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Black-Jewish Tensions and Modern Antisemitism in America

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Antisemitism, while on the decline in America since the end of WWII, has persisted through the present. "White man are you sick and tired of the Jews destroying your country through mass immigration and degeneracy? Join us in the struggle for global white supremacy."[1] This statement, flanked by swastikas, adorned posters that were printed at both UW-Milwaukee and UW-Madison in 2016.[2] The poster was created by the Daily Stormer, a neo-Nazi organization in America, which received significant attention in the aftermath of an attack in Charlottesville, Virginia by a right-wing demonstrator against counter-protesters which resulted in the death of a 32-year-old woman and more than a dozen injured. The assailant was said to have a "fondness for Adolf Hitler" and was "very big into Nazism" according to some of his former high school peers and teachers.[3] These comments represent a right-wing antisemitism that had historically been the primary source of anti-Jewish animosity and the focus of Jewish efforts to combat antisemitism. During the 1960s, however, the American far left and some of the more militant factions of the civil rights movement began espousing antisemitic rhetoric that brought the golden age of Black-Jewish collaboration to an end. This was, in part, due to the influence of the Nation of Islam's (NOI) writings on some within the movement. While the far right continues to spout antisemitic remarks on occasion, it was the far left that brought antisemitism into urban centers and universities in the 1960s and continues to be the most widely supported form of antisemitism in America.

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[1] An image of the poster, originally available at the website dailystormer.com is no longer available as the website has been shut down. A copy of the original image can be found at Hilton Hater, "Daily Stormer, White Supremacist Website, Yanked Down by GoDaddy," *The Hollywood Gossip*, 14 August 2017, https://www.thehollywoodgossip.com/2017/08/daily-stormer-white-supremacist-website-yanked-down-by-godaddy/.

[2] "2016 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents," Jewish Community Relations Council, Milwaukee Jewish Federation, http://milwaukeejewish.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Audit2016_narrative.pdf.

[3] Steve Almasy, Kwegyirba Croffie, and Madison Park, "Teacher, Ex-Classmate Describe Charlottesville Suspect as Nazi Sympathizer," *CNN*, 15 August 2017, http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/12/us/charlottesville-car-crash-suspect-idd/index.html.

Black-Jewish tensions were not new to America in the 1960s. Indeed, there had been problems between the two groups at least by the time of Great Depression. America collectively had a problem with antisemitism during the early 20th century and it reached its apex in the 1930s.[4] The long-lasting stereotype of the rich Jew controlling the markets, was proven to many by the perception that the Great Depression did not as harshly affect Jews. Urban African American communities were no different in this prejudice than whites. Indeed, in the once predominantly Jewish parts of Harlem, some Blacks, feeling that the Jews were responsible for the economic struggles that Blacks were now facing, cursed their Jewish neighbors.[5] This animus largely stemmed from the hiring practices of the Jews family-run businesses in urban environments, such as Chicago and Harlem, where Jewish business owners tended to hire within their own families. This was exemplified by the slogan "Don't Shop Where You Can't Work."[6] For many Jews this was a seemingly unwarranted attack on them since they were simply trying to do what was necessary to survive and keep their families fed, while many Blacks felt that the Jews were being clannish and self-centered. Instead of a racially motivated hatred of Jews, a viewpoint taken by Hitler and later by neo-Nazi movements, Blacks who opposed Jews in the 1930s did so largely for economic reasons. Indeed, this was still a primary motivation in the 1960s.

Rabbi Francis Barry Silberg noted in his presentation at the symposium on Black-Jewish relations held in Milwaukee on March 20, 1986, that while there was racism in the Jewish communities that southern Blacks moved into in the 1920s, the majority of Jews empathized with the struggles of the Black community. They too were the subject of persecution, only

[4] Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States: 1654: 2000*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 210.
[5] Diner, 211.
[6] Diner, 211.

instead of being racially persecuted Jews were religiously persecuted. Indeed, even some Blacks held antisemitic views of Jews stemming from their interpretation of the Bible.[7] This helps to demonstrate that one of the sources of antisemitic prejudice: religious intolerance and misunderstanding. One of these religious prejudices was the accusation of deicide. The claim comes from the Bible in the Gospel according to Matthew when Pilate said to the Jews gathered at Jesus's trial, "'I am innocent of this man's blood […] it is your responsibility!' All of the people answered, 'His blood is on us and on our children!'"[8] The ramifications of the biblical accusation of the Jews committing deicide were not addressed until the Second Vatican Council. While part of the reason for antisemitism historically was religious intolerance, this was not the major factor in the renewed Black-Jewish tensions of the 1960s.

