

Point of View

To Be Equal

BLACKS, JEWS, AND THE MEDIA

By John E. Jacob

The historic alliance between blacks and Jews has been strained by, among other things, the provocative statements of Minister Louis Farrakhan. Each of these has been seized upon by the media and played for all its worth. The result: a manipulated press provides a strange sort of entertainment for anti-Semites and anti-blacks.

Added to this is the supposition, which has roots in historic racism, that statements by virtually any black person

must be responded to by other blacks.

This is where other blacks are caught in the media trap. Here is how it works:

Minister Farrakhan makes a statement such as the outrageous slurs on Judaism as a religion or on the supposed illegitimacy of the state of Israel. Such reprehensible statements are representative of only a small segment of the black community; in fact, far more whites are likely to share them than blacks.

But the media report

them, often in big headlines designed to sell papers. It doesn't seem to matter to the media that such statements are the opinion of but one black minister and his relatively small group of followers. Would the media be so anxious to publicize the views of a white minister who is not representative of the larger white community?

Once the remarks become news stories, reporters and talk show hosts try to corral black leaders into denouncing those statements.

It is virtually impossible to interest those same reporters in constructive community programs we run or in the advocacy positions we take. But let Minister Farrakhan say something, and the media reporters buzz around us like flies.

Just imagine the position that puts us in. Being asked whether you agree with statements insulting the Jewish religion or the legitimacy of the state of Israel is in itself insulting, like being asked if you beat your wife or take drugs.

I can understand the anger of the Jewish community which finds itself the subject of ethnic slurs and ugly, racist remarks. Blacks too, are outraged by the remarks and resent being asked to account for statements they do not share.

I have no hesitation in affirming my support for Israel, the embodiment of Jewish national aspirations and an oasis of democracy in a desert of dictatorships. And my deep respect for the Jewish religious is based on its high ethical teachings and on the recognition that it is the foundation of both Christianity and Islam.

I continue to object to the idea that black leadership must always respond to extremist re-

marks of other blacks, even if the only purpose they serve is to prolong a media circus. But the virulence of the most recent



John Jacob reported remarks by Minister Farrakhan and the reality of the bitterness they engender, suggests that the time has come to publicly condemn those statements.

We should recognize that black people have produced far fewer

demagogues than whites. In fact, given the oppression blacks have been subjected to, it is remarkable how few extremists have sprung from soil that historically nurtures extremism.

brutal lynchings of Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney — two Jews and a black who marched hand in hand for black freedom and died together in the same cause.

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Demagoguery is encouraged by the media, whose fanning of the flames of discord prolongs the agony of divisions among ethnic communities that should not be diverted from their constructive alliance.

The current controversy takes on tragic proportions when we realize it comes on the twentieth anniversary of the

Their sacrifice embodies the spirit of a black-Jewish coalition for justice that will endure long after today's tensions are forgotten. Anti-Semitism and racism are an insult to their memory and a free society being damaged not simply by extremist statements of a handful but also by the irresponsibility of the media.

Editorial

By the time this goes to press the National Democratic convention will be in full swing. The Democratic Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates will have been officially selected, and the candidates will be off and running.

The probable presidential nominee, former Vice-President Walter Mondale, has chosen as his running mate Geraldine Ferraro, a Congresswoman from New York.

Ferraro's record as a representative has been an outstanding one. She has voted in a positive manner on matters concerning the poor, the elderly, the minorities, and the working class. She knows the plight of being a woman in today's society. A bank refused to lend her money for the political campaign unless her husband co-signed for it. She knows the plight of the elderly and working class who have been hit hard by the present administration's economic policy. All-in-all, Ferraro is intelligent and hard working, and will not be a patsy for the presidential nominee if he is elected.


Several women delegates from Nevada have expressed, through the media, their approval of the selection of Ferraro and have pledged their support. At press time we have not been able to get a reading on the feelings of the Black Democratic delegation from Nevada.

More Blacks are concentrated in West Las Vegas than in any other area in the State, yet very little is being done by the present administration to improve the conditions in the area and those in other states similar to it. Our question at this time is whether a Mondale-Ferraro administration will, in fact, seek to improve our lot with such things as more jobs, industries, and other opportunities in the area.

If the Mondale-Ferraro administration will listen to all groups, visit all areas, and allow participation by all in the American dream, then a change of administration may be in order. If not, what will be our plight four years from now?

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GET UP AND
TRY!



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