

## 1967: How Estrangement and Alliances Between Blacks, Jews, and Arabs Shaped a Generation of Civil Rights Family Values

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The entire civil rights struggle needs a new interpretation, a broader interpretation. We need to look at this civil rights thing from another angle—from the inside as well as from the outside. To those of us whose philosophy is black nationalism, the only way you can get involved in the civil rights struggle is give it a new interpretation. That old interpretation excluded us. It kept us out.<sup>1</sup>

—Malcolm X, 1964

Now there are two dreams I have in my life. My dreams are rooted in reality, not in imagery. I dream, number one, of having coffee with my wife in South Africa; and number two, of having mint tea in Palestine.<sup>2</sup>

—Stokely Carmichael, 1968

### Introduction

Since September 11, 2001, Arabs and Muslims in the United States have faced increasing infringements on their civil rights

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1. Malcolm X, *The Ballot or the Bullet*, Speech at the Cory Methodist Church (Apr. 3, 1964), in *MALCOLM X SPEAKS: SELECTED SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS* 31 (George Breitman ed., 1965).

2. STOKELY CARMICHAEL, *STOKELY SPEAKS* 143 (1971).

and civil liberties,<sup>3</sup> but today's leading advocates of Arab and Muslim civil rights only touch the surface of exclusions that these groups experience. While civil rights advocates have successfully refuted the argument that Arabs and Muslims pose a threat to national security, they have not addressed these groups' deeper isolation from dominant American institutions of power and culture.

Arabs and Muslims in the United States are identifiable but rarely written about as a "minority" because we exist primarily within our relationships to other minority groups. Power struggles among allied minority groups emerge as "family dramas" that occur at the margins of our collective struggle within the dominant society. Family dramas are disputes between loved ones that nevertheless play out within certain "family" norms. Particularly, I am interested in our existence in the black-Jewish family drama because it is the norms of this family drama that have produced the compulsion to be silent about the key issue of Palestine. The stifling of debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the fear of the anti-Semitism charge that sometimes accompanies criticism of Israel, and the prevalence of this phenomena in various areas of American life (e.g., movies, newspapers, academic environments)<sup>4</sup> has produced a group of people held together by their own silence. These are the Arabs and Muslims to whom I refer. Therefore, I am talking about a very fluid identity, better defined by the politics of exclusion than by affirmative descriptions like blood, culture, or religion.

This Essay examines one unexpected place where these silences are produced: civil rights coalitions. I propose that Arabs and Muslims today are asked to make the same concession for a civil rights coalition that blacks made to Jewish progressives in 1967: silence on or support for Israeli policies. Current events in the Middle East and in the United States require us to re-examine the estrangements and alliances of 1967, in hopes of promoting more open terms of coalition with both critical race theorists who struggle against subordination and civil rights advocates who struggle against discrimination. Building true coalitions in the United States between blacks, Jews, and Arabs means rewriting

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3. See David Cole, *Enemy Aliens*, 54 STAN. L. REV. 953 (2002); Leti Volpp, *The Citizen and the Terrorist*, 49 UCLA L. REV. 1575 (2002).

4. See Susan M. Akram & Kevin R. Johnson, *Race, Civil Rights, and Immigration Law After September 11, 2001: The Targeting of Arabs and Muslims*, 58 N.Y.U. ANN. SURV. AM. L. 295 (2002); Karen Engle, *Constructing Good Aliens and Good Citizens: Legitimizing the War on Terror(ism)*, 75 U. COLO. L. REV. 59 (2004).

the terms of the coalition to differentiate between anti-Semitism and a critique of Israel, enabling us to advocate a just peace in the Middle East. A reconsideration of the black nationalist critique of integrationism and the Arab-Israeli War will contribute to a modern rewriting of the 1967 chapter.

The 1967 chapter is interesting because that year encompassed the struggle between competing visions of black liberation, the impact of the Arab-Israeli War on Jewish identity, and the tensions produced when Arabs and Muslims today identify with Palestinian rights. The late 1960s and early 1970s were years of massive social unrest in the United States: African Americans rioted in urban ghettos; the Black Panthers began to organize nationally; dissent from the Vietnam War heated up; public schools in the South were ordered to desegregate; white women had begun to mobilize across the nation for gender equality; and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Robert Kennedy were assassinated. In addition to the upheaval at home, the Arab-Israeli War and Israel's subsequent occupation of the West Bank was transformative for many American Jews.

