Farrakhan. the leader of a small Black Muslim offshoot, declared that the creation of Israel and Israel's expulsion of Arabs was an "outlaw act;" and in the course of those remarks referred to Judaism as a "gutter religion." (37) While mainstream black leaders, such as the head of the NAACP, quickly condemned Farrakhan's remarks, Jackson was slow in doing so. Only after considerable pressure did he term Farrakhan's remarks "reprehensible."

More disturbing at that time was the fact that Jesse Jackson asked James Zogby to be one of his official nominators on the floor of the Democratic Party convention. Zogby was head of the Arab American Discrimination Committee, the leading pro-PLO and anti-Israel organization in America.

It is again important to note that a pro-Palestinian Arab stance, and an anti-Israel stance did not in themselves constitute a "Third World ideologue."

It is significant that Jackson, like Young, was moving in a direction counter to that mainstream America with respect to the Middle East; and that there were Third World ideological forces in his close following. Most significant however was the tenor of Jesse Jackson's general stance towards American foreign policy, of which his pro-Palestinian bias comprised only one piece.

It has become a matter of unconventional wisdom to perceive that American policy on Israel is a function of American foreign policy in general. According to this viewpoint, Israel's survival will depend more on the shape of American foreign policy in general than on any discrete American feelings or policy on Israel. America is not so likely to "abandon" Israel in any forthright fashion; it is more likely to become less capable of critically supporting Israel because of some general withdrawal from advocacy on the world scene. This tendency has been generically called "neo-isolation-ism." It is a post-Vietnam phenomenon, which opposes American interventionism -- the current focus has primarily been Central America -- and military expenditures, calling instead for expenditures towards the relief of domestic problems.

This kind of "neo-isolationism" is not Third World ideology, but is often compatible with that ideology and its anti-American perspective. Neo-isolationism is not explicitly anti-Israel in itself -- indeed many policy-makers who are part of that tendency in general American foreign affairs are strong supporters of Israel. Symptomatic of their dilemma were Congressional votes on foreign aid in both 1984 and 1985. A number of traditional supporters of Israel voted against the aid to Israel because it was part of a package which included interventionist aid to Central America, which they opposed. Of course, they knew that Israel was going to get its aid somehow, but their dilemma was beginning to emerge. And of course it is possible to oppose a specific American policy in Central America without being "neo-isolationist" in any of its various shadings -- but a number of these Congressmen, it was perceived, were caught up in a larger tendency than that.

The Jesse Jackson presidential movement was seen as bringing together in one camp activist neo-isolationist forces, Third World ideological tendencies, specific pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel attitudes and the American black community, which supported him strongly. While many pro-Israel Americans were mainly disturbed by Jackson's explicitly pro-Palestinian stances, others were more gravely concerned about the complex of forces he brought together, which they felt was objectively detrimental to continuing American support of Israel.

It was the juxtaposition of the American black population which caused most concern. If the "gap" were jumped between the ideological leanings of many black intellectuals, and the black grass roots in America, in conjunction with some general neo-isolationist forces, then a mass-based political movement would be created which would be inimical to Israel. And the black population would be the mass base for such an inimical movement. It was for this reason that a higher percentage of Jews than of the general population expressed concern about Jackson in 1984 even though the Jews were disproportionately inclined towards Democratic Party candidates. In the national exit poll done for the Los Angeles Times on November 6, 1984, 58 per cent of the Jews expressed disapproval of Jackson, as compared with 42 per cent of the general population. And it was for this reason that in the 1984 national Survey of American Jews, conducted for the American Jewish Committee, Jews considered blacks more anti-semitic than any of the other 14 groups named, including big business. Catholics, fundamentalist Protestants and the State Department. About 17 per cent of the Jews thought that "most" blacks, and 37 per cent thought that "many" blacks were anti-semitic (as distinct from "some" or "few").

Assessment: American Blacks and Israel

However, the "gap" between black intellectual Third World tendencies and the black grass roots was not jumped by the Jesse Jackson movement. His campaign was supported by all of the elements indicated, including the black population. But, according to the evidence, these elements did not jell into a cohesive political movement. The black population supported Jackson's domestic agenda but were not drawn into his foreign policy agenda.

The "Measure E" campaign in Berkeley, in June of 1984, demonstrated the split in microcosm. Measure E was a referendum calling for the president to reduce aid to Israel by an amount equal to what Israel spends "in the occupied territories of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights." The referendum was introduced by James Zogby's American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, in conjunction with the Third world ideological forces in Berkeley.

Measure E was an echo of what Jesse Jackson had already called for. His tilt on the Middle East was well known in Berkeley. The supporters of the referendum included Jackson's most prominent local supporter and one of Jackson's top lieutenants came to Berkeley to campaign for Measure E. In addition, the June election ballot carried both Jackson's candidacy in the presidential primary and Measure E. The blacks constituted 20 per cent of the Berkeley electorate.

