

THE
FOUNDATION
FOR | ETHNIC
UNDERSTANDING

5th Annual Report on Black/Jewish Relations in the United States

- . Cooperation
- . Conflict
- . Human Interest
- . Shared Experiences

Foreword by Hugh Price, President, National Urban League
Introduction by Rabbi Marc Schneier, President,
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The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding began in 1989 as a dream of Rabbi Marc Schneier and the late Joseph Papp. We are committed to the belief that direct, face-to-face dialogue, between leaders of ethnic communities is the most effective path towards the reduction of bigotry and the promotion of reconciliation and understanding.

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FOREWORD BY HUGH PRICE

PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

It has been both an honor and a pleasure to provide the foreword for The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding's first four Annual reports on black/Jewish Relations in the United States. I remain equally pleased to do so for this fifth edition. The year 2000 signified a landmark in black/Jewish relations as to which this comprehensive study certainly attests.

In my inaugural address as President of the Urban League, I stated, "Millions of whites have joined us in our protracted quest for racial, social, and economic justice. None has matched the Jewish community as long distance runners in the civil rights movement." Over the past six years, notable strides have been made in strengthening relations between blacks and Jews. This is truly a product of hard work from many different communities. I am extremely proud of the contributions the Urban League movement has made during my tenure in creating a harmonious and inclusive society. Urban League affiliates have been deeply involved from New York to Los Angeles. Coalitions have been built from the ground up and key dialogue has occurred on both the local and national levels. This is evidenced by the record number of joint celebrations of Passover and joint commemorations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day that brought Blacks and Jews together in the year 2000.

Common interest was a defining characteristic in relations between Jews and African-Americans in the year 2000. Many of the instances shaping relations between Blacks and Jews occurred within the greater political context of the presidential election. The nomination of Senator Joseph Lieberman as Vice President Al Gore's running mate was a perfect indication of how far we have come and how much work we have to do. Certain extreme factions used the nomination to incite tensions between the two communities, but the vast majority of African-American and Jewish leaders were overwhelmingly supportive of the nomination, which broke barriers for minority candidates in American politics. Jews and African Americans also joined hands to protest voter disenfranchisement in Florida, rally for gun control laws, support the victims of hate crimes, and engage in dialogue.

The year 2000 also saw Rabbi Marc Schneier, President of The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, chronicle the history of Black/Jewish relations during the civil rights movement in his fascinating book *Shared Dreams: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and The Jewish Community*. I applaud Rabbi Schneier and The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding for bringing the history of Black/Jewish collaboration to the forefront and for providing a program that distributed copies of *Shared Dreams* to over three thousand influential political, community, and religious leaders. I am also excited about the prospects of the *Shared Dreams* Curriculum Guide Program, which in 2001 will introduce thousands of students to the history of Black/Jewish collaboration.

The Foundation's *Annual Report on Black/Jewish Relations in the United States* performs an indispensable public service by chronicling the arduous and effective work

of people of good will, all across America, to repair any breaches that may exist and lay a foundation of trust between the two communities. While the ugly reality of racially motivated fires, shootings, vandalism, and such receive immeasurable media attention, the utter normalcy of everyday life often goes unreported. This important report however recognizes that the details of everyday life should be included because they comprise the best indicators of how Americans of all races actually interrelate: these data hold the keys to promoting and fostering racial harmony. This insightful compendium documents the positive direction of Black/Jewish relations.

On both the local and national levels, we, the Urban Leaguers, have had the honor and pleasure of collaborating with allies like The Foundation For Ethnic Understanding, The National Conference, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, The Anti-Defamation League, The World Jewish Congress, Dillard University, The American Jewish Committee, and many others. This partnership has brought our respective communities closer together and propelled America forward.

On behalf of the Urban League and the African-American and Jewish communities, I salute and thank Rabbi Marc Schneier and The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding for cataloguing the progress and setbacks of Black-Jewish relations in the year 2000.

INTRODUCTION

The Foundation For Ethnic Understanding is extremely proud to present this year's 5th *Annual Report on Black/Jewish Relations in the United States*. This comprehensive review demonstrates that numerous diligent people are working harder than ever to bring communities together, increase understanding, and foster racial harmony.

Five years ago, in the introduction to the initial *Annual Report on Black/Jewish Relations in the United States*, I discussed the idea that certain myths – supposed truths based on misperceptions and misunderstandings – had come in many ways to define the “State of the Union” between African-Americans and Jews in the United States. Each report has dispelled many myths and misperceptions by presenting an unsensationalized – valid – evaluation of the “State of the Union,” and likewise, has created a mechanism of assessing and monitoring our progress towards unity. Each year since 1996, these reports have documented an impressive amount of data on the movement towards alliance, cooperation, and common cause that has developed between the Jewish and African-American communities.

This year, cooperation and shared experience were defining elements of the relationship between African-Americans and Jews. As any other, this year had its share of conflicts, but these were far outweighed by the efforts of community, religious, economic, and political leaders to form coalitions based on mutual interest and discover cultural similarities and differences. This year Blacks and Jews joined hands to rally against gun violence, work for hate crime legislation, protest voter disenfranchisement in Florida, and share holidays together.

Significantly, there has been an immense response from students, teachers, and community leaders to *Shared Dreams*, The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding's Curriculum Guide Program. In my book, I attempted to shed new light on the story of commitment and the relationship between the African-American and Jewish communities during the civil rights era. With the curriculum guide project, the foundation's goal is to transform this powerful story of black/Jewish cooperation in the civil rights movement into an educational vehicle strengthening relations between Jewish and African American students. Over 12,000 students at over 350 high schools have participated in discussions, exercises, and workshops as part of the program that builds bridges of understanding by teaching our shared history to African-American and Jewish youths.

Over the past five years, I have been pleased to see a growing sense of closeness, common interest, and shared history between Jews and African-Americans in the United States. I am continually inspired by the enormous enthusiasm and passion that young people, community leaders, spiritual communities, elected officials, and business leaders have relentlessly put forth in order to build coalitions and foster racial harmony throughout America.

Rabbi Marc Schneier
President, The Foundation For Ethnic Understanding

OVERVIEW: THE STATE OF BLACK/JEWISH RELATIONS IN THE YEAR 2000

The fifth anniversary edition of this report chronicles the state of black/Jewish relations in the first year of the new millennium. As in previous reports, it is important to keep in mind that the basis of the report is media articles, interethnic websites, community affairs bulletins, pamphlets, and individual submissions from organizations working in inter-group relations. Four categories are represented: Cooperation, Conflict, Shared Experiences, and Human Interest. Articles were included if they identified a direct interaction between people in the African-American and Jewish communities or if the issue addressed impacted both communities. As in past years, the majority of the articles were positive in nature.

Rabbi Wohl and the Rev. Vernon Shannon, co-authors of *Strangers and Neighbors: Teaching and Writing About Blacks and Jews*, explained the process of meaningful interaction between Blacks and Jews in their book, “The trick is, you create friendly interaction, you relate to people as individuals on a social level, first, before tackling big, abstract questions... We – African-Americans and Jews – formed friendships that were quite natural. Then we could sit down and discuss difficult issues, after we had shared enjoyable activities.” We discovered in the research of our annual report that communities have engaged in these enjoyable activities for several years now and many have begun the arduous and slow process of tackling the “difficult issues.”

The sheer numbers of articles dealing with black/Jewish relations increased around several defining events throughout the year. In January, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday was a time of interactive celebrations across the country including Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Atlanta, D.C., Philadelphia, and Kansas City. The majority of these celebrations were interfaith events where members of a specific church and temple came together. Some cities planned special volunteer activities. In Concord, New Hampshire, public facilities were closed for the first time in history to honor Dr. King’s memory.

April was another time of joint celebration around the country. People from both communities in Chicago, Boston, Omaha, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New Rochelle gathered together for Passover Seders. Many of these celebrations were started some years ago and organizers reported seeing participation rise over the years. Passover is a time of joint celebration because it is the Jewish celebration of escape from slavery. The biblical themes of seeking freedom and questioning the status quo were also a significant foundation for the civil rights movement. Histories of oppression and struggling for freedom are commonalities that bind the two groups. Thus, shared Seders are ways the groups can express support for their continued commitment to freedom and equality.

During the summer, students gathered in camps and other forums to bridge barriers. In the Leland-Johnson Common Vision Program, high school students “talk honestly about stereotypes, slurs, and topics that are often difficult to address.” Operation Understanding brought African- American and Jewish teens together on a cross-country trip visiting

historical sights and landmarks. Every day concluded with group reflection and discussions that were “often contentious but thought provoking.”

In August, the topic of black/Jewish relations flared again in the media with the nomination of Senator Joseph Lieberman on the Democratic Vice-Presidential ticket. Many African-American leaders such as Rev. Jesse Jackson and Rev. Al Sharpton praised the choice as a breaking down of barriers for all Americans. Some African-American leaders were concerned about Lieberman’s positions on affirmative action and school choice programs. However, subsequent discussions focused on the specific issues, and the Congressional Black Caucus decided to endorse his candidacy. While there were a few negative comments made about the Lieberman choice, these comments were soundly denounced by important African-American leaders. As Rabbi Schneier stated, “We must distance ourselves from the rhetoric and diatribe of a few who look to exacerbate tensions between our two communities.”

Politics again contributed to a rise in media reports on this topic in September and in November. In September, two local New York Congressional district elections saw Black Americans and Jewish Americans competing for votes. In one of the elections, race actually became an issue in a negative way. But the major media political focus was, of course, the Florida Presidential election. Members of both the African-American and Jewish communities believed they had been disenfranchised in Florida. Whatever the “truth” of that incident may be, it is clear that members of both of these communities believe the outcome was that their voices were not fully heard.

Some themes hit the news repeatedly throughout the year. Shared experiences were unfortunately primarily experiences of negativity against both communities including a surprising number of comments by public figures. A federal judge was caught passing disparaging and racist notes to his clerk during trials, and an Arizona State legislator made blatant anti-Semitic and racially offensive comments. In this edition, there are eight instances of comments of this nature by public figures. Vandalism was the next largest category. Thankfully, there were very few reported instances of violence or threats against members of both communities or even between the communities. In fact, an accident occurred, similar to the one that sparked the Crown Heights disaster years ago, but failed to elicit a similar violent response. Articles about hate crime statistics and legislation was another issue of common interest to the two groups.

Human interest themes included book publications, exhibits, and artistic endeavors that focused on black/Jewish interaction. Articles about people such as the Hebrew Israelites and African Jews who are of both African descent and descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel were interesting additions to this section. Also included was news about deaths, retirements, and promotions of people who were active participants in this field.

Two controversial issues that appeared repeatedly over the year were the issues of apologies/reparations for African-Americans due to slavery and the relationship of Minister Louis Farrakhan to the Jewish community. The issue of reparations and an apology for slavery could become a source of cooperation between the two communities as African-American leaderships grapple with the issue’s political and social exigencies. Concerning Minister Farrakhan, the Jewish community remains wary as to whether or not

to engage in a dialogue with this enigmatic leader. Recently, Minister Farrakhan let it be known that he wants to open a dialogue with Jewish leaders in order to find a way to heal the relationship between the two communities. At this time, very few Jewish leaders are willing to meet with the Minister until he apologizes for anti-Semitic comments he has made in the past. Yet, some leaders are guardedly optimistic. The World Jewish Congress recently supported The Foundation's effort to meet with the Minister privately to honestly discuss with him the state of the relationship. Following this meeting, Minister Farrakhan gave a speech at the Hip Hop Summit in New York that demonstrated a genuine attempt to understand the concerns of the Jewish community.

As another summer approaches, some students will likely come together again in camps and other forums to face head-on the tough issues. We will ask our children to look hard at themselves for signs of prejudice they did not even realize were there. We will ask them to speak with each other, to learn more about each other's communities, and to learn about what matters to each other. We will ask our children not to censure their negative thoughts but to put them on the table -- to ask openly about stereotypes and misperceptions -- in the hopes of getting through the conflict to a place of greater understanding. We will ask our children to have these difficult discussions in the service of building bridges between the African-American and Jewish communities. If we as a society are to live up to the ideals of tolerance and equality for which this nation was founded, it is imperative that what we ask of our children, we in turn ask of ourselves.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ann Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "A".

Ann Barrett, Ph.D.

COOPERATION

The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding Distributes Three Thousand Copies of *Shared Dreams*

The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding distributed three thousand free copies of Rabbi Marc Schneier's groundbreaking text, *Shared Dreams: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and The Jewish Community*, to influential politicians, religious leaders, and community leaders across America. The book presents the full story of Dr. King's involvement with the Jewish community including a foreword by Martin Luther King III. Prior to its publication, many had viewed Jewish participation in the civil rights movement in somewhat patriarchal terms. In contrast however, this text presents the relationship as reciprocal, chronicling Dr. King's stances on the plight of Soviet Jewry, his support of the State of Israel, and his vehement criticism of anti-Semitism in his own community. Kwesi Mfume, president and CEO of the NAACP commented, "One of the most important books I've read this year. Rabbi Schneier thoughtfully illustrates the depth of the friendship between Dr. King and our Jewish brothers and sisters, thus providing us with a fresh and bold new perspective on both a beloved civil rights leader and a most revolutionary time in our history. This book also takes great care to explore the communality of the struggle for equality."

*January 2000
New York, NY*

Vice President Meets with New York's Black, Jewish, and Gay Leaders

Vice President Al Gore met with over two hundred of New York's leading African-American, Jewish, and gay elected officials to discuss a variety of issues ranging from racial profiling, gays in the military, the employment non-discrimination act, and education funding. Gore also promised, that if elected, his administration would be more forthright in dealing with repeated complaints of police brutality. Through these meetings, Gore sought to solidify his political base for the Democratic Presidential Primary where he faced former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley.

*January 11, 2000
New York, NY*

NCCJ Joins with the SCLC to Host Interfaith Prayer Breakfast

This annual breakfast, hosted by the National Conference for Community and Justice (formerly the National Conference of Christians and Jews) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, honored the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The event focused on the role of religious institutions in fostering social change. Reverend James Lawson, a close former associate of the slain civil rights leader, gave the keynote address. In addition, Holman United Methodist Church hosted this event for the second consecutive year.

*January 13, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Atlanta's Blacks and Jews Come Together for Joint Shabbat Service

As part of a weekend program commemorating the life of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Atlanta's Jewish community shared Shabbat services with members of Atlanta's African-American community. Rabbi Alvin Sugarman was joined by Rev. Gerald Durley and his congregation from Providence Missionary Church in celebrating both the Hebrew day of rest as well as the anniversary of Dr. King's birthday.

January 14, 2000

Atlanta, GA

Ethnic Institute Launched

In an effort to rebuild partnerships and stabilize relationships between the Jewish and African-American communities of Portland, the American Jewish Committee, the NAACP, and the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs launched the Ethnic Institute. The Institute brings leaders of the two communities together to share experiences, get to know each other, and find common ground. To engender trust between the two communities, the project encourages each community to learn from their respective histories, successes, and failures. Susan Abravanel of the AJC said, "This group was put together to try to resolve some of the wounds, and distancing created over recent years and to really get to know one another and decide where we go with this."

January 15, 2000

Portland, OR

"All Peoples" Breakfast Commemorates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The American Jewish Committee, the Metropolitan Detroit Chapter, and the Detroit Urban League held the seventh annual Martin Luther King, Jr. "All Peoples" breakfast this past January 15th. The program, held at the Urban League's offices, and brought together over two hundred and fifty Jews and African-Americans from the Detroit area. U.S. District Court Judge Denise Page Hood, the first African American judge to join the Eastern District of Michigan bench in thirteen years, keynoted the breakfast.

January 15, 2000

Cleveland, OH

Jews and African-Americans Commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

For the second straight year, Congregation Beth Shir Shalom of Santa Monica joined with the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In addition, Congregation Beth Shir Shalom, under the leadership of Rabbi Neil Commess-Daniels, hosted a Friday night service attended by the African Methodist Congregation with the theme of “Dreaming Together” to honor the late civil rights leader. This service featured music by the First African Methodist Choir, Tish Tones, and the Beth Shir Shalom musicians. The next morning, the First African Methodist Church hosted the Beth Shir Shalom Congregation at a service, which blended the traditions, mores, and music of both congregations. Rabbi Commess-Daniels was quoted as saying, “We want to assure for ourselves and for our children that the communication and the power of the connection between the African-American community and the Jewish community will be strengthened.”

*January 15-16, 2000
Santa Monica, CA*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

Over fifteen thousand volunteers participated in community service activities to commemorate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The event was organized by the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and brought together people of all races in order to improve their community and combat discrimination and racism. The volunteers were sent to different projects around the city ranging from the beautification of a recreation center, work at senior centers, literacy programs, and various student projects organized with The Jewish Community High School (JCHS) of Gratz College. JCHS has participated in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service for well over a decade.

*January 17, 2000
Philadelphia, PA*

African-Americans and Jews Come Together for a Joint Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute

Approximately seven hundred people from the Philadelphia area and surrounding suburbs attended a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. tribute service held at Temple Beth Or in Spring House, Pennsylvania. The tribute, lead by Rabbi Gregory S. Marx with Rev. Charles Quann of Bethlehem Baptist Church, provided the opportunity for vastly different ethnic and religious communities to honor Dr. King’s memory by coming together in the spirit for which he lived. The annual tribute also gives the communities a chance to experience a small sampling of another religious culture. The Concert Choir of Ebenezer Methodist Church of Norristown and the Men’s Choir of Bethlehem Baptist Church performed musical interludes for the program.

*January 17, 2000
Spring House, PA*

Kansas City Children Come Together to Commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Fifteen hundred children representing every race, religion, and ethnicity came together at Temple B'nai Jehudah for the fifth annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Youth Day Celebration. Activities for the day included multicultural dance performances, puppet shows, art projects, and discussions about Dr. King and his message of non-violence. Candice Harrison of Kansas Harmony, a co-sponsor of the event, noted that the day should emphasize the strides we have made in overcoming racial barriers and differences. Thus, as a tribute and commemoration to the youths' efforts in reinforcing racial harmony, Harrison declared, "There is a time and place to teach about stereotypes and prejudice. But this a celebration."

January 17, 2000

Kansas City, MO

King's Spirit Inspires Community Activism

Hundreds of young people convened at the Lincoln Memorial, site of the legendary 1963 civil rights march that culminated in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech. The students rallied for a short while before splitting up into groups and putting into practice the theme of the day's festivities; throughout the event they exclaimed, "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not a Day off!" The students and volunteers proceeded to participate in various community projects. For instance, Operation Understanding brought Jewish and Black teenagers to St. Elizabeth's Hospital for needed renovations. In addition, the students renovated a shelter for the homeless that was ran by the Community for Creative Non-Violence. Lastly, students cleaned up trash along routes named after Dr. King.

January 17, 2000

Washington, DC

Students Volunteer Their Time on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

For the first time, Concord, New Hampshire commemorated the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. by closing schools and public facilities. More than five hundred students of all races and creeds spent the day volunteering. Activities were divided between feeding the homeless and helping senior citizens.

January 17, 2000

Concord, NH

Al Sharpton Condemns Anti-Semitic Comments

Rev. Al Sharpton, President of The National Action Network, denounced statements made by Rev. Charles Norris at his Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. commemoration. Sharpton, who in the past has been accused of anti-Semitism particularly due to his role in the Crown Heights incident in 1991, called the statement insensitive to Jews and expressed his resentment that the reverend would use his platform to make such inflammatory statements. Sharpton further stated, "I am simply not going to tolerate Jews or Muslims being offended on my platform."

*January 18, 2000
New York, NY*

Giving Voice to Jews of African Heritage

The Black Holocaust Museum opened up a new exhibit entitled "Giving Voice to Jews of African Heritage." The exhibit documents the cultural and spiritual legacy of these unique groups, some of which claim a lineage to the twelve tribes of Israel. In addition, the display pays particular attention to the hundreds of years of violent suffering that African Jews have endured. This exhibit was co-produced by the museum and the Milwaukee chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

*January 22, 2000
Milwaukee, WI*

Blacks and Jews Protest David Duke's National Organization for European American Rights

Approximately fifty African and Jewish Americans marched in Philadelphia in protest of former Ku Klux Klansmen David Duke's formation of a "National Organization for European American Rights." The initial meeting, which brought together seventy-five members of the new organization, included a press conference at which Mr. Duke stated, "I guarantee there are many European Americans who are refugees in our own cities." Mr. Duke used the press conference as a forum to attack what he claimed to be biased treatment in favor of Blacks, Latinos, Jews, and homosexuals. The NAACP and ADL were quick to respond, denouncing Duke as a racist whose ideas represent a very slim minority viewpoint. Ken Jacobson of the ADL added, "He may not have his robe on and he may not have his mask on, but it is the same old David Duke."

