

Point of View

Blacks And Jews -- The Obituaries Are Premature

by Albert Vorspan

This is the third and final of a series of articles on Jewish-Black relationships.

Let's face it, black-Jewish relations are troubled. Frayed and problematic, yes, but the alarmist obituaries are, at least, premature. Some positive evidence abounds.

ITEM: A national reunion of black and Jewish civil rights leaders, who together changed American history in the 1960s, was convened by the Marjorie Kovler Institute for Black-Jewish Relations of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Atlanta last fall. It was not only an exercise in nostalgia, but also documented a record of solid joint achievement while reaffirming a common vision for the future. Ex-President Jimmy Carter spoke of the importance of black-Jewish understanding to the conscience of America.

ITEM: Blacks and Jews in Congress continue their symbiotic relationship, voting together on a wide array of issues ranging from civil rights to support for Isreal, from expanding housing and urban programs to opposition

to apartheid in Africa and prayer in American public schools.

ITEM: Thanks in part to a dramatic, if flawed, movie, "Mississippi Burning" America remembers the sacrifice of blacks and Jewish civil rights heroes in Philadelphia, Mississippi in 1964. Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman -- a black and two Jews -- have become symbols of that shared dream. The entire nation celebrated 25 years of the extraordinary changes in Mississippi and the rest of the nation by participating in the Freedom Caravan March in June. The event, which originated in Meridian, Mississippi, made stops along the route where history was forged in the struggle for civil rights. Thousands of activists and veterans from the civil rights era participated. Dr. Carolyn Goodman, mother of Andrew Goodman, was a key coordinator. The UAHC helped to coordinate the Jewish involvement in this historic march.

ITEM: An effective black-Jewish dialogue was started two years ago by Rabbi Jerome Davidson of Temple Beth El of Great Neck and Rev. Edward Corley of Great Neck's Mount Olive Baptist

Church in response to the shared need to heal relations between the two groups. The most recent project addressed a vital social issue in the community -- drugs. The group's joint efforts have also been devoted to honoring Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and commemorating the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht. In such community settings, the questions of Jesse Jackson and Farrakhan and Arafat and Isreal are only distant rumblings. The real issues are much closer at hand: homelessness, drugs, housing, crime, day care, guns, AIDS, mutual ignorance.

ITEM: In Houston, Texas, the Mickey Leland Kibbutz Program continues to flourish despite traumas and tensions on the national level. To date, over 100 underprivileged kids from the ghettos and barrios of Houston have spend their summers in Isreal, working at Kibbutz Yahel and experiencing the best of Isreal. Black and Jewish businessmen and civic leaders in Houston raise the funds to support this ongoing program conducted by black

Congressman Mickey Leland.

ITEM: Dozens of communities shared a black-Jewish Haggadah prepared by the UAHC's Religious Action Center during the Passover-Easter holiday season. A compendium of local black-Jewish programs has been compiled by the Center in behalf of the Synagogue Council of America; it contains literally hundreds of local programs, some of them ongoing and vital.

While affirmative action and other divisive issues clearly trouble the relationship, blacks and Jews continue to be joined at the hip in ways both mystical and practical -- a relationship which impinges on America's social conscience.

This article is reprinted by permission of Reform Judaism, published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Albert Vorspan is senior vice president of the UAHC.

**SUPPORT
OUR
ADVERTISERS**

Political Points

By

Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

Paul Meacham Is The Only Man That Owns Dr. Paul Meacham

Just before the beginning of second term in Congress, Shirley Chisholm published her autobiography. If Dr. Paul Meacham ever decides to pen his autobiography, without a doubt he could use the exact same title for his that Shirley Chisholm used: Unbossed and Unbought.

