

JESSE AND THE JEWS

By Alexander M. Schindler
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from the *Los Angeles Times*)

It is tempting to dwell on the earlier days when the black-Jewish alliance changed the course of American history by demanding racial justice and an end to discrimination at lunch counters and in the voting booth, in public schools and public accommodations.

Certainly it is more comforting to recall the sight of a Martin Luther King flanked by Rabbis Abraham Joshua Heschel and Maurice Eisendrath leading tens of thousand of civil rights marchers than to think about the killing of 29-year-old Yankel Rosenbaum last year by an angry crowd in Brooklyn amid cries of "Hitler was right."

The Rev. Jesse Jackson was active in those glory days that we so nostalgically recall. As an aide to Dr. King he was a key player in the coalition of decency in which blacks and Jews were

such indispensable partners. But time and events have led many of us to view him now as having contributed to those tensions that currently divide our communities, even as he has a unique potential to be a bridge over troubled waters.

Yet honesty compels us to admit that the Jewish community has failed to respond to or even acknowledge his efforts to repair the breach. He confronted Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva on the issue of Soviet Jewry. To protest the obscenity of President Reagan's visit to Bitburg, he made his own visit to Germany, to what had been a Nazi concentration camp. He has consistently called for improved relations with the Jewish community.

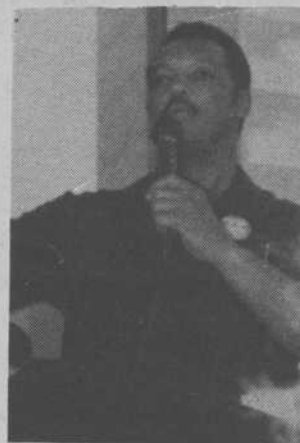
In Brussels earlier this month, at an international conference on anti-Semitism, he delivered a speech clearly aimed at reconciliation with the Jewish community; he praised Zionism as a

"liberation movement" and called for Jews and blacks to renew their joint fight against racism. He suggested that blacks and Jews "share church and synagogue experiences, share our holy days, so that we might have a greater appreciation of each other."

Two weeks later, at the Democratic Convention, he again reached out, speaking movingly about the Holocaust and praising Israel Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's "wisdom in affirming negotiation over confrontation."

Our Common Enemies Rejoice

These and other efforts were often met with suspicion and silence. But justice and self-interest demand otherwise. Let us not nurse our wounds and translate every difference into a grievance, every controversy into combat, every disagreement into a bloodletting. Only our common enemies rejoice when



JESSE JACKSON

blacks and Jews square off against each other. Jews can't afford it. Blacks can't afford it. America and the world can't afford it.

We live at a time when racial and religious and ethnic tensions are growing, when "ethnic cleansing" is ravaging the former Yugoslavia and xenophobia fuels violence against foreigners in Austria and Germany, when Gypsies are threatened in Eastern Europe and a former imperial grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan wins a majority of white votes in Louisiana.

In such an hour, we must look beyond the hurts and griev-

ances of the past. Blacks and Jews need each other not only because of our common enemies but because of our common dreams. Together, we share a vision of a just and open and generous society. Together we identify with the weak and the stranger. Together, we hold that it is the foremost task of government to achieve social, economic and political justice.

Jesse Jackson is an eloquent spokesman for that shared vision. He is the most widely acknowledged leader of America's black community, a staunch defender of his people's rights and dignity, a powerful voice for the poor and the powerless, the jobless and the hun-

gry, of every color and creed in our nation. He has earned the respect of millions of Americans as a leader of political, intellectual and moral power on the great and vexing issues of our time. And he has grown, and changed, and reached out.

At a time when toxic waters of racism are rising from the Urals in Europe to the bayous of Louisiana, Jews should welcome the hand Jesse Jackson has extended to us. Let us do so for our own sake, for America's sake, for Israel's sake, for the sake of justice, brotherhood and peace — for all the moral principles and ethical values Jews have stood and died for during our history as a people.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MINISTER FORMS RELIGIOUS RIGHTS GROUP TO FIGHT RELIGIOUS KIDNAPPING

Washington DC— In the wake of a rash of arrests and indictments of religious "deprogrammers" over the past year, including several with connections to the religious hate group known as Cult Awareness Network, an organization has been formed by an African-American minister to stand up for religious liberty and to eradicate religious kidnappings by pushing for criminal prosecutions of the kidnapers.

Dr. Issac N. Brooks, Jr., a minister and religious freedom advocate, heads the new Deprogramming Survivors Network, whose members include deprogramming victims, former deprogrammers, religious freedom scholars and ministers. Brooks stated, "Religious kidnappings such as the one of Wendy Potter, a former Miss Black America runner-up candidate, by the three time convicted deprogrammer Ted Patrick must cease. She was forcibly kidnapped and detained for weeks living in fear all because of her Christian beliefs."

The group is calling for the prosecution of criminal deprogrammers, citing as other examples the several Cult Awareness Network-linked deprogrammers indicted in Boise, Idaho, earlier this year for the violent kidnapping of a woman from her

home in full view of her two young children. The woman was forcibly detained for several days and was released by her abductors only after friends alerted the media and local authorities.

"America was found on the principles that every citizen has the right to choose his own religious beliefs and to practice those beliefs," Dr. Brooks stated. "Blood has been spilled on many a battlefield to protect these freedoms."

"Deprogrammers" who violate these fundamental rights by illegally kidnapping and detaining adherents of particular religions must pay for their crimes. Religious kidnapping must cease."

Deprogramming Survivors

Network spokesman Chris Garrison, himself a survivor of a kidnapping from his chosen religion, stated, "This horror must end. We can not allow this brutality to exist in our United States."

The further mission of the Deprogramming Survivors Network, according to Garrison, is to promote communication, tolerance and understanding between family members on matters of religious belief. "This is a very sensitive issue that demands love and understanding, never violence," said Garrison.

More information is available from Deprogramming Survivors Network at 325 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003.

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