*January 22, 2000
Philadelphia, PA*

Jazz Duo Promotes Black-Jewish Unity

Jazz pianist Warren Byrd and double bassist David Chevrán joined together to tour the country playing at colleges, churches, and synagogues. Hillel International and the NAACP sponsored the tour. The musicians use their performances together as an opportunity to educate their audiences about the ethnic and religious origins of their music. Chevrán commented, “What we do just by playing is say that you can go out and find someone completely different from yourself and have active and working dialogue.”

February 2000

Boston, MA

Jewish and African-American Law Students Come Together at Temple University

Jewish and African-American students at James E. Beasley School of Law of Temple University along with the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia initiated the “Black Jewish Relations: Common Ground For the 21st Century program.” It is estimated that around thirty percent of the students at the Beasley School are African-American or Jewish. The program focuses on the historical and cultural commonality of experience between African-American and Jewish people. The initial meeting, attended by over twenty students, discussed a brief history of the Jewish people and the history of relations between Jews and African-Americans.

February 2000

Philadelphia, PA

***Stranger and Neighbors* Is Published**

Maurine Adams and John Bracey edited this 860-page volume, which covers the history of Black-Jewish relations dating back to the early 1800's. The authors, who are both professors at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, also co-teach a class on Black-Jewish relations. The volume includes essays by Alvin Poissant, Nat Hentoff, Derrick Bell, Bill Curtis, and Julius Lester. This may be the most comprehensive text ever published, as it chronicles both the positive and negative interaction of the two communities in America. Archival materials include an 1803 document by a Jewish man, which outlines a thirty-year plan to free his slaves, and numerous records of relations and interactions throughout the periods of slavery, abolition, Jim Crow, until the present day.

February 2000

Boston, MA

Jewish Studies Program for Black Catholic School Students

St. Frances Academy, the nation's oldest African-American Catholic high school, made the Jewish studies program a requirement of their religion curriculum in 1997. For the year 2000, the schools established the Hoffberger chair for a Jewish teacher, Geoffrey Basik. Basik teaches classes in Hebrew scriptures and Holocaust issues. A focal point for the classes is the attempt to apply materials to the everyday lives of the students. Basik provokes students to confront stereotypes, racial tensions, and morality by probing students to discuss the general condition of human nature, the origin of stereotypes, and the harsh realities of an inner city neighborhood where sixty percent of students drop out by the ninth grade. Basik cites daily contact as the largest factor in shifting the attitudes of the students. "I'm not the most observant or the most scholarly, but I am the one willing to be in front of them. The daily contact is the lesson."

February 2000

Baltimore, MD

Princeton University Conference Brings Together Students of all Faiths

Seventh & eighth graders from churches, mosques, and synagogues in Mercer County gathered at Princeton University for a conference on civil rights sponsored by the Central NJ Chapter of the American Jewish Committee. At the conference, the children watched "The Right to Dream," a presentation about the civil rights movement. From there, students broke down into small groups for discussion. Parents and chaperones also gathered in their own discussion group.

February 11, 2000

Princeton, NJ

Holocaust Freedom Fighter Speaks at African-American Church

Tibor Baranski spoke at the Zion United Church of Christ as part of their Black History Month celebration. He is credited with helping over three thousand Jews escape from Budapest, Hungary, during the Nazi occupation. Baranski, who served as executive secretary of the Jewish Protection Movement and on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, spoke on his harrowing experiences in World War II and how the atrocities he has witnessed and confronted, shaped his relations with African-Americans in the United States.

February 22, 2000

Tonawanda, NY

Historic Reception Held at Atlanta's Once Exclusive Golf Club

A reception was held by Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell at the Druid Hills Golf Club to support Commissioner Porter Sanford III's run for Dekalb County Chief Executive Officer, the county's top elected post. Since both Campbell and Sanford are both African-Americans, the event ended a chapter in the club's history that did not offer memberships to either African-Americans or Jews before 1990.

March 1, 2000

Atlanta, GA

African-Americans and Jews Unite Over Amadou Diallo Trial

In the wake of the acquittal of four New York City police officers in the Amadou Diallo murder trial, Jews and African-Americans united in their criticism of police department conduct. After an Albany jury found the four white officers innocent of twenty-four counts related to the shooting of the unarmed Diallo, protests began and are expected to last for forty-one days, one day for each shot fired at Diallo. Ten members of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice were arrested for civil disobedience in a demonstration the first day. "All of us in New York should feel betrayed," said Doris Busch Boskey, the mother of Gidone Busch, a mentally ill Orthodox man who was fatally shot by Police in Borough Park last summer. Her words were aimed at Diallo's mother, Kadiatou, to show solidarity between the two families. Also, Busch's brother Glen, along with Rev. Calvin Butts, and Harlem Councilman Phil Reed are pressing for the appointment of special prosecutors by Gov. George Pataki whenever police misconduct is suspected. At a UJA-Federation meeting discussing African-American and Jewish relations, Busch and Rev. Butts criticized Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's administration in the dealing of Eleanor Bumpers, a mentally ill black woman killed by police in her apartment. Busch said blacks and Jews must cooperate in seeking changes in how the police deal with incidents involving the mentally ill. Rabbi Marc Schneier, President of the North American Boards of Rabbis and a speaker at the UJA meeting, stated that cases such as Diallo and Busch are creating a common bond between African-Americans and Jews. "This is a very real issue that blacks and Jews can form a coalition around," said Schneier, who is also president of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding.

March 3, 2000

New York, NY

Head of NAACP Defends Affirmative Action

At a conference held by the Jewish Council of Public Affairs (JCPA), Kweisi Mfume, head of the NAACP, defended his stand on affirmative action. Though some of the delegates saw affirmative action as “legalized racism,” Mfume believes that it is imperative, stating that, “race is still a driving factor in this country.” He does believe that it is an imperfect tool, but a necessary one as long as there are disparities within our society. The JCPA conference, which reported on its new policy on racial justice and equal opportunity, confirmed its stand on civil rights. Mr. Mfume praised the JCPA for “telling us what we don’t want to hear” and for the new approaches and solutions in building a stronger sense of community between all groups.

*March 3, 2000
Baltimore, MD*

Black Skin Dolls Donated to Ethiopian Jews

Over one thousand black-skinned dolls were distributed to Ethiopian Jewish children in Israel. The Project People Foundation, an African-American organization, is looking to bridge the gap between Jewish and black communities worldwide through its Sponsor-A-Smile Campaign. Helen Lieberman started the idea, a Jewish South African, who sent fifteen thousand black dolls from the U.S. into South Africa to fill a void in the lives of black South African children. Linda Tarry-Chard, who assisted Ms. Lieberman in the original campaign, is the founder of the Project People Foundation and believes that “It’s more than just giving a child a doll...Black children play with white dolls with blond hair and blue eyes that don’t look like them...now it’s about getting an icon that looks like them.” The first shipment of five hundred dolls were donated by the New York Board of Rabbis, and arrived just in time for Chanukah.

*March 8, 2000
New York, NY*

Canarsie High School Students Visit Jewish Museum

Canarsie High School students visited the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Battery Park to promote a Holocaust education program. The trip was part of “Canarsie Bridges,” an interfaith initiative of the Jewish Community Council, to promote cross-cultural understanding throughout all communities. The sixty-one visitors, who were mostly African-American or Caribbean American, witnessed the scars of racial hatred and the dangers of prejudice. All the students were affected by the visit, but one student summed the trip up best by stating, “everyone is discriminated against in some ways, it’s not different. It’s all the same thing. Its just ignorance.”

*March 20, 2000
Brooklyn, NY*

Purim Party Attracts Local Residents

A party for Purim in Brooklyn attracted over five hundred local residents including many African-Americans. A concert was held to celebrate Purim at the Be'er Hagolah Institute for Russian Jewish children in Starrett City.

March 23, 2000

Brooklyn, NY

Ron Lanoue Appointed Executive Director of NCCJ

Ron Lanoue was appointed the executive director of the San Diego region of the National Conference for Community and Justice (formerly the National Conference of Christians and Jews). Lanoue, who led the regional office in Little Rock for fifteen years, looks forward to the San Diego chapter because of its size as well as its diversity. In San Diego, people of color make up about forty percent of the population. Lanoue explains how being a Jew, and its concept of tikkun olam, which means to repair the world, will aid him in carrying out the NCCJ's message. Founded in 1957 to fight racial bias and bigotry, the NCCJ, as Lanoue states, incorporates and encourages faith diversity.

March 24, 2000

San Diego, CA

Coretta Scott King Speaks at Jewish Leadership Conference

In a speech to the United Jewish Communities Young Leadership Conference, Coretta Scott King said the "historical coalition of African and Jewish Americans must be strengthened by opposing all forms of bigotry and discrimination." Ms. King, the widow of Dr. Martin Luther King, explained to the three thousand participants how the Jewish and black communities share a history "together in fighting injustice." The theme of the conference was "Right Place, Right Time," and Ms. King expanded on the idea stating, "The right place is wherever you are and the right time is now."

March 25, 2000

Washington, DC

Conference Explores the Impact of the Internet on Racism

At the eleventh Annual National Conference on Black-Jewish Relations sponsored by New Orleans' Dillard University, "Hate and the Internet" was the central theme. There are over two hundred web sites devoted to hate, and the two-day conference explored "The impact the Internet has in taking old hate themes and repackaging them." Marshall Stevenson, the conference coordinator, noted that the objective is to examine the civil rights coalition between blacks and Jews and the importance of strengthening these bonds immediately. A play will also be performed called "On One Foot," written by two elderly men, one Jewish and the other African-American. The drama recounts the relationship between Jewish merchants and their African-American clientele in New Orleans history.

March 27, 2000

New Orleans, LA

The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding Holds 2nd Annual Black/Jewish Congressional Awards Ceremony

Over twenty members of Congress were in attendance for the ceremony, which honored Congresswomen Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) and Nita Lowey (D-NY) for their work in strengthening Black-Jewish relations. Held on the thirty-second anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the event was co-sponsored by the World Jewish Congress and the NAACP. The awards were presented by past honorees Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) and Bob Filner (R-NY) who were freedom riders on the same bus in Mississippi in 1964. At the end of the program, Dr. Israel Singer, Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress, received a phone call from Avraham Burg, speaker of the Israeli Knesset, who asked to speak to Rep. Jackson-Lee. Mr. Burg invited Congresswoman Jackson-Lee to visit Israel in order to discuss how the Israeli and United States governments could work together in promoting understanding between Jews and blacks.

*April 4, 2000
Washington, DC*

Chicago's African-Americans and Jews Have Joint Seder

Five hundred Jews and African-Americans came together at the Hilton and Towers for a joint Seder. The Seder, which grew out of the partnership of Chicago's Anti-Defamation League and The Chicago Urban League, was first held in 1999 and attendance has grown each year. Prior to the meal, the Barrington's Children's Choir and the Soul Children of Chicago sang both traditional Jewish Passover songs and gospel spirituals. The guest of honor for this event was Sherialyn Byrdsong whose husband Northwestern Basketball coach Ricky Byrdsong was murdered by white supremacist Benjamin Smith during the horrific Independence Day weekend massacre. James Compton of the Chicago Urban League called events like the joint Seder, "necessary and vital in the wake of recent hate crimes."

*April 13, 2000
Chicago, IL*

The Lenny Zakim Seder Brings Blacks and Jews Together

For the eighteenth consecutive year, the Anti-Defamation League of New England held a joint Seder bringing together blacks and Jews in Boston. However, this year for the first time, Lenny Zakim was not there to host it. Zakim, who in December lost his five-year battle with cancer, founded the event in 1983, which was the first Black-Jewish community Seder in America. The first year only six people attended; this year over seven hundred Jews and African-Americans were present to honor the memory of the former head of the Anti-Defamation League's New England office. Zakim broke barriers and built bridges throughout the Boston area establishing projects that brought diverse groups together. Some of these projects include: Team Harmony, an annual Boston event which brings thousands of teens together with celebrities in combating bigotry, the Irish-Jewish Seder, and the Lenny Fund which provides grants to interethnic organizations.

*April 13, 2000
Boston, MA*

Omaha Joint Seder Brings Blacks and Jews Together

For the fourth consecutive year, the African-American congregation from the Church of the Living God joined the Temple Israel Congregation to celebrate Passover. The joint Seder featured the choirs of both congregations performing the traditional songs of Passover. The aim of the joint Seder was to bring together the blacks and Jews to discuss issues of mutual interest or contention between the two communities.

*April 14, 2000
Omaha, NE*

American Jewish Committee Hosts Joint Seder

Blacks and Jews came together in Atlanta to celebrate liberation from slavery at a joint Seder. The Seder has grown out of the partnership which Sherry Frank, Southeast regional director of the American Jewish Committee, Representative John Lewis (D-GA), and Cecil Alexander built in 1982 when they established Atlanta's Black Jewish Coalition. The coalition works to improve relations and build bridges between the two communities through dialogue groups, weekend retreats, and joint community service efforts.

*April 14, 2000
Atlanta, GA*

Secular Jews Hold Interfaith Seder

The Shloem Community Organization of Los Angeles held an interfaith Seder in Griffith Park. Over three hundred people including African-Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Jews attended the Seder. While the Seder featured various traditional components including the four questions, telling of the story of exodus, and the singing of traditional songs, the Seder was celebrated in a secular manner, omitting the name of God in various places.

*April 14, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Milwaukee Urban League and AJC Hold Joint Seder

The Milwaukee Urban League and the American Jewish Committee held their sixth Annual African American/Jewish Task Force Seder. The Seder was entitled "In Search of Freedom, Exploring Common Ground." The event brought together members of both communities to celebrate liberation from slavery and share in their unique cultural experiences.

*April 15, 2000
Milwaukee, WI*

Rabbi Brings Together Blacks and Jews for Biblical Study Session

Rabbi Gila Ruskin of Congregation Cheveri Tzedek invited many of Baltimore's African-American religious leaders to the Northwest Senior Center for a rich afternoon of biblical discussion. The dialogue focused upon the Prophet Amos, who pointed out the sins of Israel and God's expectations from the Jewish people. The event was organized as part of the Jack Pearlstone Institute for Living Judaism month of scholarship. The theme was "Love Your Neighbor As Yourself." Rabbi Ruskin commented, "The theme is to love your neighbor. Our neighbors are largely Jewish and African-American. This is an opportunity for two neighbors to engage one another in study face-to-face."

*April 16, 2000
Baltimore, MD*

Rabbi and Wife Lead Congregation in Reaching Out to Underprivileged Youth

Rabbi Bernie King, the spiritual leader of Congregation Shir Ha-Ma'a lot, and his wife Barbara King established a partnership with three Santa Ana Schools to provide services to poverty-stricken youth. Awakened by the 1992 Rodney King riots, Rabbi King "realized that we needed to build bridges between the 'haves' and 'have-nots.'" Mrs. King, a teacher in the Santa Ana school district, where over seventy-five percent of the students are African-American or Latino, helped build the program through the relationships she had already developed at Willard Middle School. The partnership, which has now expanded to three schools, supports low-income students with programs like an ongoing clothing drive, free tutoring, essay writing contests, and providing turkeys on Thanksgiving and Christmas from the congregation's Tzedakah (charity) box. The partnership has been drastically expanded by congregation members, who provide free essential services to the students, including optometrists, eye surgeons, psychologists, social workers, dentists, cardio-vascular specialists, and veterinarians. In addition, congregation members speak at schools providing the students with inspiration. Mrs. King commented on a relationship that developed with an abused child when a Holocaust survivor spoke at Willard middle school saying, "This speaker gives hope. It crosses over ethnic bounds. It gives the students a commonality they can relate to."

*May 2000
Irvine, CA*

Oregon Unites Program Bringing Blacks and Jews Together

The Portland chapter of the American Jewish Committee initiated an intense interracial dialogue between blacks and Jews, under the auspices of Oregon Uniting, a group whose mission is to facilitate such dialogues. Six of the AJC's Portland chapter board members and six African-American members of Oregon Uniting participated in the dialogue. Dialogues were facilitated by one white person and one black person (Oregon Uniting makes a point of always having their public face include people of both races). The topics raised by the facilitators included discussions of their own experiences of racism, how they would imagine Portland without any racism, what is needed for solutions to racism, and various other probing questions. Emily Gottfried of the Portland AJC commented, "The black participants were surprised to learn that we Jews all identified as 'Jews,' and not as 'whites.'" Our non-black facilitator commented that he felt like the only "white" person in the group." The groups met for four three-hour sessions during April and May. All the participants felt so strongly about their experience that they plan to continue meeting once a month for the foreseeable future.

May 2000

Portland, OR

NAACP and ADL Lead Rally Against Hate Crimes

Over three hundred people from diverse ethnic backgrounds rallied at Market Square in downtown Pittsburgh in response to two hate inspired slayings that occurred in the Pittsburgh area in a two-month period. The rally, organized by the NAACP and ADL, entitled "Not in Our Town," featured leaders of Pittsburgh's Chinese, Jewish, African-American, and Vietnamese communities speaking out for passage of hate crime and gun control legislation. After the rally, over five hundred people gathered for a candle light vigil at a Chinese restaurant at which two employees were slain on April 28 during a racially charged murder spree.

May 5, 2000

Pittsburgh, PA

Nation of Islam Announces Plans for Million Family March

The Nation of Islam, under the leadership of Minister Louis Farrakhan, announced plans for an October 16th rally at the National Mall in Washington, DC entitled the "Million Family March." Minister Benjamin Muhammad of the Nation of Islam stated, "We want to reach out to all the various ethnic communities that make up the United States ... We're inviting all families as an affirmation of the oneness of god and the oneness of the human family." In the past, the Nation of Islam and Minister Farrakhan have been accused of being racially divisive, making anti-Semitic, and anti-white statements. This march has been endorsed by the Congressional Black Caucus, and will be supported by various religious groups including Orthodox Jews, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Buddhists, and Episcopalians.

May 6, 2000

Washington, DC

Black and Jewish Mothers in Crown Heights Celebrate Together

Mothers to Mothers, an organization that was established in 1993 to bring together black and Jewish mothers from Crown Heights for interethnic dialogue, had their annual Mother's Day dinner. The group, which was formed to heal the ethnic rifts that emerged in the 1991 Crown Heights riots, meets regularly to discuss issues facing Black and Jewish mothers. In addition, the moms speak at schools, police stations, and community centers encouraging coalition building and promoting racial harmony.

*May 12, 2000
Brooklyn, NY*

Coalition Builder Becomes Rabbi Emeritus

Over one thousand Jews and African-Americans joined together to celebrate the transition, at age seventy, of Rabbi Amiel Wohl from senior rabbi to Rabbi Emeritus. Rabbi Wohl partnered with Rev. Vernon Shannon in establishing the Coalition for Mutual Respect in 1979. This coalition has brought blacks and Jews together for over two decades. Coalition programs include workshops at schools to combat bigotry, a trip to Israel visiting Jewish and Christian sites, an annual Martin Luther King Jr. dinner, and an annual interfaith Passover Seder at Iona College. Rabbi Wohl commented, "The trick is, you create friendly interaction, you relate to people as individuals on a social level, first, before tackling big, abstract questions. The coalition held covered dish suppers, theater parties, shared worship services, including a very popular interfaith Seder – we did things that were enjoyable. We – African-Americans and Jews — formed friendships that were quite natural. Then we could sit down and discuss difficult issues, after we had shared enjoyable activities."

*May 13, 2000
New Rochelle, NY*

Million Mom March Brings Diverse Mothers Together

Over 100,000 people from every race and religion joined together to rally for gun control laws on the National Mall. Similar smaller rallies were held in seventy cities around the nation for those who could not make the trip to Washington. The marchers rallied for the following reform measures: a waiting period as well as background checks for all gun purchases, licensing, registration, safety locks for all handguns, and limitation to one handgun purchase per month per person. The event also brought together victims and relatives of victims of gun violence to share their experiences. Donna Finkelstein, whose daughter Mindy was wounded in an attack on her Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles last year, commented, "The most rewarding part has been my encounters with African-American and Latina mothers who have lost children or relatives to gun violence. I have really learned that this problem affects everyone, regardless of ethnicity or background."