While Black-Jewish tensions have existed historically, the groups have also had periods of cooperation and mutual understanding; the NAACP is perhaps the greatest example of this amicable relationship. Indeed, in 1980, James A. Thomas urging for a return to the Black-Jewish alliance of the past noted that Jews had historically treated Blacks better than other whites.[9] However, in the early 1960s, with the civil rights movement gathering momentum, some members of the more radical groups began questioning why Blacks were being so poorly treated and why Blacks could not seem to get ahead financially. One of their conclusions was that whites were economically taking advantage of Blacks; white businesses, white landlords, and white bankers were making Blacks pay more than their white neighbors. Even before the 1960s, James H. Robinson understood that "anti-Semitism among Negroes is based upon suspicion

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[7] Francis Barry Silberg, "Black/Jewish Relations: A Prologue," 20 March 1986, box 40, folder 11, Vel Phillips Papers (hereafter VPP), Milwaukee Mss 231, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
[8] Matthew 27:26-27 (NIV).
[9] James A. Thomas, "Time Remembered," *Chicago Defender*, Wednesday, 26 March 1980, box 193, folder 3, Dore Schary Papers (hereafter DSP), US Mss 37 AN, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

rather than hate" and that "there are Negroes with anti-Semitic attitudes born from unhappy experiences with Jewish property-owners and storekeepers operating in communities to which Negroes are restricted."[10] On this claim, however, Thomas said, "Sure, we can say that the Jew robbed us by the prices we had paid, but we always had food on the table and a healthy and loving family relationship."[11] When taken together these statements suggest that tensions were based significantly on economic struggles that many urban Blacks felt were caused by Jews.

Just before the 1960s, James H. Robinson noted that, "The possibilities of conflict between Jews and Negroes will become potentially greater as the non-white population exceeds the white population in the urban centers."[12] Indeed, the relationship between Blacks and Jews started to drift apart during the 1960s as whites continued their movement to suburbs. The formerly strong alliance turned sour as Blacks grew tired of the inaction of liberalism. Jews, long having been supporters of liberalism's goals, took offense and quickly became skeptical of the civil rights movement.[13] Jews, having long been active in the civil rights movement, began feeling increasingly ostracized beginning in the early 1960s. In 1965, Carmichael, a leader in the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC), helped inflame Black-Jewish tensions, when he told whites to "get off the bandwagon" and that they had no place in the civil rights struggle.[14] This alienated many of the Jews who had long fought for equal rights with many abandoning the cause altogether as a result. The rise of Black militancy in the 1960s can be seen as one of the early signs of tensions to come.

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[10] James H. Robinson, "Some Apprehension, Much Hope," box 153, folder 19, DSP.
[11] James A. Thomas, "Time Remembered," DSP.
[12] James H. Robinson, "Some Apprehension, Much Hope," box 153, folder 19, DSP.
[13] Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 206.
[14] Diner, 335.

That Black antisemitism was frequently motivated by economic oppression is corroborated by Eddie Ellis who, in 1966, wrote, "The most violent type of oppression of Black Americans – economic oppression – is waged by solely profit-motivated members of that *other ethnic minority* [i.e. Jews]. Hence, it stands to reason the Black man who is constantly under the *heel* of economic tyranny lashes out, quite naturally, at the visible tyrant."[15] Ellis' statement highlights numerous issues within the Black-Jewish relationship. Jews frequently voiced their treatment of being an ethnic minority when discussing Black woes. Letters such as those from Frances Dale, a Jewish teacher in New Jersey, point to some Jews viewing themselves as the victims of the white-Black racial conflict that was brewing.[16] Jews, being the pale-skinned people that Blacks interacted with most frequently in urban areas since they owned many of the shops that were in ghettos, were seen as white, rather than Jewish. However, Jews often did not see this in the same light.

