

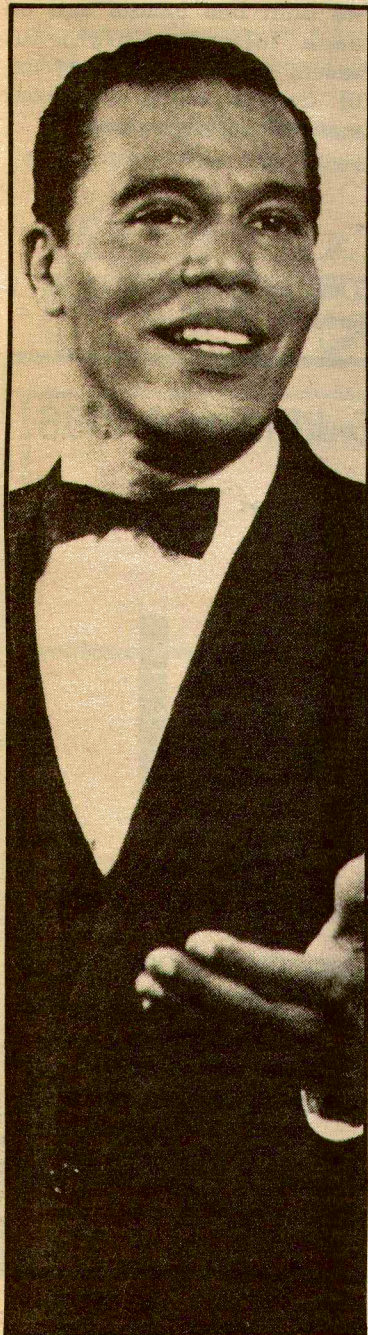
Farrakhan Concerns Jews

by Mitchell Bard

"Contortionist mirror on the wall, who's the slickest of 'em all? Jew-baiting Black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan, who by spewing forth anti-semitism, guarantees himself reams of publicity and such colossal audiences in every city that he is about to become to bigotry what Bruce Springsteen is to rock."

Those were the words not of an angry Jew, but the words of a Black man noted for his outspoken defense of civil rights: syndicated columnist, Carl Rowan. The analogy to Bruce Springsteen seems particularly appropriate here at UCLA where black and Hispanic hypocrites speaking through their respective newspapers have joined the followers of "The Boss" of bigotry. Farrakhan has been held up by the anti-semitic groupies as a champion of the oppressed and as a man who is condemned only because he speaks the "truth" that white people, especially Jews, do not want to hear.

It is easy for Farrakhan's supporters to dismiss white critics as racists, but how do they rebut the widespread criticism from the leaders of their own communities? According to Nommoo, Black leaders have simply "bowed down to the pressures of the Jewish community," and La Gente dismisses Hispanic



political critics as "bootlickers." Who is this man who is able to not only generate widespread anger, but also cause his own alleged constituents to turn on each other?

Louis Eugene Wolcott was born in New York in 1933 and grew up in Boston. He was a calypso singer until 1955 when he was recruited by Malcolm X to the Nation of Islam, a group of Black Moslems led by Elijah Muhammad. In 1965, Elijah Muhammad gave "Calypso gene" the Muslim name of Farrakhan and later that year, when Malcolm X was assassinated, he became the head of the main Harlem mosque. A decade later, Elijah Muhammad died and the Nation of Islam split into two factions: the American

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Muslim Mission, headed by Muhammad's son, and the Nation of Islam, led by Farrakhan. According to ADL, the former has approximately 100,000 members while Farrakhan's adherents number between 5,000 and 10,000.

Farrakhan's notoriety began after a Black reporter for the Washington Post, Milton Coleman, reported that Jesse Jackson had described Jews as "Hymies." Farrakhan accused Coleman in a speech of being a "no good, filthy traitor," and said that "one day soon we will punish you with death" (Los Angeles Times, April 11, 1984). Farrakhan later denied that he threatened Coleman's life but added that in the independent Black state, he advocates "those kinds of traitors will be punished with death" (Chicago Sun-Times, July 31, 1984).

Farrakhan did not only threaten Coleman, he also threatened all Black leaders who dared to disagree with him: "Every leader should be held accountable at the cost of his or her life. Death should be the penalty for traitorous activity" (Charlotte Observer, March 1984). During an August 1984 speech, Farrakhan asked the crowd what should be done with black leaders who seek Jewish support. Someone shouted: "Kill them." Farrakhan replied: "I didn't say it. I just seconded the motion" (Newsday, Aug. 19, 1984).

Farrakhan attracted the most attention, however, for his attacks against Jews. When Jews attack Jesse Jackson, he said, they are attacking all Blacks. "If you harm this brother, I warn you in the name of Allah, this will be the last one you

do harm" (February 25, 1984).

Farrakhan quickly made it clear that his feelings toward the Jews ran much deeper than just anger over their alleged mistreatment of Jackson when he told radio listeners on March 11, 1985 that "Hitler was a very great man." This comment was so obviously inane and insensitive that Jackson was compelled to repudiate Farrakhan's remarks.

The Minister made an even more odious proclamation on June 24: "(Israel) will never have any peace because there can be no peace structured on injustice, lying, and deceit and using the name of G-d to shield your dirty religion under his holy and righteous name (emphasis mine). This remark was so blatantly anti-semitic that the U.S. Senate voted 95-0 to condemn it and Jackson labeled it "reprehensible and morally indefensible."

Still, there are those who claim that Farrakhan is not anti-semitic only anti-Zionist, yet he has frequently repeated the anti-semitic canard that Jews control the media in an effort to find a scapegoat for criticism directed at him. Most recently, he claimed that "as long as Jewish people control the media, Arabs, Blacks, Muslims will never have a balanced view" (April 16, 1985).