*May 14, 2000
Washington, DC*

AJC Boston Hosts Tour of Black and Jewish Neighborhood

More than fifty people participated in a morning event that featured a buffet breakfast and a bus and walking tour of a former Jewish neighborhood, now largely African American. The group of Jews and African Americans visited churches that were formerly synagogues, spoke to the ministers, and heard stories of childhood memories from older Jews in the group. The tour demonstrated how intricately close the two group's historical experiences in America were. The group now plans to have Black-Jewish tours, neighborhood by neighborhood, on an annual basis.

*June 2000
Roxbury, MA*

ADL and NAACP Call for Hate Crime Hearings

Three Boston city counselors joined with representatives of the Anti-Defamation and the National Association Advancement of Colored People in calling for public hearings to examine the question of why hate crime prosecutions have dropped when incidents of hate crimes have risen dramatically in Boston. In 1999, 433 incidents of hate crimes were reported marking a fifty-seven percent increase from 1993 statistics. The number of reported hate crimes that were criminally prosecuted dropped to just nine percent in 1999, when over twenty-one percent of reported hate crimes were prosecuted in 1993.

*June 14, 2000
Boston, MA*

Baltimore Jewish Council Sends Local Leaders to Israel

The Baltimore Jewish Council sponsored a trip that sent twenty-five local political and business leaders on ten-day trip to Israel. The contingent of African-Americans, white Christians, and Jews took the trip in an attempt to build bridges based on the history of similar persecution of African-Americans and Jews. Lisa Gladden, an African-American member of the county liquor board commented, "I learned that Jews have a clear understanding of values and of entitlement, and where they came from. It is important for African-Americans to develop the same sense of where we came from. With that understanding comes a clear sense of where we are going."

*June 16, 2000
Baltimore, MD*

Hebrew Israelites Hold Inter-Congregational Conference

The four-day conference in Harlem, which brought together congregations of Hebrew Israelites from as far as Guyana and Israel, celebrated the ordaining of new rabbis and the unique and varying interpretation of Judaism embodied by Hebrew Israelites. Most Hebrew Israelites follow the teachings Rabbi Wentworth Arthur Matthew, who founded a Synagogue in Harlem in 1919. Based on observations that certain Africans obeyed dietary laws, observed holidays parallel to Judaic ones, and biblical prophecies that claimed Israelites would be enslaved and migrate around the world, Matthew concluded that Judaism had been the original belief system of many Africans. Despite celebrating Bar Mitzvahs, reading the Torah, wearing skullcaps, and identifying Israel as their homeland, most Hebrew Israelites do not identify themselves as Jews. The term Hebrew Israelite is preferred because Jacob had twelve sons, and Judah was only one of the twelve. It is estimated that between forty-five and one hundred thousand Hebrew Israelites live in the United States.

June 25, 2000

New York, NY

Massachusetts Governor Calls for Bridge To Be Named After Leonard Zakim

Governor Paul Cellucci joined Bernard Cardinal Law, the leader of Boston's Catholic community, in calling for the bridge being built over the Charles River to be named the Leonard B. Zakim Freedom Bridge. Zakim, who died of cancer in December of 1999, worked tirelessly to bring Boston's ethnic communities together during his twenty years as the head of the New England chapter of the ADL. Zakim established coalitions throughout the Boston area. Zakim brought diverse communities together by initiating projects such as Team Harmony, an annual Boston event that brings thousands of teens together with celebrities each year in combating bigotry, the nation's first black-Jewish joint Seder, Irish-Jewish Seder, and the Lenny Fund that provides grants to interethnic organizations. Governor Cellucci commented, "This magnificent bridge is a fitting tribute to a man who spent his own life building bridges of human understanding and goodwill."

June 27, 2000

Boston, MA

Victims of Smith Shooting Spree Sue Gun Industry

The Anti-Defamation League joined with The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, surviving victims of Benjamin Smith's racially motivated shooting spree, and their families to file a suit against a gun shop, two gun manufacturers, and a gun trafficker. The suit, which targets the Old Prairie Trading Shop, Bryco Arms and Sturm, Ruger & Co., and Donald Fiessinger (an illegal gun trafficker who sold Smith the guns), alleges that gun companies knew that dealers sold weapons to traffickers. Smith killed two people and wounded seven others, all of whom were African-Americans, Asians, or Jews, before killing himself during the rampage, which took place on Independence Day weekend in 1999.

June 30, 2000

Chicago, IL

Jewish Literacy Program Reaches Children of All Cultures

The Los Angeles Public Library initiated a summer reading program aimed at children in pre-school through sixth grade. The program, which requires children to read six books “of Jewish content” before the end of September, distributes certificates and prizes to children who complete the reading list. The adoption of this program at African-American, Filipino, and Korean community centers in Los Angeles has led to a cross-cultural exchange of literature for youth. Abigail Yagsur, a Los Angeles librarian commented, “You start to understand my culture because you read my literature, and I’ll start to understand your culture because I read your literature.”

July 2000

Los Angeles, CA

Anytown U.S.A Camps Teach Tolerance and Understanding

For forty-three years, The National Conference for Community and Justice (formerly the National Conference for Christians and Jews) has brought together high school students for workshops in diversity and tolerance as part of the Anytown, U.S.A. summer camp program. Since its inception, over fifty thousand young people have participated in the program. Anytown convenes diverse groups of high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors to teach them how to build communities of justice where all are treated with understanding and respect. In groups ranging from forty to seventy, these students come from different races, cultures, religions, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds. Together, they engage in an experience that facilitates changed attitudes and increased awareness of the intergroup issues that so often divide us. For the year 2000, the NCCJ is running ninety-two camps from forty-five cities and is bringing together groups of forty to seventy high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors to breakdown stereotypes and develop interpersonal bonds that transcend racial, religious, and ethnic divisions.

July 2000

Prescott, AZ

Leland-Johnson’s Common Vision Program Brings Black and Jewish Teens Together

High schools students from around the Twin cities area are exploring African-American and Jewish cultural history through the Leland Johnson Common Vision Program. The yearlong program, which seeks to build understanding within and between black and Jewish communities, has seventeen year-olds talking honestly about stereotypes, slurs, and topics that are often difficult to address. The program, which grew out of a joint venture between Temple Israel in Minneapolis and Pilgrim Baptist Church in St. Paul, includes activities such as a re-enactment of the Underground Railroad, a tour of Washington D.C.’s Holocaust museum, and a tour of The Great Blacks in Wax Museum. Aaron Robinson, an African-American boy who participated in the program, commented, “I just didn’t know anything about Jews or their history going into it. Their struggle is just like ours . . . Both had hard times that we overcame.”

July 2000

Minneapolis, MN

Interfaith Prayer Vigil Brings People of All Races Together at Site of Cross Burning

Over one hundred people, including representatives of the NAACP and ADL joined hands in a prayer of unity on the lawn of Maria and Dwayne Ross, where on June 19th a cross was set ablaze. The Independence Day vigil came one year after the Midwest was ravaged by the racially charged shooting spree in which Benjamin Smith killed two and wounded seven others. Martin Cominsky, senior director of the Houston Anti-Defamation League, said of the vigil, "A hate incident against any of us – Jew, African American, or whatever – is a hate incident against all of us. All races have come together to show that Houston is not a place for hate."

*July 4, 2000
Houston, TX*

Baltimore Jewish Council and Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Send Black Teens to Israel

The Baltimore Jewish Council in conjunction with the Hoffberger Foundation initiated the Elijah E. Cummings Youth Program to Israel. Each year, the program sends twelve students, mostly African-American, from Congressman Cummings district in Baltimore to Israel. For the year 2000, the program was expanded to include the Jerold C. Hoffberger Leadership Program, which is a yearlong program designed to cultivate community leaders and encourage active dialogue between young people in diverse communities.

*August 2000
Baltimore, MD*

Teens See America While Building Bonds Between African Americans and Jews

Eight African-American teens and eight Jewish teens took a cross-country trip visiting landmarks, museums, and historical sites while sharing their similarities and differences. The students participated in the trip as part of a yearlong Operation Understanding program, which seeks to foster racial harmony and help youngsters to develop leadership skills. The teens ate with witnesses to Bloody Sunday (the day police in Selma tear-gassed civil rights demonstrators), walked through Crown Heights, visited the Holocaust museum, toured the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visitor center in Atlanta, and concluded every day with group reflection and discussion. In these discussions, students were presented provocative statements such as "Hitler was the most influential man of the 20th century" and "It is harmful for blacks to call one another 'nigger.'" Discussions were often contentious but thought provoking and forced the students to confront beliefs that they held and perceptions of each other's cultural history. Leah Bushman, a Jewish teen in the program, commented, "We learned a lot from the places we visited, but we learned the most from one another."

*August 2000
San Diego, CA*

Republican Party Touts Diversity at National Convention

The four-day Republican convention, which opened July 31st, displayed the newfound diversity of the Republican Party. With more rabbis than priests in attendance and with speakers and performers of African-American, Asian, and Latino descent, the delegation nominated George W. Bush for president and Dick Cheney for vice president. Most Republicans boasted that the convention was a reflection of the party's diversity, while Democrats labeled the event tokenism. According to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, more than eighty percent of the delegates were white although eighty-five of the delegates were African-American representing a sixty-three percent increase from the 1996 Republican convention.

*August 1, 2000
Philadelphia, PA*

African-American and Jewish Issues Addressed at Republican National Convention

On the same day that President Bush met with Jewish Republican leaders and assured his "unconditional support for Israel," Colin Powell became the first African-American to be the keynote speaker at the Republican Presidential Convention. Powell shocked Republicans by defending affirmative action programs although most Republicans have been vigorously opposed to them in the past. Powell proclaimed, "Some in our party miss no opportunity to roundly and loudly condemn affirmative action programs that helped a few thousand black kids get an education. But hardly a whimper is heard from them over affirmative action for lobbyists who load our federal tax codes with preferences for special interests." Republicans called Powell's speech a "bold departure" and said that he demonstrated the diversity that is indicative of the new Republican Party.

*August 2, 2000
Philadelphia, PA*

Reverend Al Sharpton Praises Al Gore for Senator Lieberman Nomination

Rev. Al Sharpton, who has been accused of Anti-Semitism numerous times, most noticeably during the Crown Heights riots, praised Al Gore and the Democratic party for nominating Senator Joseph Lieberman, a Jew for vice-president. Sharpton sent Al Gore a letter praising his choice that "transcends the nation's history of exclusionary politics." Sharpton later appeared on CNBC's Hardball where he called the nomination "a great move" and congratulated Vice President Gore's courage for making the selection.

*August 8, 2000
Washington, DC*

Reverend Jesse Jackson Praises Lieberman Nomination

Reverend Jesse Jackson, who has been construed as anti-Semitic after calling New York “Hymietown” in a 1984 run for the presidency, praised the nomination of Senator Joseph Lieberman. Jackson told The Wall Street Journal that the choice shows that “another barrier has fallen and a new opportunity has risen.” Jackson later added, “Fascists have been both anti-Semitic and anti-black.” In the past there have been tensions between the two leaders, which stem from past statements Senator Lieberman had made about affirmative action programs. In 1995, The New York Amsterdam News, one of the nation’s most significant African-American newspapers, ran a four page editorial written by Jackson in which he begged Lieberman to “consider the program in light of history and not hysteria.”

*August 8, 2000
Washington, DC*

African-American Leaders Denounce Lee Alcorn’s Statements

African-American leaders from around America condemned and denounced the statements made by Lee Alcorn, president of the Dallas chapter of the NAACP. Alcorn that said black voters “need to be suspicious of any kind of partnerships between Jews at that kind of level because we know that their interest primarily has to do with, you know, money and these kind of things.” Julian Bond, chairman of the NAACP board of directors, called the statements “hateful, repulsive, and ignorant.” Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson called the remarks “terrible and insensitive.” Rev. Jesse Jackson also called the remarks “divisive” and noted that Jews and blacks worked together to build the NAACP and the National Urban League.

*August 9, 2000
New York, NY*

Unity Over Hate Rally Commemorates One-Year Anniversary of Jewish Community Center Shootings

Over three hundred people of differing ethnicities, religions, and races joined together on the campus of Pierce College to honor the victims of the North Valley Jewish Community Center shooting and share their support for peace on both a local and national level. Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA) organized the event along with the Anti-Defamation League, The NAACP, Million Mom March, and the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission. Rather than give speeches, the participating officials were asked to share stories about hate crimes in their communities.

*August 10, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Teachers Attend Summer Seminar on the Holocaust and Jewish Resistance

For eighteen years, Vladka and Benjamin Meed have been educating history and social studies teachers at their summer seminar held in Israel. This year, forty-four teachers, most of whom were Jewish and African-American, made the journey. Zilliah Ingram, the daughter of a Jewish mother and an African-American father, discussed how the seminar changed the manner in which she taught the Holocaust to her primarily African-American students in Baltimore. "The focus of Holocaust studies should be to focus on the victims, that the victims were people with lives, jobs, families, people who were into the arts... and then gradually show them how these people who had normal lives were placed into ghettos and how their families fell apart and how men lost their dignity as far as being the provider for their families and the whole Jewish culture was broken down. Not to just throw up pictures of all these piles of bodies."

*August 11, 2000
Baltimore, MD*

Lieberman Meets with African-American Leaders

During a meeting with over three hundred African-American delegates at the Democratic National Convention, Senator Joe Lieberman expressed support for affirmative action and said that he would defer to presidential candidate Al Gore on the issue of school vouchers. Lieberman declared, "I have supported affirmative action, I do support affirmative action, I will support affirmative action. Why? Because history and the current reality make it necessary. It's as simple as that." Lieberman cited his 1995 and 1998 votes in support of affirmative action, his refusal to campaign for proposition 209 (a controversial ballot initiative which bans racial quotas for state contracting and university acceptance), and also discussed his personal experience in registering African-American voters during the Mississippi freedom rides of 1964.

*August 15, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Congressional Black Caucus Endorses Lieberman Nomination

Following Senator Joe Lieberman's meeting with over three hundred African-American delegates at the Democratic National Convention, the Congressional Black Caucus officially endorsed his nomination for vice-president. Citing a one hundred percent rating on his civil rights voting record from the NAACP in 1999, and his expressed support of affirmative action, the Congressional Black Caucus overwhelmingly voted to support Lieberman. Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), who had publicly expressed doubt about Lieberman, said, "I feel confident in campaigning for him, I was not going to do it if he did not address these issues."

*August 15, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Reverend Jesse Jackson Embraces African-American Jewish Alliance

In a meeting with the New York delegation to the Democratic National Convention, Rev. Jesse Jackson called the Joe Lieberman nomination “a bold affirmative action that broke the quota of zero and said, Sure, an American Jew can be on the ticket.” Jackson also responded to Wilbur Tatum’s editorial in The New York Amsterdam News, which put forth the argument that Senator Lieberman’s selection was an attempt to increase funding from world Jewry. Jackson said repeatedly that he did not agree with the editorial but would not condemn it. Jackson also warned about using the Lieberman pick to fan the flames of Black-Jewish tension. Jackson believes that the inflammation of intergroup tensions is an attempt to divert Democrats from the real issue, which he claimed was the division of resources. Jackson proclaimed, “Blacks and Jews should not be at odds, we have an alliance built on shared suffering, shared survival, and shared victories. Blacks didn’t keep Jewish people off the ticket until last Tuesday. Blacks didn’t keep Jews off the Supreme Court until Brandeis. Blacks didn’t keep Jews out of country clubs and neighborhoods. That’s a diversion.”

*August 16, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding Releases *4th Annual Report on Black-Jewish Relations*

In response to the perception that black-Jewish relations entered a state of conflict as a result of the selection of Joe Lieberman as Democratic vice presidential nominee, The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding released the *4th Annual Report on Black-Jewish Relations* for the year 1999. In addition, The Foundation re-released a 1998 poll that found growing cooperation between the two communities in response to the re-release of 1998 ADL poll showing African-Americans were three times more likely to be anti-Semitic than whites. Foundation President Rabbi Marc Schneier stated, “We must distance ourselves from the rhetoric and diatribe of a few who look to exacerbate tensions between our two communities.”

*August 16, 2000
New York, NY*

Jackie Robinson's Son Travels to Israel to Build Coalitions Between Africans And Jews

David Robinson, the son of the legendary Jackie Robinson, has established a company with Irving Schatz, a Jewish man from New York. Robinson traveled to Israel to work with Israeli companies on bringing solar power capabilities to underprivileged Africans in Tanzania. During the trip, Robinson stated, "I have a tremendous respect for the Jews of Israel, who have returned to their homeland and have had tremendous success in building a secure country. African-Americans and Jews have a great deal in common both people were torn from their homelands and enslaved. Ninety-nine percent of African-Americans have great respect for the Jewish people and Israel."

*August 16, 2000
New York, NY*

Congressman John Lewis Introduces Senator Joe Lieberman at Democratic National Convention

Former freedom rider Congressman John Lewis (D-GA) introduced another former freedom rider Senator Joe Lieberman as the first Jewish vice presidential candidate on a major party ticket in American history. Lewis addressed the history that the two had shared in fighting for civil rights by stating, "After many of us had been arrested, jailed, and beaten during the early days of the civil rights movement, Joe Lieberman responded to the greatest moral crisis of our time. As a young student, he left the comfort of Connecticut and New Haven to be a foot soldier in the drive to register black voters." Following Lewis' introduction, Lieberman addressed the 4300 person delegation remarking, "Is this a great country or what?"

*August 16, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Hebrew Israelites Have Concert to Raise Funds for Cultural Center

Voices of Shalom, a Hebrew Israelite music group held a fundraising concert at the Hillcrest Jewish Center. Most Hebrew Israelites follow the teachings of Rabbi Wentworth Arthur Matthew, who founded a Synagogue in Harlem in 1919. Based on observations that certain Africans obeyed dietary laws, observed holidays parallel to Judaic ones, and biblical prophecies that claimed Israelites would be enslaved and migrate around the world, Matthew concluded that Judaism had been the original belief system of many Africans. The group, led by Israelite and former Chic member Alfa Anderson also released a fundraising CD entitled "Messages." The goal of the concert was to raise money for the construction of a Hebrew Israelite cultural center to be called "Ha Sh' Ar Yisrael." Israelites practice many of the tenets of Judaism, but prefer the name Israelites to Jews because it reflects that Jacob had twelve sons, not just the single son Judah. Despite claiming an ancestry, which dates back to ancient tribes of Israel and a practice that celebrates all major Jewish holidays, the Israelites are not recognized as Jews by mainstream Jewish organizations.

*August 19, 2000
New York, NY*

American Jewish Committee Hosts Networking Event

As part of their Black-Jewish economic roundtable program, the Boston chapter of the American Jewish Committee hosted a networking breakfast at Freedom House in Roxbury. Seventy-five people attended including entrepreneurs, professionals, and community activists. Each attendee had thirty seconds to explain his or her product, or describe the product for which, they were looking. The AJC also hosted a business education forum entitled "Are You Dot Com Ready?" The event was held at the law firm of Hill and Barlow in downtown Boston. Three speakers in the "Dot Com" consulting business addressed the audience of forty-five people and answered questions.

September 2000

Roxbury, MA

Black-Jewish Dialogue Starts in Pittsburgh

The Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Jewish Committee and the Community Relations Committee of the United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh co-sponsored a Black-Jewish Dialogue. Between September 2000 and June 2001, the dialogue has sponsored three community forums in cooperation with the Pittsburgh Chapter of the NAACP and the Urban League of Pittsburgh. The forums have featured panel discussions on the following topics: "The Future of Public Education in Pittsburgh," "Pittsburgh Media Coverage of Issues of Race," and "Ethnicity, and Black, White and Green: Economic Disparity in Pittsburgh."

September 2000

Pittsburgh, PA

Blacks and Jews Celebrate the First New Synagogue in St. Louis in Fifty Years

Central Reform Congregation held the grand opening of Sukkot Shalom. Meaning Shelter of Peace, the building is the first new synagogue in St. Louis in over fifty years. Julian Bond, the national chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, joined former Senator John Danforth and Rabbi Susan Talve in walking the Torah from Chase-Park Plaza to the synagogue. Later, Julian Bond addressed the congregation and discussed the storied history of cooperation between African-Americans and Jews. In addition, Senator Danforth presented Rabbi Talve with the Danforth Foundation's \$100,000 "I Dare You Award."

September 9, 2000

St. Louis, MO

Gore and Lieberman Campaign at Howard University

Vice-President Al Gore and Senator Joe Lieberman made a campaign stop at Howard University, one of the nation's premier African-American educational institutions. Gore and Lieberman discussed issues relevant to African-American young people, such as the Clinton administration's record of appointing African-Americans to the federal bench, increasing funding to scholarship programs, the breaking down of barriers by the Lieberman nomination, ending racial profiling, and preserving affirmative action. Gore proclaimed, "When I hear the other side say affirmative action is no longer necessary, I say please give me a break." Also, Gore claimed that it was a shame "that so many young people graduate from college with the equivalent of a home mortgage without a home."