Eddie Ellis wrote in January of 1966 that "America's Jewish communities have assimilated themselves into white Protestant America – and done it so damn well – they have assumed the attitudes and prejudices of this WASP 'in group' ….to our sorrow."[17] Ellis' sentiment was not far from the truth. Many Jews in the inner-city had developed similar racial prejudices to whites and it was because of this racial discrimination that many Blacks began viewing Jews as white. This is, perhaps, one of the many great issues surrounding Black-Jewish tensions; whites often did not view Jews as white and were thus alienated, while Blacks did view Jews as white and were similarly ostracized. White southerners were outraged that Jews were helping with the civil rights movement and by the 1950s Jews had become targets of white

[15] Eddie Ellis, "Semitism in the Black Ghetto," *Liberator*, (January, 1966), box 153, folder 18, DSP.
[16] Frances Dale to Dore Schary, 13 September 1968, box 153, folder 18, DSP.
[17] Eddie Ellis, "Semitism in the Black Ghetto," *Liberator*, (January, 1966), box 153, folder 18, DSP.

violence.[18] Many Jews found themselves in an uncomfortable position, rejected and even persecuted by some whites and blacks and caught in the middle the fight for civil rights.

One key aspect of the Black-Jewish relationship, and perhaps the entire reason why the conflict grew so rapidly, is that the two sides never saw the issue in the same way. Blacks saw Jews as oppressive white urbanites who were taking advantage of a history of racial oppression, while Jews thought that Blacks despised Jews for religious reasons. Samuel Lipschitz, a New York Jew, wrote to Dore Schary, the chairman of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) for much of the 1960s, voicing his concerns on a Black-Jewish coalition. Lipschitz, when stating his belief about the motivation for the Black-Jewish alliance proposed by Schary stated, "Is it not that the Jew is using the Negro as a tool to take revenge or to manifest their resentments against the white Christian who for so long have persecuted the Jews."[19] Rather than seeing the issue as Dore Schary saw it, i.e. as an issue of racial inequality where both Jews and Blacks were being abused, many Jews saw it as an issue of religious persecution. An anonymous teacher in New York wrote to Dore Schary that, "Maybe you should tell your Negro friends that, from 1619 to 1861, Christian Southerners enslaved them, and that thereafter a vicious discriminatory system has been perpetrated, largely by southerners? And that when the products of this terrible system come North, uneducated and unprepared for city life, to eat up our welfare money, even the most sympathetic becomes angry after a while?"[20] Indeed, this sort of misunderstanding made it difficult for Jews to comprehend why Blacks were displeased, since many viewed Blacks as being disgruntled over the Jewish religion, rather than their economic situation.

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[18] Diner, 272.
[19] Samuel Lipschitz to Dore Schary, 14 November 1969, box 153, folder 18, DSP.
[20] "Name withheld for fear of reprisals" to Dore Schary, n.d., box 153, folder 18, DSP.

In 1965, a massive study of antisemitism in America was completed by the University of California-Berkeley and submitted to the ADL. Their findings, taken from a survey of 2000 people, concluded that religion was a major factor in antisemitism.[21] This would explain why the ADL was as reluctant as they were to address Jewish concerns about a rise in Black antisemitism; the ADL viewed it simply as a continuation of their historical tensions with Christians and devoted more effort to fixing the Jewish-Christian tensions than the rapidly evolving Black-Jewish tensions. This was also due in part to a study which found that Blacks, on average, were much less likely to have antisemitic feelings than whites.[22] The ADL was happy to report to Jews around the country that Black antisemitism was not a problem, that antisemitism was still primarily coming from the right, and that they would have nothing to fear. This would soon fall on deaf ears because of the actions of a few more militant Blacks in northern cities.

As previously noted, Black militancy became a major cause for concern among Jews in the mid-1960s. However, the ADL was largely successful in keeping these concerns in check until 1965. In 1965, a riot broke out in Los Angeles and led many ambivalent Jews to turn against Blacks. Blacks, having long grown weary of waiting for the liberal cause to effect change in the system and systemic racism, took to the streets in what has been describes as the "long hot summer" and started looting and damaging many of the stores in their neighborhoods.[23] In many northern cities, including Los Angeles, Jews felt that these riots were targeted at them. In Philadelphia 80 percent of the shops damaged in the riots were owned by Jews, in Los Angeles 80 percent of the furniture stores, 54 percent of the liquor stores, and 60 percent of the food

[21] "Anti-Semitism and the University of California Studies," delivered by Samuel Delsimer, 4 February 1965, page 4, box 153, folder 13, DSP.
[22] "Statement of Principles [of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith]," n.d., page 2, box 153, folder 19, DSP.
[23] Diner, 275.

stores that were damaged or looted were own by Jews.[24] It is easy to see how Jews felt that they were the targets in these attacks. However, these attacks were not aimed specifically at Jews, rather they were intended to be against the system that Blacks felt was oppressing them. Arnold Forster, one of the ADL's senior officials, wrote to the national director of the ADL, Benjamin Epstein, informing him of the situation. He noted that, "Though many Jewish store owners incurred tremendous losses as a result of the riots, these depradations [sic] occurred not because they were Jewish but rather because they were white and their property was in the target zone."[25] Indeed, Forster was not the only person urging for a return to reason. The director of the Jewish Community Council in Rochester, New York, similarly advised that "Jewish businessmen were not the prime targets because they were Jews" and that the violence that had occurred should not be interpreted as antisemitism.[26] Unfortunately, this advise did not seem to have a significant effect on the Jewish store owner who had just watched his life's work be destroyed in a few days.

