

MEASURE E AND JESSE JACKSON

An American Arab association in the Bay Area is about to hold a fundraiser for Jesse Jackson. And it is an American Arab association which is behind Measure E in Berkeley. Is there a connection?

There is nothing sinister about American Arabs raising funds for Jesse Jackson. American Jews often raise funds for political candidates who are tilted towards Israel.

As for Measure E, a proposed anti-Israel statement by the municipality of Berkeley, the JCRC files are jammed full of pro-Israel resolutions passed by our local legislatures. It was probably just as dumb of us to get local bodies to enter foreign affairs, but it's not a high crime.

The problem is that Measure E reflects and feeds some unfortunate tendencies in this country -- unfortunate for the U.S. and for Israel. And, according to some observers, Jesse Jackson's campaign reflects those same unfortunate tendencies.

Jackson has accomplished one worthwhile result. He has brought more Black people out to vote. That is generally healthy. And the Blacks and Jews have shared a common vision of America more sharply than most other population groups: freedom, democracy and opportunity in the American mode.

That has been the basis of the Black/Jewish coalition. And, although their fates have diverged somewhat, their agendas should still be shared. The elimination of poverty remains high on the Black agenda. While it no longer touches Jews as directly, the elimination of poverty should be high on the Jewish agenda for at least the reason that America's democratic strength depends on it.

And the survival of Israel is high on the Jewish agenda. While it does not touch Blacks so directly, the survival of Israel should be high on the Black agenda for at least the reason that a free world and strong America depend on it.

But two national tendencies pull those agendas apart. One is "third world" ideology, which in foreign policy is anti-American and anti-Israel; and on the domestic scene is racially and ethnically divisive.

The other tendency is that of neo-isolationism. It has a number of sources aside from "third world" ideology itself, including an often misguided strategy for peace; and an urge to spend money on the elimination of domestic poverty, rather than on supporting foreign allies, as though the two were mutually exclusive.

While the Jesse Jackson movement may have achieved one politically admirable effect, it is also the focus for much of the neo-isolationist and third-world ideology in this country, both of which are dangerous for the U.S., for Israel and indeed for both domestic and world peace.

And Measure E, planted by the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, is designed to draw together the neo-isolationist and "third-world" tendencies. If Measure E wins in Berkeley, its proponents intend to introduce it from the floor of the Democratic convention. And they hope to gain support from within the Jackson movement, because of parallel tendencies.

A triumphant Measure E wouldn't sweep the convention or the country at this time -- but it would give new prominence to tendencies in this country which could widen the rift between two of America's most natural allies, and damage the interests of both the U.S. and Israel.