*September 15, 2000
Washington, DC*

Minority Museum Provides Ongoing Discussions About Race

Once a month, David Shapiro opens up his home for frank and honest discussions about race, ethnicity, and religion. Shapiro, a former member of the Kansas City Mayor's Task Force on Race Relations, began the minority museum discussion group to "help people get to know each other and bring down the walls of anger, embarrassment, hate, hurt, and even violence, which can grow in the shadows of prejudice, bigotry, and discrimination."

*September 16, 2000
Kansas City, MO*

AJC Milwaukee Holds Forum on Diversity in Israel

The Milwaukee chapter of the American Jewish Committee and the Milwaukee Urban League co-sponsored a forum entitled "Diversity in Israel: Color, Class and Head Coverings." Belaynesh Zevadia, Israeli Consul for Academic and Minority Affairs, keynoted the event. The forum was an extension of the ongoing African American/Jewish Task Force, which is a partnership of the two organizations devoted to broadening coalitions.

*September 20, 2000
Milwaukee, WI*

Judges Speak on Intergroup Relations

City University of New York sponsored a panel discussion at John Jay College entitled "Black, Jewish, and Latino Judges in Conversation" to address the significance of fostering intergroup relations. The Panel included Kings County Supreme Court Judges Randolph Jackson, Reinaldo Rivera, Administrative Law Judge Shannon Taylor, and New York County Civil Court Judge Milton Tingling. Jeffrey Ross of the Anti-Defamation League moderated.

*September 28, 2000
New York, NY*

Forty-Seventh Assembly District Committee Members Talk Race, Peace, and Farrakhan

The Forty-Seventh Assembly District in Los Angeles, comprised of mainly of black and Jewish members, has Democratic activist Jon Freidman describing its actions as 'magical.' The district covers a portion within Los Angeles including Culver City, the South Fairfax neighborhood, extending as far east as the central city areas north of the Inglewood city line. "The most marvelous thing about the forty-seventh," Friedman said, "is the extent to which all of the elements participate. Blacks and Jews and others get together, work together and treat each other with serious respect." The orientation of the committee is local and specific – what Friedman defines as "life-affecting, in-your-face kind of issues." Howard Werlensky, a leading Democrat activist and former head of Democrats for Israel, describes his theory for the successful teaming. "When you can discuss how you feel in an honest manner, you have a relationship.... The other thing about this group is they have a common goal: the goal is people who believe in the Democratic Party." Mr. Werlensky is due to receive an award from the NAACP.

October 6, 2000

Los Angeles

Lieberman Wants To Meet Farrakhan

Senator Joseph Lieberman, after announcing his desire to meet with Minister Louis Farrakhan, came under considerable criticism from both Jewish Organizations and Republicans. Lieberman said of the proposed meeting, "I look forward [to meeting Farrakhan] because this is a time to sort of knot the country together more." Lieberman also said, "I have respect for him and respect for the Muslim community generally." No meeting has been scheduled yet.

October 6, 2000

New York, NY

Rappers Give Leg Up to Million Family March

The list of stars expected at this year's Million Family March includes Hip Hop artists Snoop Doggy Dogg, Jay-Z, and the Wu-Tang Clan. The popular rapper DMX is also serving on the march's entertainment committee, along with Ice Cube and Sean "Puffy" Combs. Russell Simmons, the co-founder of Def-Jam records, has been urging friends and protégés to attend, hoping to highlight the need for stronger family bonds in the African community. Simmons said he was impressed over comments Farrakhan had made privately about Joseph Lieberman, whose vice-presidential candidacy Simmons avidly supports. "I'm a big fan of Gore-Lieberman," Simmons says. "I have a Jewish partner [Lyor Cohen] in the music business, and a lot of my companies—we make socks, lingerie, shoes, leather bags—I own with Syrian Jews, and I also work with many Orthodox Jews. And I realize what a dramatic effect this has had on my life and could have on the lives of others." The artists will be performing for free, according to the march's organizers. Ideally, Simmons says, the event will register enough new voters to swing the presidential election to the Democrats.

October 14, 2000

Washington, D.C.

Farrakhan To Bless Ten Thousand Married Couples

Minister Louis Farrakhan plans to bless ten thousand married couples during his Million Family March in Washington. Reverend Sun Myung Moon, leader of the Unification Church who is famous for performing mass-weddings, will also be on-hand for the event. In addition, to the Unification Church, Farrakhan has extended the invitation to all peoples. "I don't want us to get bent out of shape because a folk of another race desired to help make the Million Family March...What I want on that Mall on that day is to give the world a taste of what the kingdom of God like is when people of all races, hues, and colors...can relate to each other as God intended." Abe Foxman the ADL National League Director has been unmoved. A 1998 ADL poll found blacks to be significantly more likely than whites to hold anti-Jewish beliefs, such as believing the Jews have too much control of the media and Hollywood. "That's what makes a Louis Farrakhan more dangerous," Foxman said. "Now [that] he is getting into the mainstream, this matters a great deal."

*October 15, 2000
Washington, D.C.*

A Day for Families and Farrakhan in a Capital Gathering

Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, welcomed over 400,000 families to his "Million Family March" held in Washington to promote family values. Farrakhan extended the invitation to families of all ethnic and religious backgrounds, although the crowd was predominately African-American. Also attending the event were a contingent of Jews from the Neturei Karta International in Monsey, N.Y. Yisroel David Weiss, an associate rabbi with the group, said, "We've had discussions with Minister Farrakhan and find him to be a very warm person." In regards to Farrakhan's past comments concerning Jews, Weiss said that those comments were "clearly taken out of context."

*October 17, 2000
New York, NY*

JVS Helps Jews, African-Americans, and Latinos Find Work

Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), a non-profit organization founded in 1931, offers high-quality programs to individuals, businesses, and agencies related to job seeking, and supports career planning, skills assessment, training, and retraining. Their clients are as "diverse as L.A., from newly arrived refugees and immigrants looking for their first job in the U.S. to clients with disabilities who are trying to determine if they can go back to work, to welfare recipient transitioning from welfare to work, to a high level CEO who's just been laid off," Vivian Seigel, executive vice president and CEO of JVS explains. At least twenty-five percent of the six thousand plus clients are African-American or Latino.

*October 27, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

A Common Cause

United by a common outcry of injustice, two thousand African-American and Jewish voters attended a protest to voice their objections to the ballots in Palm Beach. African-Americans and Jews have previously felt discrimination in Palm Beach. For instance, civic leader Rev. Herman McKray still has his copy of the 1956 Riviera Beach ordinance banning members of the 'Negro race' from the beaches used by "members of the White Race." Likewise, in the 1960's, Boca Raton was an unofficial 'restricted area' where Jews were kept out of the property market and local golf clubs. As Rev. Jesse Jackson addressed a smaller gathering at the New Macedonia Baptist Church, which included a delegation of Jewish retirees, he recalled how the early civil rights movements enjoyed the support of Jewish leaders. Now he said it was a time for a new coalition of Jews and blacks to challenge Florida's election.

November 11, 2000

St. Petersburg, Fl

Jackson Says Blacks and Jews 'Must Stand Together' on Tally,

Reverend Jesse Jackson and Woodland Hills Rabbi Steven B. Jacobs joined together at the ark of the Torah at Temple Israel of greater Miami to address the concerns of local voters regarding the ballot dispute. Jackson charged that black immigrants and elderly Jews in Palm Beach County were 'targeted' for disenfranchisement in last week's presidential election; in addition he called on the two minorities to join forces to fight for an accurate vote count. Standing next to Rabbi Jacobs, Jackson declared, "Once again sons and daughters of slavery and Holocaust survivors are bound together with a shared agenda, bound by their hopes and their fears about national public policy." Rabbi Jacobs added this, "Now, we blacks and Jews find ourselves fighting old battles we thought we had won... We must stand together or we will perish alone." An unusually large number of votes went to Pat Buchanan, suggesting that people had accidentally voted for him, while intending to vote for Vice President Gore. *November 13, 2000*

Los Angeles, CA

Rabbi Steven Jacobs Joins Jesse Jackson to Address Voter's Concerns in West Palm Beach

Rabbi Steven Jacobs of Kol Tikvah in Woodland Hills and his longtime colleague Reverend Jesse Jackson spent the week touring Florida attempting to bring together what they called the disenfranchised voters of Florida's black and Jewish communities. Included in their tour were visits to polling places, interviews with voters, and a rally at Temple Israel of Greater Miami featuring Kweisi Mfume, president and CEO of the NAACP, and Ralph G. Neas, president of the progressive political organization, People for the American Way. "Once again, sons and daughters of slavery and Holocaust survivors are bound together with a shared agenda, bound by their hopes and their fears about national public policy," Jackson told the crowd. Since many voters involved in the dispute are Haitian immigrants, African-Americans, or elderly Jews, the two religious leaders used the opportunity to unite Florida's black and Jewish communities.

*November 17, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Observance Brings Together Multiracial Families

Every week for Shabbat, Jewish couples with biracial children, single parents who have adopted children of color, and interracial families gather together to give thanks to the Jewish Multiracial Families Network. Linda C. Jum, national organizer for the network explains, "Just bringing together every definition of Jew or every definition of someone who is connected to Judaism." Jum said the network was started about five years ago in Boston by a group of white couples that have adopted children of color. In March, the group obtained a grant from the Nathan Cummings Foundation and the Jewish Outreach Institute to launch a national outreach project. Reena Bernards, a member and mother of two biracial children said, "We want to show our children that it is possible to be both African-American and Jewish."

*November 30, 2000
Washington, D.C.*

In Florida, Some See a Chance for New Black-Jewish Cooperation

The Stephen Wise Synagogue in New York, a reform synagogue renowned for its tradition of social activism, held an event to demand a re-count of the vote in Florida. The event was organized within forty-eight hours and local unions assisted in promoting the event. Speaking to a mixed audience of about one thousand Jews and African Americans, Rev. Jesse Jackson said, "It reminds us of our need to be together. We are inextricably bound." Tens of thousands of African, Caribbean, and Jewish Americans were allegedly disenfranchised in South Florida when their votes were not recorded accurately. The New York Times stated that black votes were disqualified at far higher rates than those cast by whites. Referring to his visit to a Florida Jewish retirement home, Mr. Jackson was quick to point out that this is a "Jewish issue" as much as it is a "black issue." An elderly woman told him that she "would rather die tonight than have on her record that she voted for Pat Buchanan." Other speakers consisted of a number of prominent local Jewish politicians, City Comptroller Alan Hevesi, U.S. Representatives, Jerrold Nadler, Gary Ackerman, and Charles Rangel.

November 30, 2000

New York, NY

Blacks and Jews Come Together for a Culture Sharing Evening

As part of their ongoing partnership in the African American/Jewish Task Force, The Milwaukee Urban League and the American Jewish Committee Milwaukee chapter held a communal holiday celebration. Entitled "Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanzaa: Sharing our Traditions," the evening brought together blacks and Jews of all ages to share their cultural similarities and celebrate their differences.

December 2000

Milwaukee, WI

Law Enforcement Visits Holocaust Museum

The Anti-Defamation League and the U.S. Holocaust Museum are sponsoring a sensitivity training seminar for thousands of Washington law enforcement officers. The program is meant to expose how young men and woman who were placed in positions of authority have committed countless atrocities by abusing their power. "We see a generation of recruits that give us such hope that the mistakes of the past won't be repeated," said David Friedman the director of the Washington chapter of the Anti-Defamation League. The Washington Police Department has come under much scrutiny for alleged racial profiling and brutality. A visit to the museum hopes to instruct the officers on human rights issues, and make them more aware of their behavior among minorities in their community.

December 14, 2000

Washington, DC

CONFLICT

Prison Workers Visit to Black Holocaust Museum Sparks Controversy

State Legislator Glenn Grothman (R-West Bend) criticized spending state funding on a racial sensitivity training program that brings prison workers on a tour of the Black Holocaust Museum. Grothman, who in the past unsuccessfully attempted to repeal the Martin Luther King holiday for state officials, questioned the legitimacy of the institution itself. "First of all, there was no black holocaust was there? Calling that museum the Black Holocaust Museum is an insult to Jews." Marissa Weaver, executive director of the museum, remarked that the name "Black Holocaust Museum" was chosen to reflect the life experience of James Cameron, the museum's founder who was lynched as a teenager. Weaver was quoted as saying "We are not about compromising or vying for who had more suffering." Most legislators were in favor of the program as was Warden Ken Morgan who contributed that "more understanding of each other's heritage makes for a better workplace." Grothman later countered with, "It's apparent that the Department of Corrections has too much money, and if they have time to engage in this nonsense, they're probably overstaffed too."

*January 17, 2000
Milwaukee, WI*

Rev. Charles Norris Makes Comments Considered Anti-Semitic at Rev. Al Sharpton's MLK Commemoration

First Lady and New York Senatorial candidate Hillary Clinton joined former mayor Edward Koch at the National Action Network's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day commemoration. The event hosted by Rev. Al Sharpton, who has in the past been construed by some as anti-Semitic, stirred up controversy when Rev. Charles Norris made statements some have labeled anti-Semitic. Norris remarked that he was unable to attend Dr. King's 1963 march on Washington because his Jewish employers would not allow him to take off work. He further stated that two Jewish employers fired him. "Miller number one was a Jew, Miller number two was a Jew. I was then employed by a Jew, by the name of Jesus." Clinton, who arrived after these comments were made, rejected the comments calling them divisive.

*January 17, 2000
New York, NY*

Merger Between Farrakhan and W.D. Muhammad Worries Jewish Officials

The partnership between Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, and Imam Wallace Deen Muhammad, the moderate religious leader of the Muslim American Society raised concern with American Jewish officials. Muhammad, whose Muslim constituency is estimated at over two million members, for the first time has embraced Farrakhan, who in the past has been accused of fostering anti-Semitism. Jewish leaders were worried that by associating with Farrakhan, Muhammad would bring Farrakhan's past "poison" into the main mosques of Muslims in America. Jewish leaders were also upset that the partnership involved members of Neturei Karta, the anti-Israel extremist group. Yehusit Barsky, of the Division on Middle East and International Terrorism for the Jewish Committee said, "It's a very disturbing trend." Barsky believes that Muhammad, once known as a moderate force, is aligning with terrorists and anti-Israel Arab Islamic groups and his view on Jews is becoming more extreme. Abraham Foxman, national Director of the Anti-Defamation League believes that the merger is distressing because it enables Farrakhan to seem more mainstream, while at the same time tarnishing Muhammed's reputation. Some Jewish leaders do not seem overly concerned with the merger though, "I don't think this will impact adversely in black-Jewish relations because there is too much positive energy now in strengthening the black-Jewish alliance," said Rabbi Marc Schneier, President of The Foundation For Ethnic Understanding.

March 2000

Chicago, IL

The Murder of Three Whites Looks Racially Motivated

Ronald Taylor, an African American man, accused of killing three whites and wounding two in a shooting spree on March 1, was arraigned. Taylor, whose home contained anti-white and anti-Semitic writings, was charged with ethnic intimidation (Pennsylvania's hate crime law) as well as the homicide charges. Hand written notes in Taylor's home were found which stated "Death to Jerusalem," and "White Trash." Allegedly, just before leaving his apartment complex, Taylor told another African-American, "the gun is for crackers (white people)."

March 3, 2000

Wilksburg, PA

Whitney Houston Statement Draws Controversy

In an interview with Jane Magazine, Whitney Houston referred to her signature gold bracelet as being made by "this Jew guy on Diamond Row in New York." Houston was unable to be reached for comment, but her spokeswoman, Nancy Seltzer said, "I've never heard Whitney use language like that. She doesn't think in terms of race or religion."

March 29, 2000

New York, NY

African-American Jewish Convert Finally Granted Israeli Citizenship

Stephanie Williams, a thirty year-old African-American woman who converted to Judaism in 1997, was finally granted Israeli citizenship. Williams originally applied for citizenship in 1998, but her application was held up possibly because of the color of her skin. Israeli Interior Ministers doubted the validity of Williams' conservative conversion that was performed in Philadelphia. Williams and the rabbi who performed the conversion were then subject to months of undue questioning. This questioning persisted despite the fact that under Israeli law, converted reform, conservative, and orthodox Jews are supposed to qualify for automatic citizenship. She was later asked to sign a document, which stated that if it were ever proven that she was a member of the Black Hebrews (a sect of 1250 people who have come to Israel from Africa, but have not been recognized by the government as Jews) she would give up her citizenship rights. Williams refused to sign the document stating that it was prejudicial to force her to sign anything simply because she has black skin. Her citizenship was finally granted when the Ministry appointed a new population-register who ordered subordinates that had held up the application to recognize her rights as a Jew.

*April 12, 2000
Jerusalem, Israel*

The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad Is Published

Karl Evanzz chronicles the life of the founder of the Nation of Islam in this 514-page text, which focuses largely on the roots of African-American anti-Semitism. The author documents the life experiences and theoretical foundations of the spiritual leader who converted both Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan to Islam. The book details Elijah Muhammad's conversion by "Master" Wallace D. Fard, whose teachings were based on the concept that all white men were devils and that Jews, represented Beelzebub, the Lord of the Flies. The book further documents Muhammad's outrage with Dr. Ralph Bunche, an African-American who was influential to the 1949 partition of Israel and Palestine, as well as Malcolm X's eventual split with his spiritual guide. In 1965, Malcolm X said of his former teacher, "What Elijah Muhammad is teaching is diametrically opposed to the principles of Islam and the Muslim world itself."

*May 2000
New York, NY*

Federal Judge Secretly Added Blacks and Jews to Lemrick Nelson Jury

It was revealed that Brooklyn Federal Court Judge David Trager held a secret meeting with lawyers from both the prosecution and defense prior to the civil rights trial of Lemrick Nelson Jr. and Charles Price. At this meeting, Judge Trager decided to replace two dismissed jurors with one African-American juror and one Jewish juror rather than alternate juror number one and two. A panel of five caucasians (two of whom were Jewish), four Latinos, and three African-Americans convicted Nelson and Price of violating Yankel Rosenbaum's civil rights for their part in the fatal stabbing that occurred during the Crown Heights riots of 1991. The records of the meeting had been kept sealed until Nelson's lawyers raised the issue during an appeal of his 1997 conviction.

*May 1, 2000
New York, NY*

Survey Shows More African-Americans Don't Know About Judaism

The National Convention for Community and Justice (formerly the National Convention of Christians and Jews) released the findings of their Taking America's Pulse II survey revealing that the African-American community feels more distant from the Jewish community than it did in a 1996 poll taken by Gallup and commissioned by the American Jewish Committee. Only seven percent of African-Americans polled replied that they felt very close to Jews (remained steady from 1996); twenty-nine percent said they felt close to Jews (up from twenty-six percent in 1996); thirty-six percent of African-American said they fell neutral toward Jews (down from forty-four percent in 1996); eight percent of African-Americans said they felt far from the Jewish community (remained steady from 1996); four percent of African-Americans responded feeling very distant from the Jewish community (up from three percent in 1996); while seventeen percent of African-American respondents claimed they did not know enough about Judaism to make a judgment (up from fourteen percent in 1996).

*May 15, 2000
New York, NY*

Minister Louis Farrakhan Proclaims “I Will Never Apologize to the Jewish Community”

At a press conference promoting the Nation of Islam’s October 16th Million Family March, Minister Louis Farrakhan expressed a desire to have “rapprochement with the Jewish community.” However, Farrakhan refused to ever apologize for statements in the past, which have been construed as anti-Semitic. “I will never apologize to the Jewish community for telling the truth.” The minister discussed a meeting he held with a group of rabbis who suggested that he undertake “a protracted period of good words and deeds, in addition to disavowing the Nation of Islam’s book *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, which is supposedly a history of the slave trade. The minister responded by claiming, “I am not a hater. I’ve never hurt anyone Jewish. Maybe we need a protracted period of good behavior from Jews, cause you’ve done more damage to us, and the book? I’m not hateful. Show me where I’m wrong.”

*July 6, 2000
New York, NY*

TV Housemate Is Revealed To Be a Former Member of the New Black Panther Party

William Collins, one of two African-Americans cast on the CBS reality show *Big Brother*, formerly was an aide to Khalid Muhammad and member of his controversial New Black Panther Party. Muhammad formed the New Black Panther Party upon being thrown out of the Nation of Islam for calling Jews “bloodsuckers.” Collins, who has also been known as Hiram Ashantee, made no reference to either Muhammad or the Black Panther Party in his biography for the show, which locks ten strangers in a house with twenty-eight cameras and sixty microphones for ninety days. Chris Ender, a CBS spokesman, said, “We feel very comfortable about William’s participating in *Big Brother*.”