In the aftermath of the Los Angeles riots in 1965, several antisemitic slurs were hurled against Jewish store owners. While there is little evidence that Jews were singled out in the riots, there were sufficient incidents to be worrying to the Jewish community. Statements like, "We're not gonna stand for Old Saul Schwartz waiting behind the counter in his liquor store with his NAACP sticker in the window. Then come 2:30, and old Saul put the community's money in his pocket and gets in his Jewish canoe – a Cadillac – and goes home to Bel Air while he leaves his Negro clerk to wait on the stick-up man," made many of the Jewish residents in LA nervous.[27] The LA office of the ADL noted that these statements also resulted in phone calls to them "from

[24] Diner, 275.
[25] Arthur Forster to Benjamin R. Epstein, 23 August 1965, box 153, folder 19, DSP.
[26] Diner, 276.
[27] Arthur Forster to Benjamin R. Epstein, 23 August 1965, box 153, folder 19, DSP.

members of the Jewish community who felt they had been 'betrayed.'"[28] These two statements together form an important piece of the puzzle. The reality of the situation was that there was little antisemitism in the civil rights movement, but Jews were nevertheless worried that this might change.

Black militant leaders like Malcom X and Stokely Carmichael drew the attention of Dore Schary for their anti-Zionist and antisemitic views. James H. Robinson noted in 1957 that "most of these attitudes [of anti-Jewish prejudice] have been borrowed from the majority group with whom Negroes have associated or the pseudo-Moslem groups of the recent Pan-Arab influence which has been noticeable in Negro communities of eastern and midwestern cities."[29] Robinson was quite accurate in his assessment. This influence of Arab and Muslim thought on the civil rights movement can explain why there was an influx of antisemitism in the form of anti-Zionism in the 1960s. In 1967, Israel preemptively attacked Egyptian airfields in response to Egypt closing the Straits of Tiran to Israeli ships. Many Black nationalists, sympathizing with Palestinians and the Arab nations, condemned what they perceived as Israeli imperialism. Indeed, at the 1967 Conference for a New Politics, the Black Caucus spearheaded a resolution that declared the Six-Day War an "imperialist Zionist war" and that Israel, a white nation, had stolen land from dark-skinned Arabs.[30] This angered many Jews who sided strongly with Israel, further driving a wedge between the two groups. Furthermore, Carmichael's claim, while abroad in Syria in 1967, that "Zionism had assisted Negro organizations with the aim of dominating them" drew the ire of many Jews who had long been striving for equal rights for all.[31] It is reasonable to conclude then that Black-Jewish tensions were escalating rapidly by late 1967.

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[28] Ibid.
[29] James H. Robinson, "Some Apprehension, Much Hope," box 153, folder 19, DSP.
[30] Diner, 334-5.
[31] Harvey B. Schechter, "Anti-Semitism on the Left; Old and New," box, 153, folder 19, DSP.

Citing the height of Black militancy, Jewish pride stemming from the decisive Israeli victory in the Six-Day War, and left-ward movement of the Black community, Silberg argues that that "1967 was the watershed year for Black/Jewish relations."[32] If 1967 was the beginning of the end for amicable relations between Black and Jews, then 1968 was the final blow. What had once simply been minor inconveniences in Black-Jewish relations deepened into widespread distrust of the other. In late 1968, tensions between Blacks and Jews flared again over a strike in New York's public schools which left schools in the Ocean Hills-Brownsville community closed from September to November. The issue revolved around the transfer of a number of Jewish teachers out of the district. Jews saw this as a blatant violation of their union contract while Blacks saw this as a necessary measure to ensure that Blacks were not being treated poorly by teachers.[33] Jews quickly became the targets of numerous blatantly antisemitic remarks that left many feeling unsafe. A statement to two Jewish administrators read, "You had your warning last year to get rid of the Jew racist-pig (name omitted). You have ignored this demand of the Africation (sic) National Liberation Method (ANLM). Now that kike will die like the scum he is. Watch yourself Jew, crossing the streets, drinking tea, etc. You have also been marked for elimination."[34] This caused exceptional stress for many of the Jews in New York since the images of the Holocaust were still fresh in the minds of many. Many could not understand why they were being singled out in this conflict and lashed back with their own racist remarks.[35]

