

Earl Raab

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Jackson and Berkeley

There is an illuminating connection between the sayings of Jessie Jackson and the Berkeley initiative to ditch Israel.

As you know, Jackson's negativism towards Israel, flowing from his attachment to Arab funds - led to increasingly explicit eruptions of anti-semitism.

Well, we will always have a contingent of bigots, anti-semites among them- just as we will always have a contingent of the mentally-ill. (There is now an army of about three (3) from Marin plastering San Francisco with anti-semitic leaflets). The important matter is that their expression of anti-semitism never be considered publicly acceptable and never become politically profitable.

Expressions of anti-semitism by public figures is therefore a special hazard. When State Senator Schmitz publicly erupted into anti-semitism recently, the State Senate was moved swiftly to censure him and strip him of special office.

Jackson publicly apologized, which was a move in the right direction- but the response of other public figures has been especially disappointing. Almost all have said that such anti-semitism is unacceptable, but their remarks lacked a certain sting with respect to Jackson.

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Why? You would be much richer if you would get a dollar for every time political and Black leaders have privately told us that Jackson has always been a questionable character and that his anti-semitic remarks are inexcusable- *but* that his candidacy is going to bring out a lot of new Black voters just because he is Black, and that will be good for Black and liberal politics - therefore they cannot abandon him. That's the way it is.

However, we should not allow this to become a Black/Jewish issue, as the Arab and other mischief-makers would like it to become. It was whitey George McGovern whose response to Jackson's anti-semitic slur was: "I don't want to pass judgements on other candidates." And, as AIPAC pointed out to some of us in Washington last week, the group of Congressmen who continue to vote *most* favorably for Israel, other than Jewish Congressmen, are the Black Congressional caucus. The Jews have a duty to openly attack every anti-semitic statement, but they also should avoid doing so in a Black/Jewish context, which is what the Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee would like.

The Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the leading Arab lobby in this country today, would like to see that rift develop between Blacks and Jews (partly because of the pro-Israel stance of the Black Congressional caucus); as well as between Jews and other groups. That is also why this Arab committee is the force behind the Berkeley June ballot initiative which calls for reduction of American aid to Israel, to the extent that aid is used for settlements in Judea and Samaria. The Arab

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committee would like to use the campaign not just to attack the settlements, but to attack Israel generally as a fascist state.

The Arab committee's first effort of this kind is in Berkeley because of the strong anti-American (and anti-Israel) version of "third-world" ideology which can be found in that land. And that sentiment has been one of Jackson's bases. That kind of ideological "third-world" anti-Israelism does not flow from anti-semitism; although, as we have seen, it can certainly create anti-semitism. American support of Israel is the central focus.

So the Jackson situation must be handled in a way that will least serve the purposes of the Arab-Anti-Discrimination Committee. As for Berkeley, the JCRC of the Greater East Bay and the A.D.L. are on top of the situation- but the campaign against the initiative will be fought by a broadly based political committee, which will need much financial and other aid from sensible citizens all over the region. If you want to help, get in touch.