In that election, Jesse Jackson overwhelmingly swept all of the eight black precincts -- those that were 80 per cent or more black. In Berkeley as a whole Measure E was defeated by a 64 to 36 ratio. In the black precincts, Measure E was defeated by a 58 to 42 ratio. If one were able to remove the Jewish votes -- and the "progressive" Jews of Berkeley did in fact rally against this measure -- then there would have been no significant difference between the black and white votes. In effect, the blacks voted for Jackson's domestic policy and against his foreign policy. (38)

It has been noted that the social status and educational level of the grass roots black population is one factor which keeps it prevalently distant from ideological positions in general. Its preponderant domestic and daily-life concerns keep it prevalently distant from foreign policy considerations. One additional factor that still keeps it from prevalent anti-Israel or pro-Palestinian positions is the resistance of many of its leaders, especially on the political level.

In Berkeley's Measure E episode, for example, only one black public official supported the measure; the others either opposed it or sat it out. The black press, by and large, and except under the stress of an "Andrew Young affair," has supported Israel. For example, a survey of the black press after the 1973 war found that the black press was rarely hostile to Israel. (39) And the American Israel Public Affairs Committee

·(AIPAC) has reported that "sixteen of the twenty-one members of the Black Congressional Caucus (an even higher percentage than their white colleagues) have consistently voted for foreign aid to Israel and against major arms sales to those Arab nations still not at peace with Israel." (40)

There is a blurred but effective split between the pragmatic and the ideological leadership in the black community. The pragmatic leadership is itself more a part of the mainstream American political process, which blunts its ideological edge; and it also finds American Jewry an important partner in most of its enterprises. For example, just as the Black Congressional Caucus is disproportionately disposed towards support of Israel, so are the Jewish members of Congress disproportionately disposed towards most black legislative causes. The signals the grass roots black population receives from its pragmatic leadership do not urgently press that population towards ideological Third World or anti-Israel positions. In nine Gallup surveys between 1973 and 1983, American non-whites with opinions have indicated that their sympathies lie with Israel as against the Arabs by an average two to one.

On the other hand, in the nine Gallup polls during those years, the total American public with opinions has indicated that its sympathies lie with Israel as against the Arabs by a four to one ratio. The difference between the blacks and the whites is not quite as great as it seems from those statistics. About 11 per cent of the general population, on the average, indicated sympathy with the Arabs, as compared with about 15 per cent of the non-whites. The larger differential was in sympathy for Israel, an average of 45 per cent for the general population and 30 per cent for the non-whites. (41) It is in the relative absence of black opinion, or of positive black opinion with respect to Israel, that the concern lies.

And that concern is buttressed by a statistical "oddity" which the surveys have found: for the general population, favorable attitudes towards both the Jews and Israel have been correlated positively with level of education. But for blacks, this correlation has been less distinct. (42) There is a compelling suggestion that there is an ideological factor related to higher educational levels, not to mention contact with ideological movements on the college campuses.

At the time of the United Nations "Zionism is racism" resolution, a culmination of Third World ideology, the Hilltop, Howard University's student newspaper, typically applauded the resolution as condemning "a political ideology used to justify continued displacement and subjugation of Arab Palestinians in their own land, Palestine." (43)

The apparent fact that educational level has a different impact on blacks than on whites with respect to both anti-semitism and anti-Israelism, does not mean that there is an automatic relationship between these two antipathies. In their analysis of a comprehensive Louis Harris survey, Lipset and Schneider found no significant corre-

lation, one way or another, between sympathy for Israel and conventional anti-semitism in the general population. Nor was there a significant correlation between anti-semitism and support for the PLO. (44)

However, in one stream of the black intellectual climate, there does seem to be an ideological element which acts on _both_ feelings towards Israel and feelings towards Jews. It is suggested that, as in the case with the general population, anti-semitism is not the source of the anti-Israelism (non-economic anti-semitism is not disproportionately high among blacks), but that anti-Israelism can be the source of anti-semitism, given the prominent American Jewish role in support of Israel. (45)

The American black grass roots population is neither prevalently anti-Israel or anti-semitic, as the American Jews are wont to see them because of the vocal Third World stream in the black intellectual climate. The American black population has not been harnessed to either a Third World ideology or an anti-Israel stance. Jesse Jackson's was the latest failure in the attempt to accomplish that.

The Farrakhan Model

However, the potential is there, given a deep economic crisis to compound the daily-life plight of American blacks; or given a demagogue who, in perverse ways, can energize American blacks around their legitimate economic aspirations. It may not seem likely that Louis Farrakhan is the man to do it; but he models an approach which could connect ideology to grass roots, and he could be plowing ground for others.