Simultaneously, many Blacks felt that the Jewish teachers in the school district were simply deflecting from the issue at heart. David Spencer, chairman of the IS 201 Complex

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[32] Francis Barry Silberg, "Black/Jewish Relations: A Prologue," 20 March 1986, box 40, folder 11, VPP.
[33] Diner, 337.
[34] "Anti-Semitism in the New York City School Controversy: A Preliminary Report of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith," January 1969, box 153, folder 14, DSP. Parentheses were as written in the original source.
[35] Diner, 337.

Governing Board and a key figure in the New York school crisis in 1968, stated that "What we see happening is that with an ingenious display of verbal gymnastics, a large part of the Jewish Establishment using the cry of 'anti-Semitism' to imply that black people are persecuting Jews. The only comparable situation that comes to mind is a rapist charging his victim with assault."[36] This statement, along with many others made by Blacks who were accused of being antisemitic, indicates that Jews were being targeted not because of their religious beliefs but rather because they were perceived to be white. Indeed, Jews did not see the issue this way, instead they saw it as an attack on them because of their religion, and with language like, "Hey, Jew boy, with that yarmulka [sic] on your head/ You pale-faced Jew boy—I wish you were dead," it is not hard to see why Jews might think so.[37] This is another perfect example of the two groups not seeing the issue from the other's perspective and ultimately escalating the situation because of this. Rather than seeing the issue for what it was, an issue of community involvement in schools, Jews felt they were experiencing a level of persecution not seen since the days of Nazi Germany. Similarly, Blacks felt that Jews were trying to extort and control them with any opposition to Jews being met with claims of antisemitism.

In any discussion of Black-Jewish tensions it is necessary to mention the poem recited by Leslie Campbell on a WBAI radio broadcast in December of 1968 entitled "Anti-Semitism." The poem, written by a 15-year-old girl, was immediately labeled as antisemitic by the ADL and worsened the already tense relationship between Blacks and Jews. The poem demonstrates many of the antisemitic sources in the civil rights movement, but perhaps the most blatant of them being the influence of Islam. Lines like, "When the UN made Israel a free independent state little

[36] "Anti-Semitism in the New York City School Controversy: A Preliminary Report of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith," January 1969, box 153, folder 14, DSP.
[37] Diner, 337.

4- and 5-year-old boys threw hand grenades. They hated the black Arabs with all their might, and you, Jew boy, said it was all right."[38] This poem reflects the notions of antisemitism taking the form of anti-Zionism in the late 1960s as well as that Black nationalists were heavily influenced by Muslim theology. The poem further exemplified influence from Muslim theology in the lines, "Jew boy, you took my religion and adopted it for you, but you know that Black people were the original Hebrews."[39] While one might want to say that this poem was not really well received by the protesters, that it was dedicated to the president of the United Federation of Teachers (the union that was on strike) and lauded by one of the Black teachers opposing the strike as "both beautiful and true" strongly suggests that such sentiments were not uncommon among the counter-protesters.[40]

It was during the late 1960s that anti-Zionism became the major force of antisemitism. Fed largely by Black militancy, antisemitic leaflets describing what Blacks should do to Jews circulated in late 1968. What the ADL once saw as in insignificant issue had reached "a crisis level in New York City schools, where, 'it has been building for more than two years.'"[41] One such leaflet addressed to "Brothers and Sisters" stated:

> Albert Shanker, a Zionist Jew pig, and the U.F.T. (United Federation of Teachers), which is backed by Zionist Jew Pigs in business, have offically [sic] declared war on us, the people of the slums, through their pig puppet cops and their swine puppet Firmin.
>
> Therefore, fight back by disrupting all Jew pig's businesses in your area by any means possible (such as boycotts during the day and when the time is right do your thing and keep on gettin up), until they pull their pig bastards and bitches and puppets off of our backs.
>
> Our Slogan
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> Until pig Shanker and his puppets are made to quit, All Jew pigs will be hit.[42]

[38] "Anti-Semitism in the New York City School Controversy," January 1969, box 153, folder 19, DSP.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Press Release from the Anti-Defamation League, 23 January 1969, box 153, folder 19, DSP.
[42] "Anti-Semitism in the New York City School Controversy," January 1969, box 153, folder 19, DSP.