*July 13, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Former Black Panther Voted off Big Brother

William Collins, also known as Hiram Ashantee, became the first of the ten housemates on the CBS reality show *Big Brother* to be voted out of the house by viewers. The New York Daily News revealed on July 13th that Collins was a former leader of the New Black Panther Party and an aide to Khalid Muhammad. Muhammad, the party’s founder, was kicked out of the Nation of Islam for calling Jews “bloodsuckers.” Collins was interviewed after the show where he confirmed The Daily News story that linked him to the New Black Panther Party, but added that he left the party four months prior. When asked whether he considered white people or Jews his enemies, Collin’s responded, “I consider all people who are evil and unrighteous and against my god my enemies. If white people or Jews fall into that category then they would know that.” CBS officials added that they felt no need to remove Collin’s from the show after his link to the Black Panthers was discovered because any hate speech made would be edited for television and the network correctly assumed viewers would vote him off anyway.

*July 20, 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Head of the Dallas NAACP Makes Disparaging Remarks About Jews and Lieberman

Lee Alcorn, president of the NAACP Dallas chapter, was accused of anti-Semitism following remarks he had made during a radio interview on KHVN-AM. Only a few hours after Senator Joe Lieberman was named Vice President Al Gore's running mate, Alcorn stated, "If we get a Jew person, then what I'm wondering is, what is this movement for, you know? I think we need to be suspicious of any kind of partnership between the Jews at that level because we know that their interest primarily has to do with, you know, money and these kind of things."

August 7, 2000

Dallas, TX

Alcorn Quits After NAACP Suspends Him

Kwesi Mfume, President and CEO of the NAACP, condemned the remarks made by Lee Alcorn, President of the NAACP Dallas Chapter. Mfume stated in the suspension letter he sent to Alcorn, "I find your comments in this matter to be repulsive. They are, in my opinion anti-Semitic, anti-NAACP, and anti-American. Your comments do not reflect the views or values of the NAACP, our board, staff, or membership." Upon hearing of his suspension, Alcorn promptly resigned his position as president rather than apologizing. Alcorn went on to say that his remarks were taken out of context. He called it "unfortunate that certain elements of the community have attempted to cause division... by characterizing these statements as anti-Semitic. The statements were Anti-Lieberman, not Anti-Semitic." Alcorn did admit that his comments were insensitive but claimed, "It seems you can't criticize anybody who is Jewish without being branded an anti-Semite."

August 10, 2000

New York, NY

Minister Louis Farrakhan Questions Senator Joe Lieberman's Loyalty

At a Los Angeles press conference to promote October's Million Family March, Minister Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam, questioned Democratic Vice Presidential nominee Joe Lieberman's loyalty. Farrakhan stated, "Mr. Lieberman as an Orthodox Jew, is also a dual citizen of Israel, the State of Israel is not synonymous with the United States, and the test he would probably have to pass is: Would he be more faithful to the Constitution of the United States than to the ties that any Jewish person would have to the state of Israel?" During the press conference, Farrakhan also called for dialogue with Jewish leaders and claimed allegations that he is an anti-Semite were "so mistaken." Senator Lieberman responded that evening on Larry King Live declaring that America was his "first and primary loyalty."

August 11, 2000

Los Angeles, CA

The New York Amsterdam News Prints Editorial Entitled “The Democratic Party-Jewish Connection: It gets curiouiser and curioiser”

The New York Amsterdam News, the nation’s oldest weekly African-American newspaper, printed an editorial by Publisher Emeritus Wilbur Tatum, which many have construed as Anti-Semitic. The piece entitled “The Democratic Party-Jewish Connection: It gets curiouiser and curioiser” puts forth the argument that Senator Joe Lieberman was nominated in order to raise money for the Democratic party from the world Jewish community. The article states, “Therefore the reasoning in the Gore camp went out all over the world to Jews of means: you’ve got to show me the money. When you do, one of yours will be given the second spot on the ticket. The word went all over to Jews in every pocket of every civilization and near-civilization that the major protector of Jews in this world, the American government, is now available. But in order to get it, you have to buy it.” Tatum is married to a Holocaust survivor and his daughter is Jewish.

August 12, 2000

New York, NY

African-American Leaders Are Unhappy with Lieberman’s Views

African-American leaders voiced concern over the nomination of Senator Joe Lieberman for vice president due in large part to positions the senator has held both on affirmative action and school vouchers. Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) stated outright, “If there is no modification by Lieberman on vouchers and affirmative action, I’m not selling the ticket. I have no obligation to sell a ticket to which I am diametrically opposed.” In 1995, Senator Lieberman declared racial quotas to be divisive and has supported voucher experiments in the past. Senator Lieberman has also agreed to meet with the Congressional Black Caucus to discuss any concerns they may have.

August 13, 2000

Los Angeles, CA

Abe Foxman Condemns Wilbur Tatum and Congressman Charles Rangel

Abe Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League, demanded an apology from Congressman Charles Rangel for making “crude and offensive” charges regarding his salary in the same interview in which Foxman likened Wilbur Tatum to David Duke. The tensions between the two community leaders was sparked by Tatum’s editorial entitled “The Democratic-Jewish connection: It gets curiouiser and curiouiser,” which Foxman has called anti-Semitic. Foxman said it was “insidious and an anti-Semitic canard employed by anti-Semites, racists, and conspiracy theorists through the centuries to bolster their claim of Jewish control. His contention that Jews bought the vice presidency shows Bill Tatum for what he is – nothing more than an anti-Semite the likes of David Duke.” Foxman also cited a 1998 ADL poll, which asserted that African-Americans were three times as likely to be anti-Semitic than whites.

August 13, 2000

New York, NY

Wilbur Tatum Denies Being an Anti-Semite and Accuses Abe Foxman of Race Baiting

In an interview with The New York Daily News, Wilbur Tatum denied being an anti-Semite. Anti-Defamation League National Director Abe Foxman likened Tatum, Publisher Emeritus for The New York Amsterdam News, to former Klansman David Duke, after an editorial he wrote criticized the nomination of Senator Joe Lieberman. Tatum stated, "Abe Foxman has been a race baiter his whole life. My wife is a Holocaust survivor. My daughter is Jewish. I am not, nor have I ever been, an anti-Semite." Tatum further claimed that Foxman was making the accusation in order to improve fundraising for his organization.

*August 14, 2000
New York, NY*

Anti-Defamation League Criticizes Lieberman's Comments at a Black Church

The Anti-Defamation League expressed criticism of Joe Lieberman's comments to the African-American congregation at Detroit's Fellowship Chapel Church. Lieberman said, "The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion not freedom from religion. There must and can be a constitutional place for faith in our public life. As a people, we need to reaffirm our faith and renew the dedication of our nation and ourselves to God and God's purposes." In a letter to the Connecticut senator, ADL National Director Abe Foxman and National Chairman Howard Berkowitz stated, "Candidates should feel comfortable explaining their religious convictions to voters. At the same time, however, we believe there is a point at which the emphasis on religion in a political campaign becomes inappropriate and even unsettling in a religiously diverse society such as ours." Lieberman's spokesperson stated, "He believes the ADL does a lot of good work, and in this particular instance respectfully disagrees."

*August 27, 2000
New York, NY*

Jewish Ambulance Driver Collides with African-American Father and Son, Killing Both

Shamai Goldstein, a thirty-six-year-old volunteer ambulance service driver, was running a red light on Ocean Avenue in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn, when he struck a motorcycle carrying Alberto Curtis Sr. and his son Alberto Jr. killing both. Goldstein, a volunteer with the Hatzolah ambulance service, was driving a 1988 Ford station wagon, equipped with sirens and lights, and was en-route to the apartment of a seventy-five year-old woman who had complained of chest pains. The New York Department of Motor Vehicles issued a statement that volunteer ambulances are not supposed to run red lights, and when they do they should "proceed with caution." The death of the Curtises had raised the specter of the August 1991 accident, which resulted in the death of seven-year-old Gavin Cato and sparked the Crown Heights riots. Thankfully, this incident did not spark any further violence.

*August 27, 2000
New York, NY*

District Court Judge Dismisses Father's Law Suit Against High School

District Court Judge Jan E. Dubois ruled today in favor of the Philadelphia Board of Education and George Washington Carver High School in a racial bias suit brought by parent Marvin A. Smith. In January of 1998, Smith, the father of two children who attended Carver High School, circulated a letter alleging that white and Jewish teachers at the school were "uncaring racists" who "are systematically destroying their children's spirit and destroying their will." The plaintiff also circulated petitions calling for the termination of two teachers because one opposed affirmative action and the other assigned students to report on the film Schindler's List during Black History Month. Teachers at the school had Mr. Smith removed from the parental advisory council and urged parents to remove Mr. Smith from his position as president of Carver's Home and School Association. Smith sued on various counts including defamation of character, violations of his civil rights, and an infringement of his first amendment rights. In addition, he asked for ten million dollars in punitive damages.

*September 5, 2000
Philadelphia, PA*

Race for Congress Turns Rancorous

The primary race to become the Democratic candidate for New York's Seventeenth Congressional District, contested between African-American State Senator Larry Seabrook and the Jewish incumbent Eliot Engel, turned rancorous. Seabrook, who has run strongly on the principle of African-American political empowerment, accused Engel of invading his privacy when Engel's campaign revealed that Seabrook filed for divorce without consulting his wife. In addition, it was revealed that Seabrook had filed joint returns despite the secret divorce. Also the race became further marred with ethnic tensions when of the Jewish former mayor of New York Ed Koch endorsed Engel, while Reverend Al Sharpton endorsed Seabrook. Specifically, both sides have accused each other of pandering to ethnic and racial divisions.

*September 5, 2000
New York, NY*

Representative Major Owens Defeats Una Clarke in Democratic Congressional Primary

Brooklyn's Eleventh Congressional District, which includes the neighborhood of Crown Heights, saw one of the most heated congressional primaries in the country end in a narrow victory for African American Congressman Major Owens. Secular Jews in the neighborhood as well as African Americans tended to vote for Owens citing his stature in the House and long standing record on Israel. Owens' opponent, Caribbean American Una Clarke, a former friend and colleague of Owens, had been supported by a large majority of Orthodox Jews as well as Caribbean Americans. Clarke even won the endorsement of the Crown Heights Political Action Committee, one of the most powerful interethnic political organizations in New York. Clarke has been known in the Jewish community as "Morah Una" (Morah is the Hebrew word for teacher) due to her influential 1972 role in keeping the first Jewish daycare center in the area open. *September 12, 2000*
New York, NY

FBI Investigated Militant Jewish Group in Deaths of Hip-Hop Stars

The investigative web site Thesmokinggun.com obtained FBI memos revealing that the bureau "extensively investigated" whether hip-hop stars Tupac Shakur and Eric "Eazy E" Wright were victims of death threats and extortion plots by members of the Jewish Defense League. The militant group, which has called for the expulsion of all Arabs from Israel, was the focus of a thirty-one month investigation. The investigation produced no tangible evidence linking the group to Tupac Shakur's 1996 murder, extortion, or death threats.

September 22, 2000
New York, NY

Lawyers for Lemrick Nelson and Charles Price Challenge Civil Rights Statute

Lemrick Nelson and Charles Price, who were found guilty in 1998 of violating the civil rights of Yankel Rosenbaum during his stabbing in Crown Heights in 1991, are appealing their conviction by challenging the interpretation of the 1968 civil rights statute. The statute punishes anyone who assaults someone because of race or religion "while the victim was enjoying a facility provided by a government." The 1968 statute is based on both the thirteenth amendment and the commerce clause of the Constitution. Lawyers for Nelson and Price have argued that the 1968 statute stretched the Constitution because the Commerce Clause is only supposed to apply to economic activity. In addition, the lawyers have argued that the thirteenth amendment, which includes prohibition of public or private racial discrimination in the disposal of property, in making and enforcing contracts, and in private employment. Finally, it protects only racial discrimination and maintains that "Jew" is a religious distinction rather than a racial one.

September 28, 2000
New York, NY

New York Amsterdam News to Review “The Holocaust Industry”

The New York Amsterdam News, America’s oldest African-American weekly newspaper, announced that they would review Norman Finkelstein’s book “The Holocaust Industry.” In this text, Finkelstein, the child of two Holocaust survivors, attacks major Jewish organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League and Simon Wiesenthal Center for using the Holocaust for fundraising purposes. The author attacks Elie Wiesel for charging twenty-five thousand dollars per appearance as well. The book, which is on the best seller lists in Canada, Germany, and Switzerland has been reviewed by only two other American publications. In an editorial by Publisher Emeritus Wilbur Tatum, The New York Amsterdam News charged that the mainstream media has avoided reviewing this book because of a fear of monetary retribution from powerful Jewish institutions.

*September 29, 2000
New York, NY*

Seabrook Says Engel Used “Willie Horton Tactics” to Win Election

African-American State Senator Larry Seabrook, who lost the election to serve Bronx’s Seventeenth Congressional District, feels he was defeated unfairly due to “Willie Horton-type” imagery painted by the winner and incumbent, Eliot Engel. Seabrook contends that he “was never afforded the opportunity to campaign in Riverdale” and that he was not invited to any political events, which would have given him the chance to speak with white constituents. Seabrook also claims that Engel resorted to ‘political racial profiling’ when the congressman sent out thirty-one pieces of negative literature. Seabrook says that Engel wanted to “say I was lazy. Never went to work and that I stole money. This will be the prototype that a white will use against a Black politician whenever there’s a number of seats being held by whites in predominately Black and Latino areas.”

*October 5, 2000
New York, NY*

Lieberman Feels Heat in Farrakhan Flap

The fallout from Senator Joe Lieberman’s statement on a black-oriented radio network still hovers over the vice-presidential candidate. Of Louis Farrakhan, Lieberman stated, “I look at anything that anybody does to get people to register to vote as really at the heart of what democracy is about,” he went on to say, “I admire what Mr. Farrakhan is doing there.” The liberal American Jewish Congress called it a case of poor judgment that would serve to ‘minimize’ Farrakhan’s “outright and blatant racism.” The Republican National Committee Chairman Jim Nicholson called the statement “political pandering and a terrible mistake.” Abe Foxman, the national director of the ADL, said that if Lieberman met with the Nation of Islam leader “he would be legitimizing a bigot, an Anti-Semite and a racist.” No meeting of the two men has been set.

*October 6, 2000
New York, NY*

Families Arrive in Washington for Million Family March

Farrakhan appeared on NBC's "Meet The Press" to promote his upcoming Million Family March, a gathering meant to reinforce the significance of family life. In the television interview, Farrakhan insisted again that more Jews control black artists, athletes, and other professionals. "The Jewish people have that kind of control," he maintained in calling for more equitable and reciprocal relationship rather than "that paternal relationship of the one who has the money to fund black organizations, to fund black newspapers, to fund black magazines so that it quiets our voice."

*October 16, 2000
New York, NY*

African-American Files Reparation Claims for Fifty Dollars

Robert Brock, a seventy-five-year-old African American man, has traveled the country imploring African-Americans to pay him fifty dollars in exchange for filing a claim for reparations. The Anti-Defamation League has watched Brock for some time due to questionable behavior in the past. According to the Gail Gans (Director of the Civil Rights Information Center for the ADL in New York), Brock had agreed with a separatist philosophy that Hispanics, Jews, and Arabs should be repatriated, was active in the Holocaust denial movement, and protested the U.S. Holocaust Museum. Despite these positions, Brock insists that he is not an anti-Semite, but still contends that the Holocaust was "overstated." Brock has placed the money he has collected in a fund he calls the "Community Brotherhood Association," but provides no further details.

*October 17, 2000
Boston, MA*

Jewish Agencies Silent in Dispute Over Florida Vote

The abstention of the Jewish organizations from any actions as Florida decides who will be the next president of the United States raised eyebrows among some observers, who say that the Jewish voters may have been prevented from freely exercising their franchise. Martin Raffel, the chief operating officer of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs said, "We're non-partisan and we don't want to be doing anything that can be seen as endorsing one candidate over another." Arthur Teitelbaum, the southern area director of the ADL said, "We see this as an issue of politics, not an issue of religion. Simply because there are a large number of Jews impacted by a political controversy does not necessarily make it a Jewish issue."

*November 17, 2000
Washington, DC*

Spike Lee Accused of Stereotyping

Shlomo Schwartzberg, the Director of programming for the Toronto Jewish Film Festival accused Spike Lee of promoting “stereotypes that denigrate Jews.” Schwartzberg claims that Jews are cast in a disreputable light in Lee’s new film, Bamboozled, as well as other Lee films including Do the Right Thing and Mo Better Blues. Schwartzberg believes that Jewish filmmakers and actors do not take a stand against Lee because “they’re scared to oppose him, since he’s so quick to scream racism.”

December 2000

New York, NY

SHARED EXPERIENCE

NAREB Wants to Erase Records Barring Blacks and Jews from Residential Districts

In courthouses across America, proclamations, covenants, and zoning laws that were once used to forbid African-Americans and Jews from purchasing housing in specific areas still remain on the books. Despite the fact that these covenants cannot be enforced, due to a 1949 Supreme Court decision, many subdivision maps still technically contain phrases that racially segregate residential areas. For example, in the Glenwood neighborhood in Clearwater, Florida, there is a zoning law that states, "No conveyance of this property shall ever be made to persons of African or Hebrew descent." Most of the time, homeowners have no idea these laws are on the books. The National Association of Real Estate Brokers began a nation-wide effort to purge these laws from all court records. Surprisingly, this effort has met significant resistance. California title companies and legislators that opposed the change argued that changing records would cost too much, and since these laws are no longer enforced, the effort would be pointless. Others have argued that to delete the wording from court records would be to wipe out a dark piece of our collective history that needs to be remembered.

*January 2000
Tampa, Fl*

Arizona Lawmaker Makes Prejudiced Comments

Arizona State legislator, Barbara Blewster, made comments stimulating outrage from all across America. Blewster's comments about Jews, African and Native Americans, homosexuals, and gun violence drew criticism even from the controversial Howard Stern radio show. She specifically expressed her surprise that a Republican Jewish lawmaker "didn't have a big, hooked nose." In a letter to a constituent, Blewster compared homosexuality with bestiality, human sacrifice, and cannibalism. She told another legislator that Native Americans, "were not smart enough to do what they needed to get ahead, and that even African-Americans are more advanced than Native Americans and smarter. Even during the slavery days, that Booker T. Washington pulled himself up by his bootstraps... After the Emancipation Proclamation, people made it. No one starved, no one was dying." Blewster also encouraged amending the law to allow teachers and school administrators to bring concealed weapons to school, remarking, "An armed society is a polite society."

*January 2000
Phoenix, AZ*

FBI Concludes Investigation of Gunman's Computer

After a six-month investigation, specially trained FBI agents and technicians discovered no relevant evidence after searching through every byte on Benjamin Nathaniel Smith's computer. Smith, a prominent member in the Illinois white supremacist group called the World Church of the Creator, killed two and wounded seven in a two-day shooting spree over the Independence Day weekend in 1999. Smith began his reign of terror by firing at six Orthodox Jews who were leaving a Chicago Synagogue on July 2nd; he then traveled to Skokie, Indiana, where he murdered an African-American basketball coach before killing a Korean postal worker in Bloomington, Indiana. After the shooting spree, Smith committed suicide in the minivan he had stolen for the rampage.

January 4, 2000

Chicago, IL

FBI Opens Hate Mail Investigation

The FBI began an investigation of letters that threatened an increase in violence against Jews and Blacks. The offensive letters have been received by chapters of the NAACP, American Jewish Committee, and African-American Universities in five southern states. The obscene letters refer to Rahowa, or a racial holy war commonly called for by the Peoria, Illinois based white supremacist organization known as the World Church of the Creator. The letters further express direct physical threats on the lives of civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, boxing legend Muhammad Ali, as well as former basketball star Michael Jordan. A letter directed to the NAACP read in capitals, "The total destruction of your race is our mission in life." Similar letters with a swastika added to the bottom were received by eighteen of the thirty-six regional chapters of the American Jewish Committee. The letters were postmarked Fayetteville, North Carolina and mailed in late December of 1999.