Farrakhan's views on the relationship between Judaism and Zionism are explicit: "Jews know their wickedness, not just Zionism, which is an outgrowth of Jewish transgression" (Washington Post, July 27, 1985, my emphasis). In his recent Los Angeles appearance, Farrakhan declared that Jews "are not the chosen people of G-d...the Black people are." As for Farrakhan's criticism of Israel, he is entitled to his opinion; of course, his claim that the Jews stole the Palestinian homeland is historically inaccurate — but veracity has never been very important to demagogues.

Farrakhan's loyalties are also exposed by his partnership with Libyan dictator Moammar Kadafi. Kadafi has provided Farrakhan with a \$5 million interest-free loan to start a marketing organization called POWER (People Organized and Working for Economic Rebirth). No one begrudges the Nation of Islam a loan to help stimulate Black "economic rebirth," but it is ironic that Blacks would see Kadafi as an ally given the historical oppression of Blacks by Arabs. As one writer in the Black periodical *Ebony* explained: "the Arabs, in league with the Portuguese, were the chief instigators and the main profiteers of the slave trade....Indeed, it was the Arabs who showed the white man what a fortune could be made in Black flesh....I do

not see how and Black brother with even passing acquaintance with our history, can proclaim himself in spiritual league with the Arab."

The Kadafi connection also highlights the anti-American and separatist thrust of Farrakhan's message. During a broadcast from Libya, Kadafi told the 13,000 people in the audience that Blacks should desert from the United States armed forces and form their own army to "destroy white America." Farrakhan says that he would not fight for the U.S. because it "is the number one enemy of freedom loving people on earth" (July 22, 1985). He has also referred to white Americans as "worshippers of filth, worshippers of sex and worshippers of pleasure," (Feb 1980) and called integration "a hypocritical trick used by white people to deceive black people into making us believe that our four hundred old enemy had all of a sudden become our friend" (March 11, 1984).

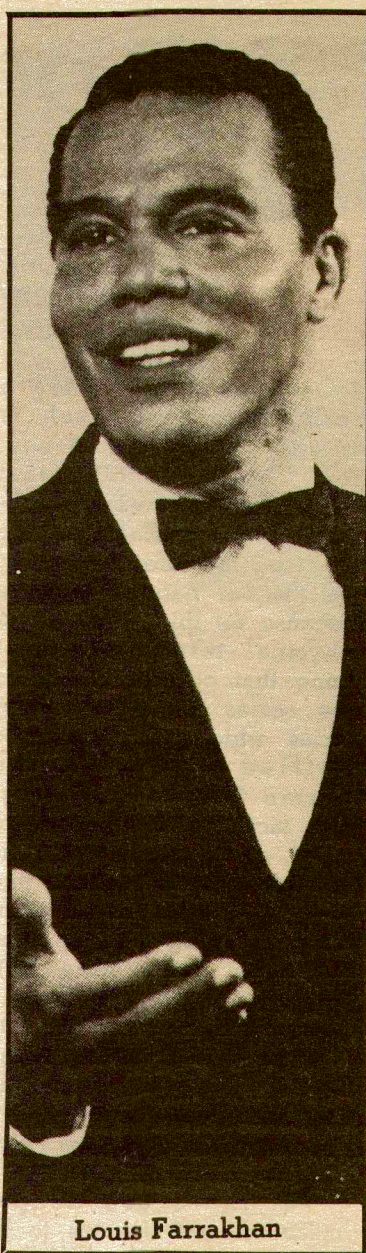
Last year, Farrakhan predicted that Blacks will "settle the score" with whites and that "we'll have the most awesome war machine that the earth has ever seen" (Los Angeles Times, May 28, 1984). This is a message that seems far removed from that of Martin Luther King, and in fact, is far from that of the majority of Black Muslims.

According to Warith Deen Muhammad, the leader of the American Muslim Mission, Farrakhan has abandoned "what is universal

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true Islam," and "has made anti-semitic statements." The message that Muhammad recently brought to Los Angeles, that "G-d is one and all people are his creation and his dependents, and he loves and cherishes them all," stands in stark contrast to the vitriol of the Farrakhan speech.

Given the blatantly abhorrent expressions of Farrakhan, the question arises as to why he is able to attract large crowds to his speeches. One answer is that the combination of his charisma and media attention has made him a celebrity, but that is only a partial explanation. Alvin Pous-saint, professor of psychiatry at Harvard, has suggested that Farrakhan "is in touch with the black masses" who "have always gotten a vicarious satisfaction and pleasure out of a black man giving white people hell." Perhaps the best explanation is that his message of hope



Louis Farrakhan

for the economically disadvantaged strikes a responsive chord with those who prefer easy answers and scapegoats to harsh realities.

While responsible leaders have spoken out against Farrakhan's anti-semitism, some Blacks have tried to pick out the vile portions of his message and endorse the "good parts" the way someone who doesn't like olives might pick them off an olive pizza and still enjoy the remainder. One cannot filter out hatred in the same way, however, because it is a central ingredient to the recipe.

Hitler's "greatness" in building up the Nazi economy cannot be separated from his monstrosity anymore than the Klan's program for improving the lot of disadvantaged whites can be shorn from its racist source. The apparent inability of certain students on this campus to see this is truly frightening because it portends not an improvement in race relations in America, but increasing friction based not on white fears of having to share economic and political power with Blacks, but rather on the latent racism and anti-semitism among members of persecuted communities.

Julius Lester has said: "We have been brutalized too much to start brutalizing each other." It's a shame that Minister Farrakhan and his followers have not come to this realization. ■

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