

Farrakhan: A 'peddler of bigotry?'

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THE GUEST COLUMN
By STEWART LEWENGRUB

During the past few days my mind wandered back to October 1973 -- to be specific, two days after the start of the Yom Kippur War. Jews the world over felt threatened. The initial military victories, as a result of the surprise attack, seemed to belong to the Arabs. Israel had not yet turned to the tide. In Washington, there were time-consuming debates over arms shipments to Israel.

That morning, into my office walked a friend, Lonnie King, then president of the Atlanta NAACP and a longtime active civil rights leader. As a Morehouse College student, Lonnie was one of the architects of the early sit-ins and had more than once been threatened and attacked by white racists. In 1973, Lonnie, while active in community affairs, was also struggling to establish his own business.

He sat down at my desk and pulled out his personal checkbook. He wrote out a check for \$100 (not a small amount for him then) and said, "I want to send this to the Israelis. Can you do it for me?" I told him to fill in "UJA-Israel Emergency Fund" and I would see that the check got there.

Then I said "thanks," and asked, "how come?"

I've never forgotten Lonnie's response. He said: "I don't know much about Arabs or Israelis, but I do know that when I was marching for our rights and I looked around, most of the whites that I saw helping us were Jews and I figure I owe you this. When we needed you, you helped. Now it's my turn." I hugged Lonnie. Interestingly, several months later, Lonnie King and I led a mission of 12 Atlanta black leaders to Israel in what remains for me one of the highlights of my own career.

It has been several years since I last saw Lonnie. I'm not sure whether he is still in Atlanta or not. The reason I recall his visit

that October day, 12 years ago, relates to the current issue concerning the anti-Semitism of black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan and the reluctance of some black political and community leaders to issue unqualified, firm and clear condemnations of this peddler of bigotry.

In recent months, Farrakhan's anti-Semitism has reached a fever pitch. His audiences have grown in number and enthusiasm. His public expressions of bigotry are not directed toward Jews alone;

white Americans, in general, also share his oratorical ire. But his pet scapegoats are "the Jews." Actually, he refers to us frequently as "the so-called Jews."

In the most insulting and detestable of terms, Farrakhan mocks the Holocaust, attacks the legitimacy of the democratic State of Israel and degrades Judaism itself. He ascribes the cause of every affliction suffered by blacks to the Jews. "Jewish control," "Jewish money" and "Jewish wickedness" are among



Louis Farrakhan during a recent visit to Winston-Salem (photo by Art Blue).



POP GOES THE WEASEL

his oft-used phrases.

There are those who have explained that Farrakhan speaks to issues of black pride, black economic initiative and black freedom. But why with his foot firmly on the neck of the Jews?

Farrakhan does not simply say to black audiences, get rid of your shackles and find your freedom. He says get rid of the shackles placed on you by the Jews and find your freedom from the Jews.

Why then, is criticism from some of our nation's most respected and visible black

followers should they be too critical?

There have been several black political and civil rights leaders, as well as journalists, who have firmly denounced Farrakhan and his bigotry. But too many others have couched even their mild criticisms in sociological explanations, apologies, assurances of his harmlessness and suggestions he is being "misread" and "misunderstood."

Farrakhan has been termed "articulate," "persuasive," "a legitimate force for positive change," etc. Hitler was ar-

question? Not at all. Reciprocity is not cynical. Nor is it immoral. Reciprocity is the essence of political life and perhaps of most human behavior. It does not suggest a compromise of principle.

Black political and civil rights leaders do not -- repeat do not -- owe the Jewish community automatic agreement, assent, or support on any political issue. There is the mutual responsibility to listen to one another's concerns and views and, indeed, there are times when we will agree and times we will differ on given issues. Sometimes our agendas are shared; sometimes they are not.

But I believe there is one thing black leaders and spokesmen do owe the Jewish community. Whenever and wherever racism has surfaced, Jews have been, and still are, among the first to publicly condemn it and assure the black community that we stand side-by-side in opposing that racism. Strategies may differ, but the history of the Jewish people and the teachings of Judaism demand that we oppose racism. We have learned the painful lesson that bigotry is contagious and, once unleashed, knows no limitations.

I believe it is not too much to expect that those who hold positions of leadership in the black community will likewise denounce anti-Semitism -- without qualification, without apologies, without equivocation -- whenever and wherever it surfaces.

Is it reasonable to expect a black leader, whose primary con-

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leaders -- such as Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young and Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley -- belated and then so carefully phrased and muted?

Are they unaware that Farrakhan is appealing to the basest instincts of his audiences? Do they doubt the anti-Semitic thrust of his message? Do they believe that the \$5 million Farrakhan received from Libya's Muammar Qaddafi is solely for the purpose of manufacturing and selling toothpaste and cosmetics and has nothing to do with his past assaults on Jews and Israel and as incentive for future ones?