January 8, 2000

Charlotte, NC

Ed Koch Criticizes Mayor Rudolph Guiliani's Appearance with Nazi Sympathizer

Former Mayor of New York Edward Koch held a press conference at city hall to publicly condemn the appearance of Mayor Rudolph Guiliani at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. dinner hosted by the Congress of Racial Equality. At the event, Guiliani shared a platform with Joerg Haider, the right wing leader of Austria's anti-foreigner freedom party, who allegedly has praised Adolf Hitler's policies in the past. During the press conference, Koch posed the question, "Is that a place to spend Martin Luther King Day, to be on the same dais as the leader of the neo-Nazi party in Austria?"

January 19, 2000

New York, NY

Federal Judge Passes Racist Notes

Judge Alan McDonald, a federal judge in Yakima, Washington, was in the habit of passing racist and disparaging notes to his clerk during trials. For instance, during the testimony of a bank vice president, who happened to be African-American, Judge McDonald passed a note that read, "Ah is impotent." Another note read, "... in my experience, a Mormon money man makes the Jews and the Chinese look like rank amateurs!" In addition, a court worker passed judge McDonald a note in a room full of Latino defendants and lawyers that read, "it smells like oil in here – too many greasers." The seventy-two-year-old called the notes, "jokes that help break the monotony of court proceedings." In addition, the judge felt no need to apologize for the notes because "they were never intended to be in a situation where they could be misunderstood."

January 31, 2000

Yakima, Washington

Republican Presidential Candidate George W. Bush Speaks at Bob Jones University

While campaigning for the Republican nomination for president, George W. Bush spoke at Bob Jones University in South Carolina. The extremely conservative university has come under controversy for long-standing policies, a history of statements by the administration, and materials on their website that have been construed as offensive to Catholics, Jews, homosexuals, and African-Americans. In 1999, Bob Jones University finally lifted their ban on interracial dating.

February 2, 2000

Greenville, SC

Two Ameritech Supervisors Suspended for Ties to White Supremacist Group

Mark and Dana Wilson, both customer service supervisors at Ameritech, were suspended indefinitely after the Arts and Entertainment Channel re-broadcast their 1995 special "Investigative Reports: The New Skinheads." The program, which originally aired in 1995, featured the husband and wife talking about their involvement in Resistance Records, a white power music label specializing in music with lyrics denigrating African-Americans, Jews, and homosexuals. The program described Mark as someone who "helps inspire racial separatists around the world." This incident is particularly sensitive after the 1998 closing of an Ameritech calling center in Milwaukee produced an influx of minority workers at the Appleton center where the Wilsons were employed.

February 6, 2000

Appleton, WI

Harlem's Academy of Arts & Letters Defaced with Swastikas

Police are investigating who is responsible for scrawling a red and a yellow swastika on the entrance to the prestigious Academy of Arts and Letters in Harlem. Under the door, a note was found which read, "Heil immortal Prince Hitler. Clinton the fornicator is dead." The 103 year-old Academy, which honors distinguished writers and artists, plans to install security cameras in an effort to prevent further acts of vandalism.

*February 6, 2000
New York, NY*

Holocaust Revisionist Historian Sues American Holocaust Scholars and Publisher for Libel

David Irving, an extreme right-wing historian, who on various occasions has denied that Jews were systematically murdered at Auschwitz, sued Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books for libel. Irving, who represented himself, claimed that Lipstadt and Penguin ruined his career by accusing him of distorting history to serve his racist predilections. During the trial, Lipsadt and Penguin's lawyer Richard Rampton read a poem from Irving's private journal, which he would recite to his nine-month-old daughter. The poem read as following, "I am a Baby Aryan/ Not Jewish or Sectarian/ I have no plans to marry an Ape or Rastafarian." Irving acknowledged teaching the poem to his daughter, but denied that the poem was racist.

*February 6, 2000
London, England*

Spertus Museum Opens Exhibit on the Nazi Olympics

Spertus Museum opened an exhibit displaying photographs, films, and panels of text presented to the public at the 1936 Summer Olympics, which were held in Berlin. It was at these Olympics that sprinter Marty Glickman was removed from the four hundred-meter relay team by the United States Olympic Committee because he was a Jew. In addition, African-American Jesse Owens won four gold medals in track and field, which infuriated Hitler, prompting him to storm out of the Olympic stadium. The exhibit also chronicles the temporary removal of anti-Jewish posters and the construction of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp only twenty miles away from the international spectacle.

*February 13, 2000
Chicago, IL*

Ameritech Ends Suspension of White Supremacist Managers

After reviewing their records, Ameritech decided to return two managers with white supremacist ties back to work. Specifically, Mark and Dana Wilson were returned to their positions as supervisors. The two were suspended after an employee viewed the re-broadcast of the 1995 Arts and Entertainment Channel program Investigative Reports: The New Skinheads, on which the couple proclaim racially separatist beliefs. The couple admit to having held racially divisive beliefs, but now claim that they no longer believe in the tenets of white supremacy and are ashamed of their past. Ameritech released the following statement, "Ameritech does not tolerate discrimination in the workplace. There was no racial incident at Ameritech. No one has been suspended for any act of discrimination at Ameritech."

*February 14, 2000
Appleton, WI*

Federal Court Rejects Ku Klux Klan's Argument

The 8th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court ruling that KWMU-FM did not violate the first amendment rights of the Ku Klux Klan in the case of the KKK vs. KWMU-FM. KWMU-FM. The campus radio station of The University of Missouri at St. Louis refused to air a fifteen second public service announcement during the program All Things Considered, which read "The Ku Klux Klan, a white Christian organization, standing up for the rights and values of the white Christian Americans since 1865." In the past, these rights and values have included persecuting, disenfranchising, and lynching African-Americans, Jews, homosexuals, and Catholics. The court found that since the radio station had never accepted any monetary contribution from the KKK, the editorial judgment of public broadcasters failed to violate the Klan's first amendment rights.

*February 17, 2000
St. Louis, MO*

Nazi Vandal Defaces Academy of Arts & Letters Again

For the second time in two weeks, a swastika was found painted on the Academy of Arts and Letters in Harlem. Security cameras, which were installed after the February 6th vandalism, picked up a caucasian woman as she approached the building to commit the act of vandalism. The woman was believed to be between fifty and sixty years old, five foot five inches tall, with a medium build. None of the academy employees recognized the woman and it is not known whether the woman perpetrated the February 6th act.

*February 20, 2000
New York, NY*

Columnist Accuses Al Gore and Bill Bradley of Condoning Don Imus' Racism

Boston Globe columnist Derrick Z. Jackson wrote an editorial attacking Democratic presidential candidates Al Gore and Bill Bradley for their multiple appearances on the Don Imus Radio Show. Imus, the host of the syndicated radio show, which is carried by ninety-two stations across the country, has demonstrated a pattern of racist and bigoted statements against African-Americans, Jews, Asian Americans, Latinos, and homosexuals. Imus has in the past called a Washington Post columnist a "boner-nosed, beanie wearing, Jew boy." Regarding a New York Times White House reporter, who happened to be black, Imus once said, "Isn't the Times wonderful? It lets the cleaning lady cover the White House." In addition, he has continuously referred to African-Americans as "gorillas and monkey-eaters."

February 23, 2000

Boston, MA

George W. Bush Criticized for His Appearance at Bob Jones University

The fundamentalist Christian school, Bob Jones University, entered the spotlight after a visit by George W. Bush to bolster his campaign run for president. Mr. Bush was criticized for failing to denounce the university's racial policies and the anti-Catholic statements on its Web site. In a response, two Democratic Congressmen introduced a resolution condemning the discriminatory policies of the university. Congressman Joe Crowley (D-NY) called upon the House of Representatives to stand together against the university's "bashing" of Jews, Catholics, and Mormons. Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY) lambasted Bush for failing to apologize to both African-Americans and Jews. Specifically, Rangel commented, "Black people are due an apology, because Bob Jones University has an official policy against interracial dating."

March 1, 2000

New York, NY

Harvard Law Professors Seek Reparations for Slavery

Similar to reparations paid to Jews who settled claims against German manufacturers and government arising from the Holocaust, African-Americans are now seeking retribution from America for its two hundred-forty years of institutionalized slavery. Harvard Law professor, Charles Ogletree Jr. and chairman of the Afro-American Studies Department, and Henry Louis Gates Jr. are assessing the "viability" of collecting payment for multiple generations who endured slavery. Due to Randall Robinson's influential text, *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*, the issue of reparations is now being taken seriously by mainstream America.

March 6, 2000

Boston, MA

Insurance Company Apologizes for its Role In Slavery

As part of a growing trend, Aetna Inc. apologized for its role as an insurer for slave owners and in providing property insurance on individual slaves in the 1850's. The company released a statement expressing "deep regret over any participation at all in this deplorable practice." The apology is the latest in a string of statements recently released with the goal of mending ethnic fences. Similarly, Pope John Paul II apologized for the Catholic Church's role in the Crusades and the Inquisition. Likewise, Swiss banks and German automakers have apologized for their treatment of Jews during World War II. In addition, The United States government has also apologized for the Tuskegee experiment and interning Japanese Americans in camps in the 1940's, but has never apologized for legislating the trade and practice of slavery.

March 10, 2000

Boston, MA

Amended Lawsuit Filed Against White Supremacist

Michael Bender, an attorney in the Benjamin Smith case, filed an amended lawsuit. Bender states that white supremacist Matt Hale, leader of the World Church of the Creator, gave the order for Smith to engage in the shooting rampage against Jews, African-Americans, and other minorities. The suit claims that there is new evidence that showing how Hale designed the plot of the shooting. However, Hale calls the allegations "frivolous... Never in a million years did I tell somebody to go out shooting."

March 15, 2000

Chicago, IL

Hate Crimes Reach Lowest Level in a Decade

The amount of hate crimes reported in California's Orange County reached its lowest level in a decade. In 1999, 136 crime incidents occurred, which was down twenty percent from 169 in 1998. African-Americans were the victims of thirty reported hate crimes, which makes them the most targeted group, even though they make up only two percent of the Orange County population. The second most targeted group were Jews who were the victims of twenty-five reported incidents. California law considers a hate crime an illegal act motivated by race, religion, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability.

March 22, 2000

Los Angeles, CA

Apology for Slavery Bill Defeated

The Maryland House of Delegates rejected a bill that would have made Governor Parries Glendening offer an official apology to African-Americans for the state's involvement in the practice of slavery. Lobbyists for the bill said that African-Americans were owed an apology similar to the ones given to the Jews for their deplorable treatment through the Holocaust. The bill needed twelve favorable votes, but only received ten.

March 25, 2000

Washington, DC

New York Historical Society Opens Photography Exhibit of Lynchings in America

The New York Historical Society opened the “Without Sanctuary” photography exhibit, which graphically displays America’s dark history of lynching. A majority of the photographs document the torture and murder of African-Americans, while, the lynching of Jews, Native Americans, Asians, and immigrants are also included. The exhibit addresses the sad fact that not only was lynching an ugly facet of America’s history, but that people in fact seemed to pay homage to the deplorable practice. Children are seen in many of these photos in their best clothes being brought by their parents to view the body of a lynched man. People even went so far as to make postcards out of pictures of tortured men and women and sent them to friends and family.

*April 26, 2000
New York, NY*

Gunman Kills Five, Critically Wounds One in Racially Motivated Rampage

Richard Baumhammers, an immigration and export lawyer, conducted a racially charged murder spree across suburban Pittsburgh. Baumhammers allegedly began by murdering Anita Gordon, his Jewish neighbor, and setting fire to her house. Following this, Baumhammers allegedly fired shots into two Synagogues, stopping to spray paint a swastika and the word “Jew” on the Synagogue that Gordon formerly attended. Police say that he then drove to a grocery store nearby, where he allegedly shot two Indian men, one of whom died. According to police, Baumhammers then drove to the neighboring suburb of McKees Rocks where he shot and killed Thao Pham, a thirty-year-old Vietnamese delivery boy, and Ji-Ye Sun, a thirty-four-year-old Chinese man. Baumhammers then proceeded to a local Karate School where he shot and killed Gary Lee, a twenty-two-year-old African-American man.

*April 28, 2000
Pittsburgh, PA*

Imus Attacked for Bigotry in New York Times Advertisement

TomPaine.com, a political advocacy web site, bought a twenty thousand dollar quarter page advertisement in the New York Times titled, “AnImus in the Morning.” The ad claimed, “Jews, gays, working women, minorities, foreigners – all are the targets of the degrading racial and sexual slurs that are regular sport for the Imus team.” Imus, who regularly refers to Attorney General Janet Reno as “that big lesbian,” called basketball player Patrick Ewing “an ape,” has made derogatory jokes about Jews, and admits that his brand of ethnic humor may have crossed the line at certain times. Imus conceded that it might be offensive when white members of the show imitate dialects often associated with African-Americans. Imus also stated, “Were there things said on the program that should not have been said? Probably.”

*May 11, 2000
New York, NY*

Guilty Plea Entered in Hate Crime Case

Gregory Ewing pleaded guilty to federal hate crime charges resulting from racial slurs and threats of violence that he uttered at his Jewish neighbor, Cleo Wilderstien. Apparently, the barrage of threats began when Wilderstien invited her granddaughter's African-American boyfriend to stay at her home. Ewing was arrested in May and October of 1999 after telling Wilderstien he would, "burn this cross like I'll burn you out." Ewing could be sentenced to as many as ten years in prison and fined up to \$250,000 for interfering with the Fair Housing Rights Act by using threats of force.

*June 2, 2000
San Francisco, CA*

Sixteen Students Suspended for Racial Slurs

Sixteen seniors at Palm Springs High School were suspended from school for allegedly scrawling racial slurs directed at the African-American principal and hanging a dead cat at school. In addition, the students are accused of drawing swastikas on the school lawn in white shoe polish. Although the students will graduate, they were banned from participating in graduation ceremonies. Police are investigating the incident as a violation of California hate crime statutes.

*June 7, 2000
Palm Springs, CA*

New York State Senate Passes Enhanced Penalties for Hate Crimes

Forty-eight of the sixty-one members of the New York State Senate voted in favor of a bill that enhances the penalties on those who commit racially motivated crimes. The bill has been debated in the State Senate for over eleven years and was supported by every Democratic Senator. However, twelve Republicans voted against the bill, citing conflicts with the protection of homosexuals under the statute.

*June 8, 2000
New York, NY*

Boston Reports Huge Increase in Hate Crimes

The Boston Police Department revealed that hate crimes in the metropolitan area surged fifty-seven percent from 276 reported instances in 1993 to 433 reported instances in 1999. The 1999 mark is the highest yearly total since Massachusetts became one of America's first states to enact hate crimes legislation in 1980. Of the 433 reported instances, only 212 were reported to the FBI for a federal probe.

*June 11, 2000
Boston, MA*

Neighborhood Littered with Hate Fliers

Over two hundred fliers filled with Nazi symbols and racial slurs attacking Hispanics, Jews, and African-Americans were found just down the block from Torrey Pines Elementary School in the La Jolla neighborhood of San Diego, California. The fliers advertised a phone number that provided a pre-recorded message urging listeners to ostracize and commit violence against non-whites.

*June 11, 2000
San Diego, CA*

Woman Vandalizes Academy of Arts and Letters Again

Red Swastikas were found painted on Harlem's Academy of Arts and Letters for the third time in six months. One of the swastikas was painted on top of a bronze plaque hanging outside the building. Security cameras installed outside the entrance to the 103 year-old Academy after the first defacing on February 6th caught the same woman approaching the building who committed the February 20th act of vandalism. All three incidents have occurred on Sundays and police are unsure if there is a religious significance or if the person merely maintains a schedule. Police have posted fliers around the neighborhood with the woman's likeness and have assigned patrol cars to regularly check the academy.

*June 18, 2000
New York, NY*

Tommy Hilfiger Denies Email with Racist Slurs

An email, originally sent to New York University and then forwarded around the world alleged that Tommy Hilfiger made extremely racist statements. The email claims Hilfiger stated, "African-Americans, Jews, Latinos, Asians, and Arabs should not buy my clothes because they are made for upper-class white people." The email then calls for a boycott of Hilfiger products. The email states that Hilfiger confirmed these views during an appearance on the Oprah Winfrey show. However, Hilfiger has never appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show and vigorously denies any and all allegations of racism.

*June 18, 2000
New York, NY*

Racist Fliers Litter San Diego Neighborhood Again

Hundreds of fliers found in the San Diego neighborhood of Allied Gardens contained Nazi imagery as well as racial slurs against Jews, African-Americans, and Latinos. The fliers, which were found by a police officer on Birchwood Street, were impounded for further investigation. The fliers advertised a phone number offering a recorded message of hate filled slurs against non-whites. The phone number is the same one that was found on racist fliers in the nearby neighborhood of La Jolla a week prior.

*June 18, 2000
San Diego, CA*

Supreme Court Denies Supremacist's Law License

The United States Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal by Matthew Hale, founder of the World Church of the Creator, rebuffing the argument that Illinois officials violated his first amendment rights in denying him a law license. Hale, an outspoken segregationist, contends that whites are superior to all other races. The World Church of the Creator's website reads, "It is part and parcel of the religion to hate the Jews, blacks, and other colored people ... hate for your enemies comes natural and is inevitable." Last July, the Illinois State Bar turned down Hale's application for a law license citing poor moral character. Hale commented, "I have the right to practice law and be a racist." Benjamin Smith, a late member of the World Church of the Creator, testified as a character witness in Hale's application for the bar. Notably, Smith testified before his Independence Day shooting spree on which he killed two people and wounded nine others before murdering himself. After the shootings, Hale blamed Smith's actions on Illinois State Bar's decision to deny him a license to practice law. Hale sells T-shirts glorifying Smith as a martyr.

June 26, 2000

Washington, DC

Hass Pleads Guilty in Nazi Graffiti Case

Joshua Hass plead guilty to a 1998 vandalism attack in which he violated his African-American neighbor's federally protected housing rights. Hass painted swastikas, Nazi lightening bolts, and the letters "SFP" representing the San Fernando Peckerwoods, a local white supremacist organization, on the front of the victim's home. The entire front of the victim's home was defaced with Nazi imagery. Hass may be sentenced to up to one year in prison.

June 29, 2000

Los Angeles, CA

Reform Party Primaries Face Influx of Bigotry

The Washington Post reported that a North Carolina based white supremacist organization known as the National Alliance urges followers to "support a much more radicalized, white-friendly, Reform party." One example of the radicalization of the Reform Party is candidate Martin Lindstedt. Lindstedt is seeking the Reform party nomination for the Senate from Missouri and has openly ridiculed African-Americans, Mexicans, Jews, and immigrants of all kinds in a campaign to "save white Christian America." Lindstedt who describes himself as a "Buchananite" has professed, "I know my audience. You have a few out there who whine, whine, whine, 'It's racist.' But when I'm talking to elderly whites who grew up liking segregation, I generally do pretty well." Pat Buchanan himself, who has taken very anti-immigrant and some would argue anti-Semitic stances in the past, called Lindstedt's ideas "crude, obscene, vile and bigoted in the extreme." In addition, Joseph Keller who is seeking the Reform Party Gubernatorial nomination has called for a repeal of woman's suffrage. In Idaho, Richard Masker, a white supremacist, is also running for state office on an anti-Semitic, anti-black platform.

July 27, 2000

Kansas City, MO

Senator Joe Lieberman Named as Democratic Vice-Presidential Nominee

Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore named Senator Joe Lieberman as his running mate. Lieberman, an orthodox Jew, is the first person to be a vice-presidential candidate for a major political party who is not a white Christian. Senator Lieberman, a long time civil rights activist, traveled down to Mississippi for the freedom rides of 1964 where he helped African-Americans register to vote.

August 7, 2000

Nashville, TN

Boston Park Vandalized with Racial Slurs

A wooden jungle gym and various other pieces of children's play equipment were vandalized at the Grape Street Park in the Malden neighborhood of Boston. Slurs defacing African-Americans, Jews, Asians, and Russians were found on the children's play equipment.

August 12, 2000

Boston, MA

Arizona House Majority Leader Endorses Barbara Blewster for Re-election

Representative Lori Daniels, the majority leader in the Arizona House of Representatives, taped a radio advertisement endorsing Rep. Barbara Blewster. Over the last year, Blewster has become a controversial figure for comments she made regarding Jews, African-Americans, Native Americans, and homosexuals. Blewster has in the past, equated homosexuality with bestiality and cannibalism. In addition, she has insulted the appearance of a Jewish legislator and insulted the intelligence of the African-American and Native American communities. Daniels has claimed that she felt duty bound to support fellow Republican House colleagues.

