

DENNIS PRAGER ADDRESSES "BLACK / JEWISH RELATIONS" RECENTLY AT TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM

by Muhammad Abdullah

It is a subject that many feel extremely sensitive about. And yet, in America scared by the recent violence in the wake of the Rodney King verdict, a recent resurgence in hate crimes throughout the nation, a rise in Afro-Centric education and an increase in Anti-Jewish sentiment among European-Americans, African-Americans and other minorities, particularly amidst a recessionary economy, members of a local synagogue offered an appeal to African-American leaders locally to help improve "Black/Jewish Relations."

As part of that appeal, Temple Beth Shalom, located at 1600 E Oakey Boulevard invited some local African-American community leaders to witness and address "Black/Jewish Relations," on Friday evening, April 10, 1992.

The speaker for the evening was Dennis Prager, an outspoken Zionist, and author, founder of the Micah Center for Ethical Monotheism and highly acclaimed radio talk show host of "Religion On The Line" broad-

casted in Los Angeles, California on KABC 790 AM.

Prager was invited to address the congregation as a part of the Second Annual Oscar Alterwitz Scholar-In-Residence Week-end.

The brief visit by Prager was enlightening and resourceful. Congregation Rabbi Louis M. Lederman, Edward M. Bernstein, Temple president and the Alterwitz family should be commended for their efforts, especially for extending an invitation to the African-American community leaders and residents to participate. It is rare that so many African-American people would gather in a synagogue.

Rabbi Lederman said that the time had come for African-Americans and members of the Jewish community to lay down their differences and move forward toward building closer human ties and social relationships.

Among the community leaders present at the Prager speech was Senator Joe Neil, Assemblyman Morse Arberry, Assemblyman Wendall Williams,

School Board Trustee John Rhodes, Judge A.D. Guy, Dr. William Pearson, Dr. James McMillian, Rev. J.P. Parks, and State Substance Abuse Coordinator, Mujahid Ramadan, just to name a few.

This week we will present Part 1 of a two-part speech delivered by Dennis Prager on Black/Jewish Relations. After participating in evening worship service the Temple Beth Shalom congregation and choir led by Hazzan Simon Bergman, Temple Cantor, the congregation, visitors and guests gave their undivided attention to Temple President Edward M. Bernstein as he introduced the speaker of the evening.

Prager considers himself an ethical monotheists and as someone obsessed with human suffering, specifically with the evil that people inflict on other people's human rights.

Prager began in 1969 at the age of 21, when he and a handful of others alerted the West to the Plight of Soviet Jewry. He was national spokesman of the student struggle for Soviet Jewry.

President Reagan appointed him to the United States delegation to the Vienna Review Conference on the Helsinki accords to negotiate human rights with the Soviet Union.

Prager is passionately committed to social justice and does not consider himself a liberal; he is an observant and deeply religious Jew, yet not Orthodox, he writes from within Judaism, yet many of his greatest supporters and subscribers are Christians and non-Jews. Among some of the projects of the Micah Center are

- 1) To make "good and evil" the central concern of society;
- 2) A television series on "good and evil" using leading actors;
- 3) Combating both religious and secular extremism;
- 4) To combat racism without quotas and without more civil rights laws: (Dinners in Black and White) - a program for Blacks and Whites to have dinner at each other's homes.
- 5) To develop ethics curricula for religious schools.

Prager was invited to speak on Vatican Radio at which time he was greeted by Pope John Paul 11, spoke on anti-semitism on Christian Broadcasting Networks "700 club" and was the first Jew to speak at the Islamic Center of Southern Nevada.

Prager was gone on record speaking out against the expan-

sion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. He has publicly stated that he believes that the Palestinians and the Jews should co-exist in peace. In the following speech, Prager said he looks for the day when the subject of "Black/Jewish Relations" will no longer need discussing because Blacks will be treated equal to all human beings, particularly among Jews.

PART I

It is important to establish at the outset that I loathe (hate) racism with every fiber of my body. I cannot think of a greater evil. I tell you why I say that? It is not just nice phraseology, humanistic phraseology, all involving racism. Racism is the single de-humanizing idea in the history of man! Nothing comes close! It means that you, being a member of a group, lose your humanity just because you are a member of that group. It is so evil, that it undoes everything!

Everything that Judaism, originally, that Christianity, that Islam, that humanistic idea ever came in the world to bring. Namely, at the outset, that we are all created in God's image. Not your group in God's image, but you are individually were born in God's image. It is pure evil!

Most evils have an ambivalence. There is an ambiguity to most evils. Capitalism or socialism for example, may be mixed blessings. This isn't mixed. (Racism) is pure, undiluted evil! "Whether it comes from whites, whether it comes from Blacks, whether it comes from anybody else. It is pure evil even if someone says, well I understand where its coming from. It is simply pure evil. I hate it. I hate it when it's manifested by the right wing. I hate it when it's manifested by the left wing. My thesis today is that it is as equally manifested by the left wing as it is by the right wing.

DMV AND POLICE AGENCIES



Jesse Scott, local Las Vegas president of the NAACP, wants to know why the police are harassing the efforts of a citizen's control board.

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

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"Dr. Tate is not doing this for himself," Sexton said. "He is doing it for the entire Las Vegas community."

Rev. James Rogers of Greater New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church said he was concerned mostly with citizen's violation of rights.

"There is a great deal of racism in this state and it's well hidden. It's wrong for the sheriff to exercise whatever laws and rules he desires."

African-American Summit Committee member Talib Hill was also in attendance and said he was appalled at what has been happening.

"It's imperative that police are controlled before the situation

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