Farrakhan's Nation of Islam broke away from the original body after its founder, Elijah Muhammad, died. His membership has been reported at ten thousand, but it would be surprising if that number had not increased somewhat; Farrakhan has been receiving much media attention and addressing some large audiences since the beginning of 1985.

Farrakhan's message is a mixture of inspirational black economic vision, old fashioned anti-semitism and anti-Israel fulminations with third-world strains. His economic vision is a recurring one in black American life: economic independence and economic power for the blacks by way of black enterprise fed by black consumership. His old fashioned anti-semitism consists of objectively outmoded references to Jewish landlords in black neighborhoods; and general references to Jewish power standing in the way of black power: "Black people will not be controlled by Jews. Black leaders will either come out for us, or get the hell away from us. Who is your master -- God or Jewish leaders?" (46)

The "third world" basis of Farrakham's anti-Israel remarks is made explicit by his relationship to Libya's Col. Muammar Qaddafi, an economic supporter; and by his references to Israeli aggression against Arabs, colored by an extremist Muslim attack on Judaism itself. While he was still associated with Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign,

he said that Israel would have no peace "structured on injustice, thievery, lying and deceit using God's name to shield [Israel's] dirty religion." (47) That was the remark which finally caused the Jackson campaign to drop him from its official roster. In a later speech to 15 thousand in Los Angeles, Farrakhan referred to Israel as a "wicked hypocrisy" and later made reference to undue American Jewish power. (48)

In July, Farrakhan did not get to his economic message until late in his speech. In September, he larded his anti-Israel remarks into a presentation which was now largely concerned with black economic self-determination. In fact, he openly advertised, as a model, the company which he had set up with a 5 million dollar interest-free loan from Qaddafi, whose purpose was to manufacture household detergents, soap and toothpaste for black consumers. The company was called POWER: People Organized to Work for Economic Rebirth. "Can you see yourself brushing your teeth with POWER toothpaste?" Farrakhan asked an apparently enthusiastic audience. "Can you see yourself saying, 'I feel strong because under my arm I got POWER'?" (49)

It was the mixture of Farrakhan's presentation which was most ominous because it was classically seductive. Some years ago, a University of California survey asked the American people whether, in the case of a Congressional candidate running on a platform which included anti-semitism, they would vote for him or against him on that account, or whether his anti-semitism wouldn't make any difference. Only about 5 per cent said they would vote for him on that account, but about a third of the respondents said that his anti-semitism wouldn't make any difference. (50) That, of course, is always the critical mass in the development of any anti-semitic political movement.

From that vantage point, many of the recorded reactions to Farrakhan were disquieting, suggesting that some rejected his anti-semitism and his anti-Israelism, but embraced his economic message. The implication was that his anti-semitism "didn't make any difference." The Washington Post reported this comment from a member of the audience as typical: "I thought he preached a lot of hatred, but I didn't hear that ... He spoke his mind ... I might not agree with everything he says. It's no different than people who support Reagan. Do they agree with everything he says?" (51)

Even more disquieting were similar reactions from some black leaders. Andrew Young said that he agreed with nine tenths of what Farrakhan was saying, adding that "Farrakhan is a legitimate player in the mainstream of black ideas," and that his ideas should be viewed as "simply mechanisms for survival for people who have been locked out of the economy." (52)

Another black leader, Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles, long and closely associated with the large Jewish community of that city, said that Farrakhan's speech there

"contained strong, dangerous currents of anti-semitism," which he deplored, but Bradley also said, "I am sure there are many people who agree with much of what he said ... He talked about economic development."

Farrakhan is not likely to become an important political leader in himself. He is a Muslim and most blacks are Christians. He is an extremist and extremism frightens most Americans. But he may be an important stalking horse for others. And he is providing a model for the mixture which could provide an effective bridge, not now existing, between anti-Israel ideology and the black grass roots. The outcome could be a special black role in fomenting anti-Israel feeling, detrimentally affecting general American foreign policy, with consequences for domestic anti-semitism. That would be an ironic denouement for two natural allies on the American scene.

FOOTNOTES

1. _Crisis_, February 1919, p. 166.

2. _Amsterdam News_, January 25, 1941.

3. Begin, Menachem, _The Revolt_, Dell Publishing Company, 1978, p. 387.

4. Fanon, Frantz, _The Wretched of the Earth_, first published in French in 1961. Published in Evergreen Black Cat edition, 1968.

5. _Ibid._, p. 314.

6. _Ibid._, p. 213.

7. _Ibid._, p. 213.