August 17, 2000

Tempe, AZ

Two Republican Advertisements Are Criticized for Subtle Attacks on Blacks and Jews

Two recent advertisements run by the Republican party have drawn much criticism as they allegedly make subtle attacks on African-Americans and Jews. The first ad running in Missouri depicts a mother talking about her son's public school education and shows five boys, one of whom has a gun. The mother remarks, "We didn't want him where drugs and violence were fashionable. That was a bit more diversity than he could handle." Some have stated that the ad equates diversity with crime and violence. Another Republican ad flashes the word "RATS" extremely quickly across the screen while Al Gore and Joe Lieberman are being criticized. Rats has been a historically demeaning caricature of Jewish people, some have argued that the ad subliminally encourages anti-Semitism.

September 15, 2000

Kansas City, MO

Missouri History Museum Opens "Nazi Olympics" Exhibit

Encouraged by an overwhelming response at the Chicago Spertus museum, "The Nazi Olympics" exhibit, displaying photographs, films, and panels of text from the 1936 Berlin Olympics, opened for a three month stay at the Missouri History Museum. The exhibit, which was organized by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, demonstrates the propaganda effort enacted by the Nazi regime to "whitewash" or mislead the country by presenting a depiction of a tolerant unified Germany. The exhibit also details the effort made by African-American and Jewish media sources in calling for a United States boycott of the Olympics. The exhibit also details the efforts of German fencer Helene Mayer, the lone Jew to compete for Germany. Her appearance was a token appeasement in order to quiet international critics. Mayer, who was living in America at the time, was forced to give the obligatory *Deutsche Gruss*, and wear a German team uniform replete with a swastika badge. It is speculated that the Germans put pressure on Mayer's family, who still lived in Frankfurt, to ensure her participation. The exhibit also focuses attention on Marty Glickman and Sam Stoller who were removed from the U.S. 4X100 meter relay team, by United States Olympic Committee chairman Avery Brundage because they were Jews.

September 17, 2000

St. Louis, MO

Watson Statue Draws Controversy

Led by Jonathan Turley, a George Washington University law professor, a movement of historians, journalists, legislators, and intellectuals have called for the removal of the statue of Tom Watson, from the Georgia state capital. The former U.S. Senator, who ran for Vice President with William Jennings Bryant in 1896 and twice for president on the Populist Party ticket in 1904 and 1908, was initially one of the South's most progressive politicians in terms of racial views. During the 1890's and early 1900's, Watson crusaded for African-American causes and personally prevented the lynching of a black preacher. Later, Watson changed his views and by 1910, began asserting the "superiority of the Aryan" and the "hideous, ominous national menace of Negro domination." Watson, in his position as editor of The Jeffersonian newspaper, exasperated anti-Semitic feelings during the Leo Frank trial. The circulation of the paper more than tripled during this period, which was based largely on the hateful writing of Watson. Watson wrote, "Frank belonged to the Jewish Aristocracy, and it was determined by the rich Jews that no aristocrat of their race should die for the death of a working class gentile. The next Jew who does what Frank did is going to get exactly the same thing we give to Negro rapists." Watson died in 1922, and the Ku Klux Klan sent a cross of roses eight feet high to the funeral. The statue was erected in 1932 and reads, "A champion of right who never faltered in the cause."

September 22, 2000

Atlanta, GA

More Federal Workers Say They're Victims of Racial Profiling

Charges on the rise that the U.S. government uses racial and ethnic profiling to weed out spies among its employees are. A Knight-Ridder investigation has turned up at least five cases, three of them ongoing civil lawsuits against the CIA and department of defense. Most candidates of racial profiling were American Jews that were suspected of passing secrets to Israel, but later cleared.

October 13, 2000

Pittsburgh, PA

Clinton Drafted in Final Push to Help Gore

In the final months of Al Gore's campaigning, President Clinton has come to his Gore's aid by urging people to come out and vote in what most strategists are projecting to be an extremely close race. Strategists also claim that Gore will most likely lose if traditional Democratic constituents, such as African Americans, Jews, and union members, fail to vote in large numbers.

October 20, 2000

Los Angeles, CA

Blacks, Like Jews, Find Vouchers Divisive

The Congressional Black Caucus announced plans this week for what it called a Public School's Emergency Recovery Program. The ten billion dollar plan seeks to address the failure of public schools in low-income areas. The plan was proposed in opposition to suggestions of government-funded school vouchers, which would allow parents to use public funds to pay for private schools. The Recovery Program's goal is to improve public schools by targeting curriculum and teacher improvement, infrastructure and equipment, and family support services. The debate on school vouchers in the black community is similar to the debate that is taking place in the Jewish community. In both communities, the debate raised a complex mix of social justice and economic issues. Both communities frame the issues in terms of survival, although the survival under discussion is cultural among Jews, and economic among blacks.

October 20, 2000

Washington, DC

Candidates Argue Over How to Battle Hate Crimes

The 1998 murder of James Byrd in Texas has brought the issue of Hate Crimes legislation to the forefront. James Byrd, an African-American, was killed when three white men dragged him to his death. Two of the three men will receive the death penalty, and according to media reports, none were punished under the state's Hate Crimes laws. Mark Briskman, the North Texas/Oklahoma director of the ADL, claims that the problem with Texas law is that it has not passed constitutional muster. Rather than strictly defining categories of hate crimes (against race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender and sexual orientation), Texas legislators referred to crimes that were committed "because of the defendant's bias or prejudice against a person or group." The exclusion of identifying specific groups was deliberately done, Briskman explained, because some legislators were opposed to including sexual orientation as a category. Although the Hate Crimes law has been utilized in sexual-orientation crimes, Briskman fears it could be overturned. On the federal level, there are two proposed legislations: The Hate Crimes Prevention Act that Gore supports and the so-called Hatch Amendment that George W. Bush advocates. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act expands current federal protection to groups not currently covered, that is based on gender and sexuality. It also broadens the federal government's ability to intervene and assist state and local law-enforcement officials. The Hatch Amendment calls for a study of data collected under the 1990 Hate Crimes Statistics Act. The amendment would provide federal funding to help state and local authorities investigate hate crimes themselves and allow federal authorities to prosecute hate crimes that occur when the defendant has crossed state lines.

October 23, 2000

Washington, DC

Southern Baptist Poster Called Racially Insensitive

The Southern Baptists distributed posters that advertised their overseas missionary program and used symbolism that some members, including African-Americans, have called insensitive. The poster depicts an African man, bare-chested, draped in beads, sitting in a dark room. His unshaven face is concentrating on a sheet of paper while his hands hold a pen and book. A beam of light shines down on him. Above him large letters read, "Dispel the Darkness." Robert M. Parham of the Baptist Center for Ethics said, "Why couldn't they use a blond Scandinavian, to avoid sending this cultural message?" Mark Kelly of the international Mission Board (one of two agencies that designed the poster) said that the term 'darkness' does not refer to the man himself. He is in fact Christian from the Samburu tribe of East Africa. Critics pointed out that the symbolism is at best misleading; the term 'darkness' was the theme of Southern Baptists aggressive campaign last year and was aimed at converting Jews and Indians who were believed to be, "lost in the hopeless darkness of Hinduism." Teresa Dickens of the Woman's Missionary Union said she "regrets that anyone would find the photograph offensive. It was never our intent to communicate a racially biased message." She added that the photo was reviewed by at least two black advisors.

November 8, 2000

Washington, DC

Democrats Blast Ballot Woes

Florida elections officials were deluged with complaints from irate Al Gore voters about what they claimed were widespread problems at the ballot box. In Palm Beach, Florida, election county officials said that at least 19,120 ballots were disqualified and never counted because they bore votes for two candidates. There were also 10,361 ballots on which no presidential candidate was chosen. The heavily Democratic county has a large Jewish population, and hundreds of people said they were horrified to learn that they had accidentally voted for Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan, because they misread the ballot. In the past, Buchanan has been accused of making anti-Semitic statements. Rep. Robert Wexler (D-Fla) said the greatest concentration of double-vote ballots was in black districts. "The African-America community in Palm Beach County has been substantially disenfranchised", he said. Further complaints stipulated that the design of the ballot might have violated state law, some ballots arrived late, and the presence of other irregularities.

November 9, 2000

Palm Beach, FL

Jesse Jackson Rallies Florida Minority Groups

At a hearing held over the weekend in Miami, Rev. Jesse Jackson in conjunction with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) submitted a report to U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno based on their findings. According to the report, registered voters complained that they had been harassed by polling staff, intimidated by police officers, or simply sent home because their names were not on voter rolls. Penda Hair, a director of the Advancement Project that advocates social and racial justice, said this: "While I expected some complaints, it struck me at the end of the hearing that this was startling in scope and size. It seems that in counties across Florida, voters who were qualified were turned away at the polls. It was a denial of the right to vote that seemed to be concentrated in African-American precincts."

November 19, 2000

Palm Beach, Fl

KKK Demonstrates in Skokie, Illinois

The County Courthouse of Skokie, Illinois, home to large communities of African Americans and Jews, was the site of a KKK demonstration. Skokie, which is referred to by the KKK as "Jewtown," was a stop on the 1999 Independence Day weekend shooting spree of Benjamin Smith who murdered African American Ricky Byrdsong, along with two Asian men, and injured six Orthodox Jews. Ignoring the advice of Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen, who asked the community to stay away from the courthouse for it will only attract more attention, four hundred protesters showed up at the rally. Violence broke out at the end of the rally when protesters confronted the Klan members and twenty people were arrested. Jay Tcath, director of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago said, "Without the counter-demonstrators and violence they helped to spark, the Saturday rally would have been a blurb in the media." On Sunday, a counter rally called the "Peace and Harmony" rally was staged. Twelve hundred people showed up to denounce bigotry, while rabbis, priests, and political officials preached against violence and hate. Sherialyn Byrdsong, the widow of Ricky Byrdsong, gave a stirring and emotional speech that inspired a standing ovation.

December 18, 2000

Skokie, IL

HUMAN INTEREST

The Debt: What America Owes To Blacks Is Published

Written by Randall Robinson, the founder and executive director of TransAfrica, this text outlines the argument for slavery reparations. The argument is based largely on the analogy drawn between the suffering of African-Americans during slavery and segregation and the suffering of Jews during the holocaust. Much of Robinson's argument for a fiscal settlement and a national monument to slavery is based on reparations and memorials established to honor Holocaust survivors and Japanese Americans who were rounded up and placed in camps during World War II. This piece has been influential in bringing the reparations debate to national discussion.

January 2000

New York, NY

Black Zion: African-American Religious Encounters with Jews Is Published

Yvonne Chireau and Nathaniel Deutsch examine the theological influence of Judaism on African-American religions in this collection of essays published by Oxford University Press. The collection discusses topics such as the influence of the Hebrew bible in shaping the African-American sense of identity during the period of slavery, the history of black Hebrew Israelite sects, and the stories of Hebrew Israelites who immigrated to Dimona and claim to be descendants of the biblical Israelis. In addition, the text contains an essay in which Susannah Heschel details her late father's (Rabbi Joshua Heschel) relationship with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 2000

Philadelphia, PA

Integrationist Marvin H. Caplan Dies at Age 80

Marvin Caplan, a former AFL-CIO lobbyist, executive director of the Leadership Council on Civil Rights and founder of Neighbors Inc., passed away. Caplan founded the organization to combat the portrayal by real estate brokers that the transition toward integrated neighborhoods meant the transition from a middle class neighborhood to a slum. In 1961, Caplan said, "Integration can depend upon a single person. If I am sick of prejudice, if, as a Jew, I know in my blood and bones what it means to be stamped 'Refuse' and thrown out on the garbage heap, I have no choice I must remain." Caplan was a leading lobbyist in securing the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Caplan's autobiography, *Farther Along: A Civil Rights Memoir*, documents his fifty-year career of fighting for Jewish and African-American causes and was published in 1999 by Louisiana State University Press.

January 12, 2000

Washington, DC

Africana: The Encyclopedia of African and African-American Experience Is Published

Edited by Anthony Appiah and Henry L. Gates, the landmark publishing of this two thousand-page volume explores the history of the African continent, the history of African people, and their descendants around the world. Various entries and articles in the volume deal with the history of Black/Jewish relations, they include the history of participation in the American civil rights movement, the plight of Ethiopian Jews both on the African continent and in Israel, as well as the history of various African Israelite tribes with long heritages linked to Judaism.

February 2000

New York, NY

PBS Broadcasts “Lost Tribes of Israel”

Public Broadcasting aired an edition of their series NOVA entitled, “Lost Tribes of Israel” in which Tudor Parfitt, a British Anthropologist, traces the roots of the Lemba tribe of Zimbabwe. The program details Parfitt’s twelve-year study of the Lemba in an attempt to discover how the tribe, which is located over four thousand miles from Jerusalem, could have developed a religious system with obvious ties to Judaism. The Lemba believe that they are the descendents of biblical patriarchs. The documentary examines the question of how the Lemba developed religious practices, which include wearing yarmulkes and tallis, prohibition of pork, and the ceremonial blowing of the shofar (a hollowed out ram’s horn). In addition, the members of the Lemba elite have the same genetic marker on the Y chromosome that has been found in Kohanim (male Jews who claim to be descendants of Aaron brother of Moses).

February 22, 2000

New York, NY

Fires in the Mirror Premieres at the Illinois Theatre Center

Anna Deveare Smith’s “Fires In the Mirror recounts the events that unfolded in Crown Heights, Brooklyn in 1991. Known as one of the darkest periods in the history of Black-Jewish relations, the Crown Heights riots tore at the ethnic fiber of New York and escalated tensions between the Jewish and African-American communities. In researching the play, Smith interviewed subjects from each side of the conflict, and based on their interpretation of events, created characters that run the spectrum of participants from this ugly incident. Over twenty characters representing religious and political leaders, citizens of each community, activists, and family members of the victims recreate on stage the events of August 1991.

February 22, 2000

Chicago, IL

Voting Trend Study Shows that Jews Are Most Apt to Cross Racial Lines

In her report, Race and Politics at the Millennium: The 1999 Mayoral Race in Philadelphia, Dr. Sandra Featherman found that out of all+ non-Hispanic whites, Jews are the ethnic group most likely to vote for an African-American. In her fifth such report analyzing Philadelphia's mayoral voting trends, Featherman stated that Jews held the highest percentage in crossing racial boundaries even if it meant less votes for a Jewish candidate. The study was based on the defeat of Republican Stan Katz by African-American Democrat John Street.

*March 1, 2000
Philadelphia, PA*

Replicas of Historic Sailing Vessels Built at the Mystic Seaport

The Mystic Seaport has built replicas of historical maritime vessels to show the impact that minority and ethnic groups have played in maritime history. Two of the reproduced ships include the Amistad and the Gerda III. In 1853, fifty-three African slaves overthrew the captors and took control of the ship, the Amistad. They were eventually captured and sent to jail near Montauk, NY. After a three-year fight, the U.S. Supreme Court declared them free citizens. Each night in 1943, twenty Jews were transported to Sweden and to safety by the sailing ship Gerda III. In all, the four-man crew of Gerda III saved over three hundred of the seven thousand Danish Jews that the Germans had decided to send to death camps.

*March 5, 2000
Mystic, CT*

Civil Rights Leader Dies at Age 81

Morris B. Abram, a major player in the civil rights movement and a leader in the Jewish community, died of a viral infection at the age of 81. In 1949, Mr. Abram, an Atlanta lawyer, began a fourteen-year battle to overturn the Georgia electoral rule that gave more weight to ballots cast in white rural areas at the expense of those cast by urban blacks. The rule was declared unconstitutional in 1963 when Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who was briefed by Abram, argued the case before the Supreme Court. In addition, Abram started the first middle-income housing project open to black families in Atlanta, and overturned illegal assembly laws that had been used against civil rights demonstrations. President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him co-chairman of the Planning Committee of the White House Conference on Civil Rights, and Ronald Reagan made him vice-chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

*March 17, 2000
New York, NY*

New Book Refutes Jewish Involvement in Slave Trade

Eli Farber's new paperback *Jews, Slaves and the Slave Trade: Setting the Record Straight* refutes accusations that Jews were party to a conspiracy to destroy blacks by financing slave trade. Farber examined hundreds of tax records and slave registries, as well as shipping data, and found that Jews denounced the lucrative trans-Atlantic slave trade. With the exception of two cases, Jews avoided any involvement in the shipment of human cargo. In fact, Jews owned far fewer slaves than non-Jews. In his two hundred-page thesis, Farber proves Jeffries' accusations as baseless.

*March 24, 2000
New York, NY*

Proposal to Make Home of Federal Judge a Landmark

A San Francisco supervisor proposed making the home of U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Cecil Poole a municipal landmark. Poole, an African-American whose appointment to the federal bench broke boundaries, owned the home that was once owned by Joseph Leonard. Leonard introduced restrictive covenants to the city that barred Jews and African-Americans from buying property within the city's first suburban-style subdivision. Poole, who was then deputy district attorney, bought the house for his family in 1957 and owned it until he died in 1997 at the age of eighty-three.

*March 28, 2000
San Francisco, CA*

Owner of Drug Store Chain Dies at Age 87

Milton Elsberg, co-founder of the store chain Drug Fair, died at age 87. As a publicly traded company, Drug Fair expanded from nineteen stores in 1957 to one hundred and forty five stores in 1973. Elsberg, who was once honored by the Anti-Defamation League and was Man of the Year for the Washington Hebrew Congregation, stood out on civil rights issues. In the 1950's, Mr. Elsberg announced that African-Americans would be welcome at his Drug Fair lunch counters. This policy was met by violent protests in front of his stores in Northern Virginia by the American Nazi Party. Despite the protests, Elsberg ensured that Drug Fair's counters remain integrated.

*March 30, 2000
Washington, DC*

Civil Rights Activist Retires As Head of Kansas City's American Jewish Committee Chapter

David Goldstein, a former freedom rider, and the executive director of the Kansas City chapter of the American Jewish Committee and Jewish Community Relations Bureau, retired after twenty-seven years of fighting for interethnic harmony. Goldstein was instrumental in establishing sustained dialogue between the Jewish and African-American communities in Kansas City. Goldstien helped to create joint commemorations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day bringing blacks and Jews together. In addition, Goldstien was known for initiating dialogue with homosexual leaders in Kansas City and for his work in establishing Head Start programs all across America.

*April 30, 2000
Kansas City, MO*

Toronto Jewish Film Festival Debuts From Swastika to Jim Crow

The documentary film, From Swastika to Jim Crow was debuted as part of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival. The documentary tells the story of Jewish professors who escaped Nazi Germany to teach at African-American colleges in the segregated South from the 1940's through the 1960's. The documentary examines the bond formed between African-American students and their Jewish immigrant teachers that developed despite segregation laws prohibiting their interaction off campus.

*May 4, 2000
Toronto, Canada*

David B. Guralnik Who Removed the Terms “Kike” and “Nigger” from Webster’s Dictionary Dies at Age 75

David Guralnik, a leader of the Cleveland Jewish community and the former editor in chief of the Webster's New World line of dictionaries from 1948 until 1985, died of colon cancer. It was Guralnik's 1970 decision that resulted in the removal of the terms "nigger" and "kike" from the *Second College Edition of Webster's New World Dictionary*. In the introduction, Guralnik explained that, "it was decided in the selection process that this dictionary could easily dispense with those true obscenities." The terms were re-entered in 1986 after Guralnik retired.

*May 23, 2000
Cleveland, OH*

Between Camps: Race, Identity, and Nationalism at the End of the Colour Line Is Published

In this text, Paul Gilroy Allen examines the manner in which biology and genetics research have been used to uphold racial stereotyping and demean minority communities. Gilroy pays specific attention to the similar historical use of dubious biological evidence that attempts to downplay the abilities of blacks and Jews. Allen documents the history of shared experiences of each group developing cultural identities based on transmigration and Diaspora. The author thoroughly discusses the contributions of American Jewry and their support of the African-American community. These contributions included Jewish support of the civil rights movement, their efforts of Jews in publishing the works of the Harlem Renaissance, and in forming the NAACP.

*June 2000
London, England*

Double Victory; A Multicultural History of America Is Published

Ronald Takaki's text, examining World War II and its impact on American minorities, reaches two fundamental conclusions. First, the author concludes the fight against Nazi racism exposed America's own prejudice against its minority communities including African, Jewish, and Asian Americans. Second, Takaki argues that the war provided an economic and psychological boost to the civil rights movement. In addition, the author examines the questions of Japanese intern camps, quotas on Jewish immigrants seeking refuge, and the role of World War II in inspiring Jewish participation in the civil rights movement.