This leaflet is useful in understanding what many Blacks felt about the situation as well as the extent of Black militancy in the New York. The slogan is perhaps the most useful in this assessment, since it suggests that if Shanker and the other Jewish administrators did not quit they would be met with violence. This is symptomatic of the earlier riots of the 1960s wherein Blacks resorted to riots to make their demands heard. This leaflet also highlights the anti-Zionist influence on Black-Jewish tensions. This strike had started because of a contract dispute, but now it was seen by some Blacks as being about Zionists trying to control Blacks and the struggle for freedom from these Zionists. A prime example of this comes from Eddie Ellis in 1966 who wrote:

> It's little wonder then, scarcely two years after the abolition of slavery, money from Northern 'white liberals' in many cases from Jews began to find its way south in support of 'negro' educational institutions. Through financial control of Black education, curriculum was established, and from that point 'free negroes' were taught: to be dependent upon the whites who provided their education; to be 'first rate' mechanical laborers; to differentiate their morals as well as their manners from the masses; and finally these negro students were instilled with a spirit of humility and an acceptance of their (so-called) inferior status.[43]

Even before the 1968 strike, there was a feeling among some Blacks that the Jews were manipulating Blacks in the service of whites. While his opinions were in the minority, they rang true for many Blacks in New York who felt that their school districts were not sympathetic to their needs.

"Anti-Semitism" was not the only antisemitic poem to surface during the late 1960s. "Jew-land," a parody of a contemporary rock song, was published in June of 1967 by the Black Panther Party and had many of the same antisemitic messages. Particularly worrisome to the ADL was the section which stated, "We're gonna burn their towns and that ain't all/We're gonna p--- upon the Wailing Wall/And then we'll get Kosygin and DeGaule/That will be ecstasy,

[43] Eddie Ellis, "Semitism in the Black Ghetto," *Liberator*, (January 1966), box 153, folder 18, DSP.

killing every Jew we see."[44] Again, this poem indicates that Black militancy had gained wider support or at least that it was becoming much more vocal. This poem worried Jews far more than "Anti-Semitism" due to its seemingly euphoric position on killing Jews and destroying their homes. For many Jews, poems like "Anti-Semitism" and "Jew-land" reinforced the idea that Blacks were out to get them and that they should abandon their efforts in the civil rights movement; the liberalism they were used to seemingly gone, replaced instead with intolerance, nationalism, and violence. Yet, despite these openly antisemitic remarks spout at Jews, many in the ADL still fought hard for civil rights and a return to an amicable relationship between Blacks and Jews.

Kenyon Burke was one of the many men in the ADL who sought to mend the growing rift between the Black and Jewish communities. Burke, head of the Urban Affairs desk at the ADL, went to many cities around the nation to research the feelings of Blacks towards Jews. Dore Schary noted that Burke would be able to inform the ADL and guide them on the issues surrounding the Black communities.[45] Burke found, "In most localities Negroes couldn't care less about anti-Semitism. They are concerned about the hostility of the white community and voiced their resentment against whites and the establishment."[46] This may have been true, but it was not what the Jewish community believed. As Alexander Miller, a high-ranking official in the ADL noted in 1968, "Black anti-Semitism is based rather on confrontation; on a feeling of exploitation. It represents resentment against a majority person who happens to be Jewish."[47] This explains why Jews felt wronged by Blacks. Jews having been alienated throughout much of their history by white Europeans, did not fully understand that they had become white

[44] Harvey B. Schechter, "Anti-Semitism on the Left; Old and New," box, 153, folder 19, DSP.
[45] Dore Schary to Mrs. G. Ader, 26 September 1968, box 153, folder 18, DSP.
[46] Alexander F. Miller to Alan R. Morse, 16 December 1968, box 153, folder 18, DSP.
[47] Ibid.

themselves by the 1960s. Many Jews viewed themselves as being somewhere in between in the Black-white binary. With neo-Nazis spouting their white-supremacist agenda while simultaneously degrading Jews, it is not unlikely that many Jews felt that they did not quite fit into the established binary.