I believe it was against the backdrop of this rupture that groups split apart, realigned themselves, and set the boundaries of contemporary mainstream thinking about race and the Middle East. This Essay will examine the roots of the integrationist-Jewish alliance in the greater context of 1967 and the black nationalist protest.<sup>5</sup> Part I will summarize two well-known ruptures that changed the direction of the civil rights movement: the fracture between integrationists and black nationalists, and the end of the "golden age" chapter of the black-Jewish family drama.<sup>6</sup> In Part II, I introduce the Arab-Israeli War and the question of Palestine.<sup>7</sup> The first part details the black nationalists' reasons for identifying with the story of Palestinian nationalism instead of Jewish nationalism.<sup>8</sup> I will then discuss the multiple reactions of the Jewish conservatives, liberals, and radicals to the war and the black nationalists.<sup>9</sup> Finally, I will examine the integrationists' dual, but primarily domestic, reaction to the black nationalists and the Jewish community and the character of the

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5. See Gary Peller, *Race Consciousness*, 1990 DUKE L.J. 758, 759-60 (1990) (defining an "integrationist" ideology as one that "locates racial oppression in the social structures of prejudice and stereotype based on skin color, and that identifies progress with the transcendence of racial conscious of the world").

6. See *infra* notes 12-63 and accompanying text.

7. See *infra* notes 65-197 and accompanying text.

8. See *infra* notes 66-123 and accompanying text.

9. See *infra* notes 124-161 and accompanying text.

compromise that resulted.<sup>10</sup> Part III discusses how the 1967 chapter has refracted the "double consciousness" experienced by many American minorities into a "triple consciousness" for Arabs and Muslims by structuring the way progressives talk about race.<sup>11</sup> While African Americans often speak of how the double consciousness imposes upon them the burden of watching themselves through the eyes of mainstream white America, this section argues that not only do Arabs and Muslims watch themselves through "mainstream" eyes, they also watch themselves through "outsider eyes." Often, Arabs and Muslims experience the feeling of being outside even those progressive racial projects because those projects continue to dictate when and how much to talk about Israel.

### I. Dusting Off the Family Album: Two Stories of 1967 and Black Power

On June 16, 1966, Stokely Carmichael was arrested for the twenty-seventh time, this time because he insisted to the Greenwood, Mississippi police that demonstrators in the March Against Fear had permission to sleep at a local black school.<sup>12</sup> Three years before, James Forman, Bob Moses, and six other members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had sat in the Greenwood city jail.<sup>13</sup> Forman had listened to an old woman in the cell next door

[p]raying as the old folks pray in the South . . . . [S]he is praying for freedom in Greenwood. She is praying for mercy on Greenwood. She is praying for forgiveness in Greenwood. 'Please,' she cries, . . . '[y]ou told us to love one another, there does not seem to be any love in this . . . .' She prays that we might have our equal rights.<sup>14</sup>

At the rally that followed his 1966 arrest, Carmichael voiced his frustration with the years of integrationist rhetoric and prayer: "We been saying freedom for six years and we ain't got nothin'. What we gonna start saying now is Black Power!"<sup>15</sup>

Two stories of black power complicate the dominant faith in

10. See *infra* notes 162-197 and accompanying text.

11. See *infra* notes 198-218 and accompanying text.

12. CLAYBORNE CARSON, IN STRUGGLE: SNCC AND THE BLACK AWAKENING OF THE 1960S 209 (1981) [hereinafter IN STRUGGLE].

13. JAMES FORMAN, *Notes from the Greenwood Jail*, in THE MAKING OF BLACK REVOLUTIONARIES 294-308 (1985).

14. *Id.* at 302.

15. JONATHAN KAUFMAN, *BROKEN ALLIANCE: THE TURBULENT TIMES BETWEEN BLACKS AND JEWS IN AMERICA* 78 (1988).

the civil rights movement's glory and inevitability. The first story views black power as a public protest against integrationist accommodation of a new bargain between the civil rights movement and dominant society.<sup>16</sup> The second story chronicles a chapter in the ongoing family drama between blacks and Jews in the United States, and marks black power as the end of a historic coalition.<sup>17</sup> This section will summarize these stories and set the stage for their intersection in 1967 at the Arab-Israeli War.<sup>18</sup>

### *A. Integrationists and Black Nationalists Divide over Their Racial Visions for the Nation*

Gary Peller identifies black power as a symbol of the ideological confrontation over race in the 1960s.<sup>19</sup> With black power, black nationalists confronted integrationists and lost. The result was the eventual triumph of integrationist ideology in mainstream racial discourse.<sup>20</sup> While integrationists and black nationalists did not exist in totally pure forms, the two ideological frameworks differed in their perspectives, location and "cures" of racism, and visions of racial justice.<sup>21</sup>

#### 1. Integrationist Ideology: Access to Power as the Cure to Racial Discrimination

Integrationist ideology begins from a universalist<sup>22</sup> perspective and considers racism as a deviation from the truth that all humans are equal and that race is only "skin deep."<sup>23</sup> As Peller explains, the "concepts of prejudice, discrimination, and segregation are the key structural elements of this ideology."<sup>24</sup> Prejudice is the eclipse of reason by superstition; it is the height of irrationality.<sup>25</sup> Practitioners of prejudice "discriminate"<sup>26</sup> against

16. See Peller, *supra* note 5.

17. See, e.g., STRANGERS & NEIGHBORS: RELATIONS BETWEEN BLACKS & JEWS IN THE UNITED STATES (Maurianne Adams & John Bracey eds., 1999) [hereinafter STRANGERS & NEIGHBORS].