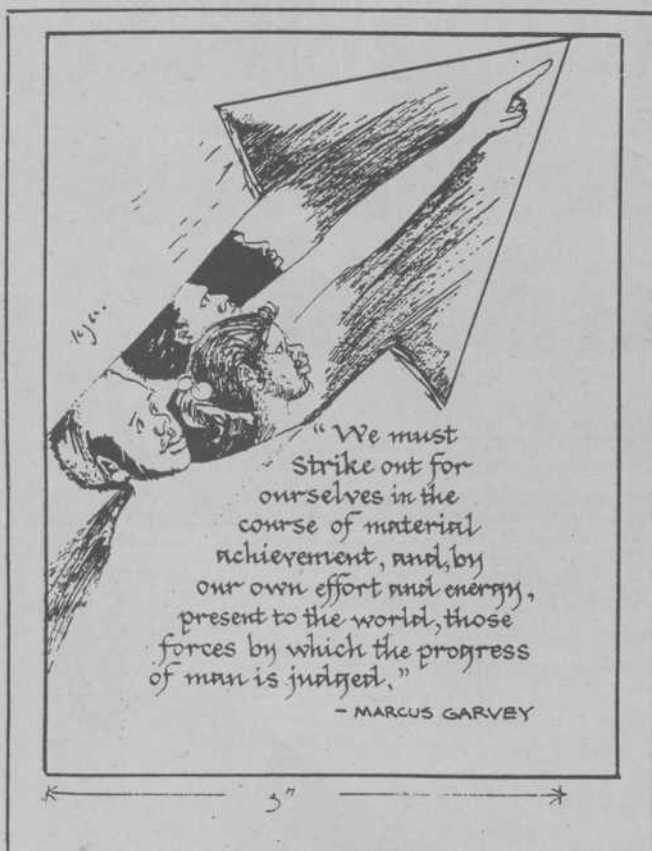
That is why it is so sad and lugubrious to see the Las Vegas Review Journal stoop so low to attempt to discredit an unmistakably strong, highly qualified, competent and caring man.

The August 3, 1989 Review Journal commentary was the most dishonest form of a sinisterly attack imaginable. However, we should not be surprised, as always in 1989 there is one thing that you can be assured of, and that is that 99% of the European-American media is committed to achieve two basic things in reference to the African-American population. Those two things are:

1. Try to create and maintain a negative perception of the African-American community.
2. Try to discredit every and all African-American public officials that are effective.

The Review Journal commentary written by Jon Ralston is another clear example. Ralston said Dr. Meacham "lacked guts" was a "weak person and susceptible to pressure." Fredrick Douglas once said "A gentleman will not insult me, and no man who is not a gentlen an can insult me." That is why the Review Journal and Ralston will never shake Dr. Meacham. That is the same reason that even though Mayor Ron Lurie showed his true colors by insinuating that Dr. Meacham is a liar, he won't be shaken. Are the mayor's remarks the behavior of a man that told the African-American community during his last campaign that he would maintain an honorable attitude with and about them? Is this the behavior of a man that is the major of a city with no African-American department heads? For Mayor Lurie to say that Dr. Meacham is "trying to protect himself" is not the type of undercut you would expect from the city's top official. Is this a

See WILLIAMS, Page 16



"We must strike out for ourselves in the course of material achievement, and, by our own effort and energy, present to the world, those forces by which the progress of man is judged."

- MARCUS GARVEY

To Be Equal

Getting Serious About Training

By John E. Jacob

The Administration has found serious flaws in the Job Training Partnership Act and is moving to remedy them. But not -- a lot more -- is needed than simply patching up the program.

Our economy will be handcuffed unless the entire workforce is equipped with the skills needed to be productive in the competitive global market. That means quality education and training for all, especially the disadvantaged.

But the JTPA doesn't reach the most severely disadvantaged -- the people it was intended to reach. As Labor Secretary Elizabeth Dole told Congress:

"Funds do not always reach the individuals and areas who need help the most. In some communities

it is felt that the program does not always result in good jobs and a higher standard of living."

All of the entrants to the



John E. Jacob

program need training -- no one disputes that. But it seems that the program skirts the most job-ready and ignores the least prepared and most disadvantaged. For example, although high school

dropouts have the highest unemployment rate, the majority of JTPA trainees are high school graduates.

Program operators are paid on the basis of actual job placement, regardless of the length of training. As

**John E. Jacob is
President of the
National Urban League**

Congressman Augustus Hawkins pointed out:

"That has led to creaming and placing those who seem most job-ready and easiest to place, rather than the hard-core unemployment who may have social, psychological or other problems."

Congress and the Administration are working to reshape the Act so that most participants are dropouts or

welfare recipients without basic skills.

A more focused program will reach more of the people most in need of training, but unless it is adequately funded and designed to reach everyone in need of assistance, it will fail to fulfill the needs of the disadvantaged or to secure the skilled workforce our economy needs.

Given the resources, federal programs have demonstrated they can deliver. The job Corps, for example, has traditionally trained the most disadvantaged youth. It has a record of placing about 80 percent of its trainees in jobs or further education -- a better record than the JTPA, which has already avoided serving the hardest cases.

But the Jobs Corps costs

See JACOB, Page 12