By 1969, the growth of Black antisemitism, real or imagined, could no longer be ignored by Black leaders who wanted to maintain their historically good relationship with Jews. Bayard Rustin, the noted civil rights leader, wrote to Dore Schary acknowledging that "Anti-Semitism among Negroes is a serious and growing problem."[48] He wanted to try to mend the schism that had grown between the two groups and Dore Schary did as well; however, this is not what many Jews wanted. The *Liberator,* a monthly magazine self-described as the "voice of the African-American," published many articles that concerned Jews due to their antisemitic statements.[49] The magazine was described quite differently by Robert Frankel, who called the *Liberator* "black nationalist, militant and left wing."[50] Frankel's comments were not unique, as some of the Jewish community demonstrated. In a letter to Dore Schary, Charles Benjamin stated, "If you sir, as a Jew, feel you have some obligation to make some effort to contribute to a workable solution to the plight of the Negro, that is your prerogative and may God bless you for it. But I sir, recognize no such obligation and I deeply resent the arbitrary imposition of this obligation upon me by anyone else."[51] While these remarks came well before Rustin's 1969 statements, they are similar to the contemporary opinions of many Jews. Indeed, not all Jews were happy with the ADL attempting to help the civil rights movement, with a significant portion of Jews being directly opposed to helping a movement they saw as promoting antisemitism within its ranks.

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[48] Bayard Rustin to Dore Schary, 19 February 1969, box 153, folder 18, DSP.
[49] *Liberator*, (May 1966), box 153, folder 18, DSP.
[50] Robert Frankel to Arnold Forster, 18 May 1966, box 153, folder 18, DSP.
[51] Charles M. Benjamin to Dore Schary, 28 April 1964, box 153, folder 18, DSP.

1967 saw the creation of the Jewish Defense League (JDL) and 1968 the Jews for Urban Justice (JUJ). These two groups had very different objectives in mind. The JUJ was created with the intention of bridging the gap between Jews and Blacks, while the JDL was created as a militant organization to protect the Jewish communities in New York against perceived Black militancy in much the same way as the Black Panther Party was created to protect Black communities. Rabbi Meir Kahane, in a letter to various Jewish organizations soliciting donations, stated that the JDL was created to "help alleviate the suffering of the Jews in New York's crime-ridden areas," because "no one else – neither the mayor, the police, nor private organizations – are apparently able or willing to do anything about this."[52] While the ADL was trying to address the complaints that some Jews had about Blacks being antisemitic, the JDL pandered to their fears. Indeed, Saul Sorrin of the ADL noted that he did not fell that combatting antisemitism was not a major concern in Black communities.[53] This likely made New York Jews feel that they were the only ones trying to do anything about the growing problem and that they too would need to be preemptive in their defense (not unlike Israel in the Six-Day War).

Jews for Urban Justice contrasted the JDL in almost every way. JUJ had grown tired of waiting for the ADL to mend the relationship between Blacks and Jews and sought to find their own solution. They found that Blacks had legitimate grievances with Jews stemming largely from economic oppression. They cautioned, "From the comments of persons interviewed, it was evident that the 'white backlash' confronting our society can also occur within the Jewish community. Jewish groups must address themselves to this problem. It is too easy to label attitudes within the ghetto which we do not immediately understand as 'anti-semitic' [sic], and

[52] Meir Kahane to Jewish Organizations, 18 November 1969, box 159, folder 19, DSP.
[53] Saul Sorrin to Alexander F. Miller, 20 January 1969, box 153, folder 18, DSP.

then categorically condemn them and dismiss them."[54] JUJ understood the nature of the rising tensions between Blacks and Jews as they were: products of misunderstanding between the two groups on why the other was outraged. Unfortunately, JUJ was unsuccessful in its mission to bring the two groups together and tensions devolved further into the 1970s.

Throughout the rest of the 20th century, Jews and Blacks have clashed on numerous issues. In 1978, the Supreme Court decision in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* was one of these issues. *Bakke* ruled that racial quotas were unconstitutional causing many Jews to rejoice and many Blacks to lament.[55] In 1979, Andrew Young, a Black former member of the civil rights movement, resigned from his post of the US delegate to the UN to the cheers of Jews and the outrage of Blacks. Many Blacks felt that Jews forced Young to resign because of his meeting with Zehdi Terzi of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).[56] Although Jews were critical of Young for his meeting (the PLO was perceived by many Jews, and even the US for a brief time, as a terrorist organization) they did not call on him to resign; perhaps rightfully so, Jews were outraged by the accusation.[57] In the 1980s, Jesse Jackson ran for the presidential nomination of the Democratic party, drawing concerns from Jews over Jackson's previously sympathetic remarks towards Yaser Arafat, the head of the PLO.[58] Louis Farrakhan, a leader of the Nation of Islam, routinely drew crowds of thousands of cheering admirers.[59] Seemingly overlooked or even dismissed by his supporters were the plentiful antisemitic remarks that he made. Statements that Jews were "bloodsuckers" and that Judaism was a "gutter religion" did not