Are they simply afraid of retaliation by Farrakhan or his

articulate and persuasive. The Ku Klux Klan speaks of "white pride." Mussolini made the trains run on time. Does that excuse their evil?

It is both fair and accurate to suggest that, were it not for the early and continuous support of many Jews, political leaders such as Young and Bradley would likely not have achieved their successes. It was not Jews alone who provided support and obviously each man has been successful because of his individual abilities and efforts. But the fact remains that Jewish support was vital to each.

So then, what, if anything, do they owe Jews? Is that a cynical

A senseless death in West Virginia: A widow copes

Sometimes you hurt so badly you have to talk about it.

Inez Shaw of Greensboro knows such pain.

The call came at 2:45 a.m. on Oct. 2 -- a dispassionate voice on the other end of a long-distance connection.

"We have your husband here at CMAC Hospital and he's dead," the voice said.

Next August would have marked her 20th anniversary of marriage to Galento Shaw, 46, a Winston-Salem-based Greyhound bus driver. When Mrs. Shaw speaks of him, she is always smiling, always obviously pleased and self-assured that hers was a good husband. The very best.

Now he was gone, the victim of four gunshot wounds from what police in Charleston, W. Va., believe was a Colt .357 Magnum handgun.

A witness testified that the man accused of shooting and killing Shaw met him on a sidewalk out-

side of a Charleston motel, angry and muttering racial slurs.

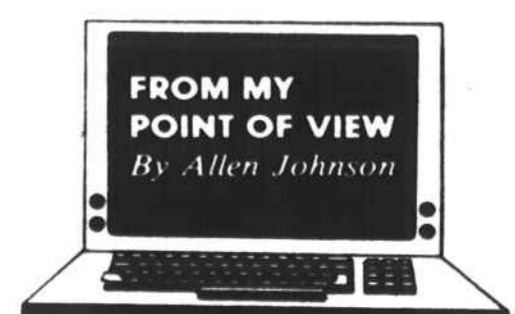
"He said, 'Who runs this place, a bunch of niggers?'" Ronnie Ray King, 20, a dishwasher, testified two weeks ago in a probable-cause hearing. "He said, 'Do you like colored people?' and I said, 'They don't bother me.' ... He said, 'Let's go whip this colored guy.' ... I said, 'He didn't do nothing to me.'"

King also testified that the man, Francis Lloyd Ramsey, 61, a West Virginia Department of Highways employee, said he was going to "shoot up this motel" and asked him to "help me fight these niggers."

When Shaw left the motel, King said, Ramsey reached into his coat pocket and shot Shaw.

"There wasn't any words between the two of them," King said. "He just shot."

Aside from the call from the hospital and another call from a police investigator, Inez Shaw says, she could only piece



together snatches of information about the incident from news accounts.

"By 12 noon, we still had not received any information from Charleston," she says.

When she did, her grief turned into frustration.

The early news accounts had said her husband "may have been involved in an argument inside the motel prior to the shooting," says Mrs. Shaw, a registered nurse at Moses Cone Hospital.

That didn't sound like her husband, she insists.

"He never had an enemy," she calmly says of Galento Shaw. "He makes friends. He always wanted to do things for people."

Clyde Scott, another Winston-Salem-based Greyhound driver who had known Shaw for 12 years, agrees.

Although his appraisal of his friend's character is hardly objective, he says, Shaw was not the type of man to provoke a fight.

"He's just not the type of individual who would go to a lounge and make enemies," Scott says. "He was the type who would make friends. That wasn't the Galento Shaw (the one referred to in the accounts) at all that we knew."

"You could go to Charleston, West Virginia, right now and talk to drivers, black and white, and they'd say the same thing about him."

Later news stories gave a more detailed account of the incident, including the eyewitness' testimony.

But Mrs. Shaw still feels a need to tell her story to area media to be sure that the public knows that

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Inez Shaw: Her husband wasn't the type of man to provoke a shooting (photo by James Parker).

Marable

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graduate schools are 65 percent white.

TSU enrolls only 10 percent of the state's black college students but produces 40 percent of its black college graduates!

Meanwhile, the historically white University of Tennessee has only 2.5 percent black faculty and seven of its schools have absolutely no black administrators.

Yet, virtually no political pressure is being exerted to desegregate white, state-supported institutions.

The struggle to save TSU and Fisk is more than an effort to preserve the institutions that gave this country some of its most gifted artists, writers, scientists and political leaders. It is part of a coordinated attempt to address

the concrete problems which confront Black America -- in health care, economic development, education and public policy. Few white universities will, in the near future, dedicate themselves to the full development of black youth as leaders, and to the goal of complete educational opportunity for the masses of black people. A national effort must begin to

consolidate the gains at Fisk, and to reverse the legal campaign to destroy TSU's identity as a black institution. If TSU falls, the collapse of state-supported black higher education will occur across the country.

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WHICH OF THESE STRIKES MORE TERROR IN THE HEARTS OF AIR PASSENGERS?

