

Anti-Defamation League publishes anti-black hate literature

by Herbert Quinde

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has set off a firestorm of anger and resentment in the African-American community after it published an ADL research report entitled "The Anti-Semitism of Black Demagogues and Extremists." Released in mid-June, the report purports to be a cool-headed "effort to examine the anti-Semitism of extremists and demagogues who seek to influence the black community," but admits that it targets black leaders "who have achieved a degree of prominence and support within it." The inflammatory piece is part of a political operation aimed at shattering the fragile vestiges of what remains of the 1960s black-Jewish coalition gathered around Dr. Martin Luther King's leadership of the civil rights movement.

The operation was launched in earnest at the November 1991 international ADL conference in Montreal, Canada, where University of Arizona Prof. Leonard Dinnerstein issued a vile blanket accusation against the African-American community. "Only one group—the blacks—is significantly anti-Semitic or oblivious to the shortcomings of leaders who insult or denounce Jews," said Dinnerstein. The ADL campaign seems driven by an attitude that blacks must be "put in their place."

Attack on the Nation of Islam

The report is primarily a frontal attack on the Nation of Islam (NOI) and its leader Minister Louis Farrakhan, who is maliciously quoted out of context throughout the report. Although the Nation of Islam has gained a significant following and respect in the inner-city of several major urban centers across the country for its highly successful anti-narcotics street patrols, better known as the "Dopebusters," the ADL report threatens retribution against any elected official or political activists who associate with or publicly commend the NOI anti-drug work. Minister Farrakhan is denounced 176 times in the 50-page report and labeled as "the anti-Semitic and racist leader of the Chicago-based Black Muslim sect," according to an article in the Aug. 29 Washington, D.C.-based *Afro-American* entitled "Jewish Group 'Blacklists' Outspoken Black Leaders."

Other black leaders such as Rep. Gus Savage (D-Ill.), who has collaborated with the NOI and numerous black

newspapers, such as the *Amsterdam News* and its publisher Wilbert Tatum, are also targeted. They are viciously criticized either for their "anti-Zionist" polemics, criticisms of Israel for its repression of Palestinians, or critiques of the political strongarming of congressmen not perceived as sufficiently pro-Israel by the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which the ADL says is not legitimate political debate but disguised anti-Semitism.

Despite the ADL's lying charges that Farrakhan and others are indiscriminately blaming "the Jews" for society's ills, *Amsterdam News* publisher Wilbert Tatum, himself a target of the ADL report, has very specifically stated that the tensions between blacks and Jews can be laid at the feet of the ADL, not "the Jews" in general. Tatum, who is a co-founder of the Black-Jewish Coalition and whose wife is Jewish, responded to the ADL report by charging that ADL National Director Abraham Foxman was attempting "to pit the Jewish community . . . against the black community," according to *The Jewish Press* on July 24. He emphasized that the ADL is attempting "to destabilize the black community," run a divide and conquer strategy against the black leadership, and to "raise money by frightening the hell out of the Jews."

ADL does not represent Jews

Tatum said that the ADL was a "fringe" organization which is not representative of all Jewish organizations. Tatum emphasized that the black leadership was "bright enough to know that the fringe ADL does not speak for the total Jewish community. . . . They have done more damage to the Jewish community than . . . to the black community."

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg has also criticized the anti-black operation in an attempt to defuse the ADL's hate campaign. In the July 17 New York weekly *Forward*, David Brooks reported on the debate at the World Jewish Congress meeting in early July in Brussels, Belgium, to assess the state of anti-Semitism around the world. A central theme of the conference was that black anti-Semitism in America was the biggest problem to be addressed.

Brooks reported, "Arthur Hertzberg implied that it was Jews who broke the black-Jewish alliance of the mid-'60s. He argued that anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred in-

crease when society is plagued by injustice and turmoil. 'When there is less peace in society, there is more trouble,' he reasoned.

"But instead of continuing to seek a just society, Rabbi Hertzberg argued, many Jews in the '70s and '80s became more conservative, and therefore allies of injustice and enemies of black progress. 'For Jews to become . . . the spearbearers of the Bourbons against the tides that are rising of hunger and despair and the desire to find their place in the sun, is not only self-defeating but immoral,' he said.

"In general," Brooks continued, "the conference was divided between those who sought a return to the '60s alliance and those who felt that those days, while remarkable, are gone. . . .