[54] "A Report on Social Action and And [sic] the Jewish Community," box 9, folder 27, "Arthur O. Waskow Papers," Mss 5, Wisconsin Historical Society, Archives Division, Madison.
[55] Diner, 338.
[56] Carl Gershman, "The Andrew Young Affair," *Commentary* (November 1979), page 25, box 193, folder 3, DSP.
[57] Diner, 339.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.

seem to dissuade thousands from attending his events.[60] The PLO and the NOI were perhaps the two greatest sources of animus against Jews in the late 1970s and 1980s and helped to keep the Black-Jewish coalition from regaining any support. Bayard Rustin again trying to bridge the divide called on Blacks to condemn the acts of the PLO who were responsible for the deaths of more than a thousand people in the Levant.[61] In 1991, riots erupted in Crown Heights when Jewish man hit and killed a young Black child. A violent riot broke out between the Jews and Blacks living in the area and a Jewish man from Australia was murdered.[62] These events all reflect the animosity that continued from the initial tensions of the 1960s. They serve as a reminder that Jews were still fighting for their survival and that they believed their future was linked with the fate of Israel.

The images of Martin Luther King Jr. marching alongside prominent Jewish activists have widely regarded as being symbolic of a Black-Jewish alliance.[63] Indeed, such images are clear evidence of amicable relations between Blacks and Jews. But these once strong bonds of friendship, based on a shared history of persecution, were broken in the 1960s. It is perhaps easiest to understand the tensions between Blacks and Jews in the 1960s with the words of one Jewish woman writing to Dore Schary in 1969. This woman wrote, "Their violence has been direct towards innocent victims; whites because they were Jews."[64] The line "whites because they were Jews" is the main reason why there was such outrage in the Jewish community during the riots of the 1960s. Jews saw their treatment by urban Blacks as coming from their faith, white because they were Jews, rather than the reality that Blacks saw Jews as white because of their

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[60] Ibid.
[61] Bayard Rustin, "To Blacks: Condemn P.L.O. Terrorism," *The New York Times,* 30 August 1979, box 193, folder 3, DSP.
[62] Diner, 339-40.
[63] Greenberg, 1.
[64] Mrs. Ben Rojas to Dore Schary, 12 November 1969, box 153, folder 18, DSP.

pale complexion. It is this misunderstanding that Kenyon Burke, Bayard Rustin, Dore Schary, and many others sought to address. However, their cries for patience and calm were ultimately ignored.

While it is easy to simply dismiss antisemitism as a bygone issue, it has not fully disappeared. Rather than taking the form of Nazis parading through streets and sending Jews to their deaths in concentration camps, modern antisemitism is preserved by the left in anti-Zionism. At the end of his book, Stephen Norwood claimed, "American colleges and universities are ensuring the transmission of antisemitism to the next generation."[65] While perhaps coarse, his remarks are not wrong. Antisemitism was adopted by many on the far left during the 1960s in the form of anti-Zionism due to Israel's perceived aggression against its neighbors. By the end of the 1960s the far left was largely based in universities, although it had little support on campuses.[66] In the 1980s, Jewish students alerted UWM administrators to the presence of a poster which seemed to portray Israel as murdering children,[67] a claim which the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity disagreed with.[68] In December of this year, when President Trump announced that the US will recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, a group of a dozen or so students together to hold a talk denouncing the action on UWM's campus. It seems then that Norwood's assessment that "university administrators facilitate antisemitic hate speech on campus by consistently ignoring it," may not be too far from the truth.[69] The collapse of the Black-Jewish alliance in the 1960s, influenced by many anti-Zionist beliefs, is

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[65] Stephen H. Norwood, *Antisemitism and the American Far Left* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 240.
[66] Norwood, 207.
[67] "The Palestinian Uprising & Israeli Brutality," box 1, folder 2, "University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Records, 1987-1992" (hereafter OAA), UWM Archival Collection 194, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
[68] Elaine M. Bezie to Martha Bulluck, 6 December 1988, box 1, folder 2, OAA.
[69] Norwood, 240.

vital in understanding why antisemitism persists to this day and how it has remained an issue that must be addressed.