8. In _Black Anti-Semitism and Jewish Racism_, edited by Nat Hentoff, Richard W. Baron, 1969, p. 3.

9. Clark, Kenneth, "Candor on Negro-Jewish Relations," _Commentary_, February 1946, p. 8.

10. Selznick, Gertrude and Stephen Steinberg, _The Tenacity of Prejudice_, New York, Harper and Row, p. 119.

11. _Ibid._, pp. 119, 121.

12. Jacobs, Paul, "Negro-Jewish Relations in America," _Midstream_, December, 1966, p. 3.

3. Raab, Earl, "The Black Revolution and the Jewish Question," _Commentary_, January, 1969.

14. _New York Times_, May 24, 1964.

15. Lincoln, C. Eric, _The Black Muslims in America_, Boston, Beacon Press, 1963, p. 129.

16. _SNCC Newsletter_, June-July, 1967.

17. _American Jewish Yearbook_, 1971, p. 149.

18. Marx, Gary T., _Protest and Prejudice_, New York, Harper and Row, 1967, p. 25.

19. _Ibid._, p. 27.

20. _Ibid._, p. 30.

21. Bureau of the Census, _Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1984_, p. 144.

22. Marx, Gary T., _op. cit._, p. 56.

23. Searles, R. and J.A. Williams, Jr., "Negro College Students' Participation in Sit-Ins," _Social Forces_, 1962, pp. 215-220.

24. Marx, Gary T., _op. cit._, p. 78 ff.

. See Frazier, E. Franklin, _The Negro in the United States_, New York, Macmillan Company, 1949, Chapter XIV.

26. Brink, William and Louis Harris, The Negro Revolution in America, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1964, p. 100.

27. Marx, Gary T., op. cit., p. 101.

28. Ibid.

29. Brink, William and Louis Harris, op. cit., p. 103.

30. Marx, Gary T., op. cit., p. 26.

31. Weisbord, Robert G. and Richard Kazarian, Jr., Israel in the Black American Perspective, Greenwood Press, 1985, p. 39.

32. Ibid., p. 142.

33. Ibid., p. 145.

34. Ibid., p. 125.

35. Afro-American, September 1, 1979.

36. Weisbord, Robert G. and Richard Kazarian, Jr., op. cit., p. 125.

37. New York Times, June 29, 1984.

38. Epstein, Edwin and Earl Raab, "The Foreign Policy of Berkeley, California," Moment, September, 1984, p. 17.

39. American Jewish Congress report, January, 1974.

40. Rosen, Steven J. and Yosef I. Abramowitz, How Americans Feel About Israel, AIPAC, Washington D.C., 1984, p. 1.

41. Ibid., pp. 6 and 12.

42. See, for example, Earl Raab, "Blacks and Jews Asunder," Midstream, November, 1979, p. 8.

43. Weisbord, Robert G. and Richard Kazarian, Jr., op. cit., p. 55.

44. Lipset, Seymour Martin and William Schneider, American Opinion Toward Israel and Jew, unpublished Mss. They found a correlation of -.07 between conventional anti-semitism and sympathy for Israel; a correlation of -.09 between conventional anti-semitism and support of the PLO.

45. For a fuller treatment of the relationship between anti-semitism and anti-Israelism in modern America, see Earl Raab, "Attitudes Toward Israel and Attitudes Toward Jews: The Relationship." Michael Curtis, editor, Anti-Semitism in the Contemporary World, Westview Press, Los Angeles, 1985.

46. Speech on July 22, 1985 in Washington D.C. Reported in Washington Post, National Weekly Edition, August 12, 1985.

47. Ibid.

48. Los Angeles Times, September 16, 1985, Metro Section.

49. Ibid.

50. Selznick and Steinberg, op. cit., p. 54.

51. Washington Post, op. cit.

52. Baltimore Jewish Times, August 30, 1985, p. 30.

-Robert G. Weisbord and Richard Kazarian Jr., Israel in the Black Perspective
 (Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1985). A prime source of historical materials.

-Nat Hentoff, editor, Black Anti-Semitism and Jewish Racism (New York, Richard W.
 Baron, 1969).

-Gary T. Marx, Protest and Prejudice (New York, Harper and Row, 1967).

-William Brink and Louis Harris, The Negro Revolution in America (New York, Simon and
 Schuster, 1964).

-Gertrude Selznick and Stephen Steinberg, The Tenacity of Prejudice (New York, Harper
 and Row, 1969).

-Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York, Grove Press, 1968).

-Harold Cruse, The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual (New York, Morrow, 1967).

-Malcolm X, The Autobiography of Malcolm X (New York, Grove Press, 1966).

-American Jewish Yearbook, 1968 through 1983 (sections on Black-Jewish relations)
 (New York, American Jewish Committee).