"The latter group stressed that it is deep cultural, religious, and ideological wedges that have driven blacks and Jews apart. They don't hold out much hope that a dialogue between a few leaders could achieve much.

"Those who spoke about the '90s painted a picture of a world in which the causes of evil are much more obscure and in which the solutions are not apparent. Moreover, they did not treat anti-Semitism as the twin brother of racism. When you are fighting the Ku Klux Klan, which is both anti-Semitic and racist, the two evils seem related. But in the global perspective of the '90s, many anti-Semities are not racists and vice versa.

"Rabbi Hertzberg suggested that Jews must return to the liberal agenda of the '60s. 'We are here worrying about anti-Semitism, but we should be worrying about ourselves.' . . .

"Eric Breindel, editorial page editor of the *New York Post*, made a grim survey of the anti-Semitism found in places ranging from rap music to the Arab world. He tossed out the suggestion that perhaps what was needed was a period of disengagement between Jews and blacks. He noted that there is little hatred in the black community for Italian-Americans. Perhaps relations between Jews and blacks have been over-politicized." In an earlier life, Breindel, who is a major booster of the ADL, was arrested for narcotics possession.

Eyewitnesses at the Brussels conference confirmed that it was ADL officials and members who threw down the gauntlet to the black leadership.

Deliberate distortions

One facet of the ADL report is to maliciously quote Farrakhan and other black leaders out of context. For example, in February 1990, according to the ADL report, Farrakhan, whose powerful speaking style has an "in-your-face quality," polemicized about the well-known fact that Hollywood has numerous well-respected and influential Jewish leaders in the movie industry, before an audience of 4,000 at Michigan State University. Farrakhan made the point that Hollywood regularly pumps out degrading movies that have historically stereotyped blacks. Farrakhan said, "You wrote us up in

scripts as clowns and buffoons. . . . Some Jews did that to black people." He and other black leaders say their statements are legitimate cultural commentary about the history of anti-black racism in America.

The ADL report has been like pouring gasoline on a fire. It highlights many examples of the intense sentiments reflected in some sectors of the black political community, such as those of Leonard H. Clegg, the chief deputy city attorney of the city of Compton, a suburb of Los Angeles. Clegg, president of the Coalition Against Black Exploitation, a group that monitors the portrayal of blacks in the entertainment industry, is charged as being an anti-Semite for having requested "a summit meeting with the Hollywood Jewish community" to "raise the issue of the century-old problem of Jewish racism in Hollywood."

Similarly, the report's attack on "rap" music seems more like a fundraising ploy to "raise money by frightening the hell out of Jews," as Tatum opined. Ice Cube and similar rap musicians are denounced as anti-Semites in the report for songs that include lyrics about the "Jewish landlord" and similar themes. The ADL has handily seized on the perceived anti-Semitism in rap music and fully exploited this artificially manipulated phenomena. It is no surprise, although ironic, that several of the most popular rap groups that the ADL has condemned are managed, promoted, or financed by the same "Hollywood Jewish mafia" that the ADL is defending. Although it is hard to find any cultural value to the mind-deadening repetitive beat of rap (as a musician trained in the classical tradition one wonders if Farrakhan might not have a useful insight into the subject), some "rappers" defend their lyrics as a social and political expression, albeit a crude one, reflecting the anger of the inner cities.

One black activist commented that an issue which has angered the African-American community and produced such intense emotions is the ADL equating anti-black racism with anti-Semitism. Such an attitude to the generalized plight of blacks demonstrates a lack of understanding that racism for blacks is a systemic and structural problem, he said. He pointed to sociologist Jonathan H. Turner's 1984 theoretical study, "Oppression: A Socio-History of Black-White Relations in America," which stated that anti-black racism is a unique manifestation not just a problem of a habitual prejudiced attitude of mind. It is a form of "stratification" which he calls "oppression" defined as both a process and structure with social, political, and economic consequences for African-Americans. He makes the point that it does not matter much if a person is a racist and harbors such hateful sentiments if the person he hates can afford and is permitted to live next door. Turner commented, "Although an anti-Semitic attitude is unacceptable, don't try to tell blacks that Jews living in New York or Long Island are also an oppressed minority. Some may be depressed," he chuckled, referring to movie producer Woody Allen, "but they certainly aren't oppressed."