*June 2000
Los Angeles, CA*

Hearing a Different Drummer: A Holocaust Survivor's Search for Identity Is Published

In his memoir, *Hearing a Different Drummer: A Holocaust Survivor's Search for Identity*, Ben Hirsch depicts his use of architectural design in expressing the pain of oppressed peoples. Hirsch has designed dozens of memorials, churches, and synagogues using his experiences to reflect the sense of despair yet undaunted hope felt by the oppressed. Reverend Knighton Stanley commented, "We wanted a building that would reflect the African-American experience, and he listened very carefully. We talked about how African-Americans and Jews had been prosecuted, oppressed, for centuries, and he was able to draw upon his own experience."

*July 2000
Atlanta, GA*

Holocaust Survivor and Civil Rights Leader Bea Branscombe Dies at 75

Holocaust survivor and civil rights leader Bea Branscombe died of breast cancer at age seventy-five. Branscombe helped to form the interdenominational Park Hill Action Committee in the ethnically diverse neighborhood of Park Hill in Denver. The group is now recognized for its success in maintaining racial and economic diversity. Branscombe was influential in lobbying for the 1965 Colorado Fair Housing Act and the 1968 Federal Fair Housing Act. In addition, Branscombe created a network of two hundred volunteer tutors who helped underprivileged youths succeed in school. She was also a board member for the Denver branch of the NAACP, Metro Denver Fair Housing Center, and Denver Community Housing Resource Board.

July 4, 2000

Denver, CO

Anti-Apartheid Rabbi Announces Retirement

Norman Bernhard, the New York born rabbi who has led the Oxford Synagogue Center since 1965, announced his retirement. For over fifteen years, Bernhard spoke out against the system of apartheid and against the South African Jewish Board of Deputies for their silence on the issue. Rabbi Bernhard organized the first meetings of Jews for Social Justice to help in the fight against apartheid. Similarly, he arranged a community center that has worked to educate underprivileged blacks for two decades. In Bernhard's view, these two projects "saved the honor of South African Jewry. Because no matter how liberal people may have felt in the good old Jewish tradition, no matter how many Jews may have been involved in the activities of the liberation struggle – those were individuals. But as a community Jews were shamefully silent."

July 27, 2000

Johannesburg, South Africa

Reported Hate Crimes Rose 12% in California in 1999

The California state attorney general Bill Lockyer released a report detailing reported activity of hate crimes within the state for 1999. According to the report, nineteen hundred sixty-two hate crimes affecting twenty-five hundred victims were reported in California in 1999. Over sixty percent of the crimes were based on race or ethnicity, an overwhelming majority of which were directed at African-American families. While seventeen percent of the reported hate crimes were based on religion, anti-Semitic acts represented the largest proportion of crimes in this category. Attorney general Lockyer stated that the results might show either an increase in hate activity or simply an increase in the reporting of such activity.

July 27, 2000

Los Angeles, CA

“Spinning Blues into Gold: The Chess Brothers and the Legendary Chess Records” Is Published

Nadine Cohodas documents the life experiences of Leonard and Phil Chess, the Jewish brothers who introduced the world to many Jazz and Blues artists. Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley, and Chuck Berry all became national figures after releasing albums on the Chess Record Label. The author sheds new light on the tangled relationship between Jews and African-Americans in popular music. Certain artists such as Muddy Waters considered the Chess brothers lifelong friends, while others such as Bo Diddley felt cheated out of royalties by the Jewish businessmen. Diddley once commented about Jews, “They got all the money.”

*August 2000
New York, NY*

Holocaust Survivor and Howard University Professor Dies

Maria Silberkwiet, a Holocaust survivor and former chairwoman of Howard University’s College of Children’s Dentistry, died of pneumonia at age 96. Silberkwiet was on the forefront of efforts to help African-American dentists gain entry into the American Dental Association.

*August 14, 2000
Baltimore, MD*

The Lynching of Leo Frank Opens

Written by Robert Myers, the opening of this play coincided with the 85th anniversary of Leo Frank’s murder. The play recreates the events that led to the 1915 lynching of Frank, then president of B’nai B’rith’s Atlanta chapter. Frank, who was pardoned in 1986, was convicted of the 1913 murder of thirteen year-old Mary Phagan and then lynched that evening. The only other suspect was Jim Conley, an African-American janitor and the chief witness against Frank. The play effectively demonstrated the tension between the two members of oppressed classes and how the culture of bigotry manifested itself in the case’s closing arguments. The prosecutor’s closing statement was steeped in anti-Semitic rhetoric, while the defense utilized the culture of segregation to offer up Conley as a murderer simply because he was black.

*August 16, 2000
Marietta, GA*

Without Sanctuary Is Published

Twin Palms Publishers and antique collector James Allen put together this unique photographic piece that details the ugly history of lynching in America from 1882 until 1968. The decision to produce this was sparked by the overwhelming response to the "Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America" exhibit during its run at the New York Historical Society earlier this year. It is estimated that over five thousand Americans were lynched during this tumultuous period in American History.

September 2000

New York, NY

Two Musicals About Lynchings Open

Alfred Uhry, the playwright who penned Driving Miss Daisy and the only person ever to win an Oscar, a Tony, and a Pulitzer, wrote Parade, an acclaimed musical on the tragic lynching of Leo Frank. The performance, which is based in Atlanta, focuses on the racial and anti-Semitic climate that surrounded the events of Leo Frank's 1915 lynching. In addition, Minstrel Show opened in Denver Colorado chronicling the 1919 lynching of William Brown in Omaha, Nebraska. The musical, written by Max Sparber, depicts the events through the eyes of two young African American minstrel players who witnessed the horrific murder.

September 2000

Denver, CO

AJC Joins with Producers to Screen From Swastika To Jim Crow

The Westchester chapter of the American Jewish Committee screened the documentary From Swastika to Jim Crow at the brand new Burns Film Center in Pleasantville. This documentary tells the story of Jewish intellectuals who, fired from their prestigious German university posts in the late 1930's, made their way to America, only to find virulent anti-Semitism on American university campuses that prevented their being hired. However, approximately sixty Jewish refugees were welcomed by several of the so-called "Negro Colleges" in the south. The movie discusses the reciprocal relationship that developed between African-American students and their Jewish professors. Ironically, the Jews who escaped racism and oppression, were forced (by visits from the KKK) to obey the racist Jim Crow laws of the South. The movie was screened to an African-American and Jewish audience, and followed by a discussion facilitated by the two Jewish producers with several African-American and Jewish students. The event was co-sponsored by AJC-Westchester and several African-American churches and civic organizations.

September 16, 2000

Pleasantville, NY

Jewish Filmmaker Tells Desegregation Story

Boaz Yakin, an independent filmmaker, recently directed the Walt Disney film Remember The Titans, based on the true story of a high school football team that helped desegregate a racially tense Alexandria, Virginia in 1971. Yakin previously earned kudos for his Sundance winning film Fresh, about a black Brooklyn boy who thwarts rival drug-lords. He also raised ire with A Price Above Rubies, about the suppressed sexuality of a Chassidic woman, which so angered observant Jews that dozens turned out to shut down production in Borough Park. The up-and coming filmmaker grew up on the Upper West Side of New York with his Israeli-born parents, and then attended a Bronx Yeshiva, eventually transferring to Bronx High School of Science. To prepare for his new film, Yakin visited the home of coach Herman Boone, the African-America coach the movie is based on.

October 13, 2000

Los Angeles, CA

Robert Leikind Inherits the Legacy of Lenny Zakim

Robert Leikind took over as the new regional director of the Anti-Defamation League's New England chapter. The beloved former director Lenny Zakim, passed away from cancer last December at age forty-six. In twenty years, Zakim built bridges among the Jewish and African-American, Irish, and homosexual communities in New England. His many projects included Team Harmony, as well as the nation's first Black-Jewish community Seder. Leikind is no stranger to civil rights and has a long illustrious history with the movement. Leikind grew up in Great Neck, Long Island, the son of German Jewish parents who were uprooted during the Holocaust. During the civil-rights movement in 1972, when he was nineteen, he spent part of a summer in rural Louisiana working on a community development project and was deeply affected by a congressman using racial epithets. Leikind went on to graduate from Vassar, then working for the ADL in New York, leaving in 1983 to attend Boston College Law School, all the while keeping an active relationship with Zakim. After college, he worked for a Brooklyn Agency that helped Holocaust survivors, then became an assistant director of the New York regional office of the ADL, leaving in 1983 to attend Boston College Law School. Originally, intending to become a civil-rights lawyer, Leikind was working for an Essex County District Attorney when he heard that the Connecticut office of the ADL needed a new director. He leapt at the opportunity that eventually led him to his new post. Leikind's passion is to help America to "live up to it's best potential."

October 17, 2000

Boston, MA

Documentary Tracks Hatred on Web Sites

Producers Vince DiPersio and William Guttentag chronicled the explosion of hate groups and their materials on the internet in the new HBO documentary Hate.com. At the time of this print, the number of groups with materials or representation on the internet was over 350. The documentary also suggests a direct correlation between these site's messages and violent hate crimes, as told by those convicted of these heinous crimes. Matthew Williams, who has admitted to killing a gay couple and bombing several Jewish synagogues, explained how he learned to hate Jews and homosexuals on these sites. Benjamin Smith, after reading a hate message on the internet from Matt Hale, leader of the racist and Anti-Semitic "World Church of the Creator," murdered an African American man and Asian-American student as a response. Timothy McVeigh has also received his 'inspiration' from such websites as well. The documentary conveys a powerful, eye-opening message that hateful words that encourage violence are spreading too quickly on an ever-growing medium.

*October 23, 2000
Baltimore, MD*

Parks Honored as WWII Hero but Record to Get Further Scrutiny

Paul Parks, former soldier of WWII and a civil rights leader, accepted the Raoul Wallenberg Award for his aid in the liberation of prisoners from the Dachau Concentration Camp. The award is named for the Swedish diplomat who had saved thousands from the Nazi gas chambers. Parks accepted the award on behalf "of the 1.2 million African-Americans who participated in WWII, who fought in a segregated army, whose records were destroyed or lost [and whose] activities are seldom chronicled by anyone." Parks has come under considerable fire after some surviving death camp liberators and investigative reports by the Boston Globe uncovered contradictions in Parks' own military record suggesting that he received the award under false pretenses. Andras Kain, president of the B'nai B'rith chapter, said they would revoke the award if more substantial claims came to light.

*October 23, 2000
Boston, MA*

Pulling Out All the Stops to Motivate Voters

Bill Clinton toured the country in hopes of inspiring a large voter turnout. To get out the vote, the president attended church twice in the Washington, D.C. area, and spoke at the Kely Teple Church of God in Christ in Harlem, a high school in Kentucky, and an Irish-American fund-raising event for his wife and Senate Candidate, Hillary Clinton. With the polls showing a virtual dead heat in the presidential race, Democrats need a big turnout from the party's cornerstone constituencies including African Americans, Latinos, Jews, labor union members, and their families.

*November 1, 2000
Minneapolis, MN*

Strangers and Neighbors: Teaching and Writing About Relations Between Blacks and Jews

Maurine Adams, an associate professor in the Social Justice Education program of the School of Education, and John Bracey, a professor in the W.E.B DuBois Department of Afro-American studies at the University of Massachusetts, often wondered what could be done to counteract the misinformation and negative media-hype surrounding the topic of black-Jewish relations. They decided to organize, twice-monthly, faculty seminars on the history of Black-Jewish relations, their goal being to bring together scarcely known documentary and bibliographical materials on the subject to inform discussions, as well as to develop syllabi for both graduate and undergraduate courses. In reviewing this collection of literature, they were struck both by the enormous scope of the subject and “by the previous failures of many academics to disseminate and discuss the materials that were readily available.” Their seminars also revealed some interesting information about the two groups. They discovered that black participants were struck by the pervasive, recurrent issues of identity among the Jewish participants that seemed to parallel their own concerns about those issues. Also, generally speaking, blacks and Jews differed in their views on how to resolve conflicts. Jewish participants contended that discussion, in and of itself, constituted action towards understanding, while many African-Americans maintained that any discussion that did not lead to action was a waste of time. One theme they continuously highlighted was the striking parallels between the bondage of the ancient Hebrews in Egypt and the enslavement of blacks in America and the post slavery discrimination against them. A recurrent question of group identity, “Who is Black” and “Who is a Jew,” challenged the boundaries of established racial, ethnic, religious and national categories. Myths were explored and shattered with facts and the program flourishes to this day.

*November 3, 2000
Amherst, MA*

Black History Edging into National Shrines

Barbara Barksdale volunteered in 1992 to clear debris from the two hundred-year-old Midland cemetery near her home in Steelton, PA, only to uncover some surprises: graves of famed Buffalo soldiers, U.S. Colored Troops and Tuskegee Airmen, as well as freed slaves. Barksdale, the great grandniece of Col. Charles Young, who in 1889 became the third Black Graduate of West Point, started a history endeavor of her own. Barksdale’s interest in her cultural history was sparked by this discovery. For the next two years, Barksdale searched college libraries and state archives and interviewed the families of free slaves to record oral histories. She found herself not only tracing Black History, but also other disenfranchised groups, from women and children to American Indians and Jews. The fruit of this amateur historian’s labor is an unofficial tour of landmarks significant to Black Americans. Barksdale does this tour on the weekends, on her own time, in hoopskirts and crown hats. Some of the landmarks include the grave of Lloyd Watts, who taught the town’s black children, and tours of stops on the legendary Underground Railroad.

*November 5, 2000
Pittsburgh, PA*

Controversial Neighborhood History To Be Released

A Menlo Park history book was released a year after the project was nearly scrapped. A public controversy erupted after board members asked the authors to delete portions of the initial manuscript that they deemed inappropriate because of references to Jews, blacks and other ethnic groups. The book describes the influx of African-Americans into the Belle Haven neighborhood, east of Highway 101, because of restrictive real estate practices of the day prohibiting them from buying elsewhere. It also mentions Jewish residents' migration south from San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake, their migration from the former Chinatown, and finally the problems caused by Stanford University's insistence that Pal Alto ban liquor. The Menlo Park Historical Society will distribute the book despite the controversy.

*November 7, 2000
San Francisco, CA*

Joseph Lieberman is Re-elected to Senate

Senator Joe Lieberman was overwhelmingly re-elected to his Senate seat, a post he may leave depending on the outcome of the presidential election. Win or lose, Lieberman was the first Jewish candidate on a major party national ticket. Rabbi Rolando Matalon, who heads Congregation B'nai Jeshurun on Manhattan's Upper West Side, expressed his desire for minority advancement saying, "I hope this is the beginning of access for all groups," Matalon said. But Lew Fidler, a Democratic district leader in predominately Jewish parts of southern Brooklyn, expressed nervousness even as he pronounced himself thrilled with Lieberman's potential national role. Fidler stated, "My fear is that we could lose because of latent Anti-Semitism." He went on to say, "Some people may say it's okay their senator is a Jew but view it differently when it's President or Vice-President."

*November 8, 2000
New York, NY*

The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding Honors Daniel Rose, John Utendahl, and Con Edison

The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding held their Fall 2000 benefit at the home of Dr. Mona Ackerman. The Foundation presented the prestigious "Joseph Papp Racial Harmony Award to Daniel Rose, Chairman of Rose Associates, and John Utendahl, Chairman and CEO of Utendahl Capital Partners, America's leading minority owned investment bank. The Harlem Educational Fund, a non-profit organization founded by Mr. Rose, has profoundly affected the lives of Harlem youths. Mr. Utendahl has been a leader in providing young people with positive role models through his work on the national board of directors of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Utendahl Capital Partners also operates Urban American L.P., a multimillion-dollar real estate fund investing in urban areas throughout America. Eugene McGrath, chairman of Con Edison, also accepted the Corporate Diversity Award. Known for having one of the most diverse workforces of any Fortune 500 company, Con Edison was recognized for their efforts to foster racial harmony and tolerance in their community.

*November 9, 2000
New York, NY*

Movie Project Brings Images of Prejudice to the Science City Dome

Filmmaker Tim Depaepe has created a film specifically designed for Kansas City's Science Dome to coincide with the October opening of the Holocaust Memorial Museum's exhibit "Remember the Children: Daniel's Story." Employing video, film laser projections, and graphic designs that are projected on the dome's 'inverted bowl' ceiling to surround the audience, True Colors employs a barrage of visual and auditory effects to examine the prejudice often directed at African-Americans, Jews, Hispanics, American Indians, and women. Depaepe stated, "The idea was to take the audience apart a little bit and put them back together," In order, "not to have them walk away and say, 'I hate myself for being a human being, but to leave feeling that despite the hatred and oppression, there's always hope. People have the ability to change. All through 'True Colors' I kept returning to the images of children. That's our hope."

*November 26, 2000
Kansas City, MO*

New Development Planned to Accommodate African-Americans and Orthodox Jews

A twenty-six thousand square-foot development, known as the Burleigh Street Enterprise Center, was built in Sherman Park of downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The development will include a bank branch, retail stores, and bookstores all targeted to accommodate Sherman Park's growing Orthodox Jewish and African American residents. As well as the retail aspect, the three million-dollar development complex will combine badly needed space for counseling and retreat programs aimed at Orthodox Jews throughout the nation. The Sherman Park area has seen a large influx of African American and Orthodox Jewish families over the last fifteen years and these new developments look to provide new life to the once struggling area.

December 2000

Milwaukee, WI

Play Opens Exploring Relationship Between Jews and Blacks During Apartheid

The Syringa Tree is the first theatrical play dealing with the relationship between Jews and Blacks in South Africa during apartheid. In the one-person show, written and performed by Pamela Gien, we see the world through the eyes of a little girl as she grows from the early days of apartheid to present day South Africa. Gien's father is a Jewish doctor and her mother manages the family's black staff. In playing all twenty-eight characters, Gien shows the audience the love shared between two families, one white and one black. The play also examines the way that Jews dealt with the suffering of black people under apartheid, and how they were often among the most active white people fighting racism. In a stirring scene, Gien's father allows a black patient to sit in the same waiting room as a white patient, a practice unheard of during the height of apartheid.

December 2000

New York, NY

Byrd and Chevan Release Second Album

On their new CD Let Us Break Bread Together, pianist Warren Byrd and bassist David Chevan explored the musical ties that have bound African Americans and Jews together during centuries of suffering and redemption. Combining Gospel songs and Judaic melodies, the musicians reveal their passion in this deeply spiritual collection. This is the duo's second album together. They have reached audiences of all faiths and races since 1997.

December 2000

New York, NY

Rebecca Walker Publishes Her New Book

Rebecca Walker, daughter of Mel Leventhal, a Jewish civil rights lawyer, and Alice Walker, who won the Pulitzer Prize for her work *The Color Purple*, published her autobiography. *Black, White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self* is Ms. Walker's account of her childhood. After her parents divorce, her life comprises a sharp contrast alternating between stays with her Jewish father in New York and Washington D.C. and with her black mother in San Francisco. With her father, she is pampered, living in a safe and protected environment, but life with her mother is much different. She experiments with drug use, promiscuity, and shoplifting in order to fit in with local San Francisco teens. As she grows older, Ms. Walker chooses to follow her black roots where she is readily accepted. The author discusses feeling hurt and insulted by the Jewish law that does not consider her Jewish since her mother is not. Her pain is demonstrated in the following excerpt: "I don't feel loyalty as much as an irrational, childlike desire to burst their suffocating illusions of purity. I want to be recognized as family." Despite her rocky childhood, at thirty, she is a graduate of Yale, the founder of a non-profit organization, a writer, an activist, an entrepreneur, and one of *Time* magazine's fifty future leaders of America.

December 8, 2000

New York, NY

Exhibit Opens Focusing on How America Fights Racism

An exhibit at the Chicago Historical Society will examine how society deals with racially motivated atrocities. The first episode deals with the "Little Rock Nine." Elizabeth Eckford was one of the nine students who took part in the integration of Arkansas' public school in 1957. Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus joined local whites in resisting integration by dispatching the Arkansas National Guard to block the nine black students from entering the school. President Dwight Eisenhower responded by sending federal troops to protect the students. When eight of the nine black students successfully completed the school year, they showed America that black students were strong enough to endure the intense hatred and racism. Another episode recalls how the community of Billings, Montana stood up against bigotry after a brick was thrown through the window of a six-year-old Jewish boy, because of his Menorah. The Billings Gazette printed a full-page picture of a menorah, and thousands of residents posted the picture in their windows. The exhibit, called "Choosing to Participate: Facing History and Ourselves," shows how together we can wipe out racism in our world.

December 10, 2000

Chicago, IL