18. See *infra* notes 19-64 and accompanying text.

19. Peller, *supra* note 5, at 787.

20. *Id.* at 831.

21. *Id.* at 808 (describing the black nationalists' "cure" for racial domination as one dependent, not on education or integration, but instead on the transfer of power from the white community to the black community).

22. *Id.* at 772-73 (defining and describing the "universalist perspective").

23. *Id.* at 768.

24. *Id.* at 767-68.

25. *Id.* at 768.

26. *Id.* at 769 ("Here racism manifests itself in the practice of 'discrimination,' in the disparate treatment of whites and blacks that the irrational attribution of

those they irrationally believe are inferior.<sup>27</sup> Segregation is the social culmination of discriminatory acts. The icon of segregation is the Jim Crow South.<sup>28</sup>

Integrationists equate racial justice with "colorblindness."<sup>29</sup> In a colorblind world, people treat each other as individuals rather than as members of superior or inferior races.<sup>30</sup> The path to this goal requires integration (the absence of segregation), in which people of different races mingle and realize the truth that skin color is meaningless.<sup>31</sup> Neutral norms like merit, equal access, and equal treatment under the law are the only hope that ignorance will be defeated and racial categories will be abandoned.<sup>32</sup> The immortalization of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream, that "one day my children be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character"<sup>33</sup> sums up the disease, the cure, and the mythification of the integrationist agenda. This dream articulates the hope that the American people will one day learn to assess individuals on merit, on what is "inside," rather than draw prejudiced conclusions based on skin color.

Because of the success of the bargain between integrationists and the cultural mainstream, integrationist icons, perspectives, and structural elements dominate the way we talk about race. The icons are among the most well-known and well-respected American leaders and organizations, and their ranks include Martin Luther King, Jr.,<sup>34</sup> Roy Wilkins, A. Philip Randolph, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the National Urban League.

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difference is suppose to justify.").

27. *Id.* at 768.

28. *Id.* at 769.

29. *Id.*

30. *Id.* at 769-70.

31. *Id.* at 770.

32. *Id.* at 770, 777.

33. Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have a Dream, Speech on the Steps of the Lincoln Memorial* (Aug. 28, 1963).

34. King actually represents both integrationists and black nationalists, but his views are usually enshrined in integrationist ideology. See Peller, *supra* note 5, at 813. See also Anthony E. Cook, *Beyond Critical Legal Studies: The Reconstructive Theology of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 103 HARV. L. REV. 985 (1990), for a more radical interpretation of King's work.

## 2. Black Nationalist Ideology: Redistribution of Power as the Cure for Racial Subordination

Black nationalists challenged the integrationists at every level of their ideology. Black nationalists advocated a context-based (rather than universalist) perspective,<sup>35</sup> argued that racism is based on subordination (rather than discrimination),<sup>36</sup> and believed that racial justice required a redistribution of power (rather than access to power).<sup>37</sup> Icons of the black nationalist movement in the 1960s include Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Imamu Baraka, Eldridge Cleaver, the Black Panther Party, sections of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and, to some extent, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).<sup>38</sup>

Peller describes the structural elements of black nationalist ideology, which centered on power, subordination, and colonialism.<sup>39</sup> For nationalists, racism was practiced not through discrimination but through subordination and racial hierarchy.<sup>40</sup> Black nationalists embraced the colonial analysis, which was reverberating across the globe.<sup>41</sup> By talking about race relations in terms of colonialism, black nationalists challenged integrationist assumptions that blacks should be "allowed in" to existing American institutions.<sup>42</sup> Integrationist goals of equal treatment under neutral norms were both impossible and assimilationist, because the norms had been established by white power. The desire for admission to the colonists' world only legitimized the colonial system.

Instead, black nationalists argued that only by redistributing

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35. See Peller, *supra* note 5, at 794.

36. *Id.* at 808.

37. *Id.* at 797.

38. *Id.* at 786, nn.49-55. CORE actually divided sharply over the two ideologies and the Arab-Israeli War. See *infra* notes 168-173 and accompanying text.

39. See Peller, *supra* note 5, at 808.

40. *Id.* The struggle against formal segregation, while disruptive of racial hierarchy in the early 1960s, did not fully capture the range of exclusions African Americans endured. It was inadequate to account for the history of slavery, poverty, and degradation of blacks by whites in every social institution. *Id.*

41. *Id.* at 810. Under this analysis, African Americans viewed themselves as a "nation within a nation," subject to white control over every aspect of their lives. black nationalists deployed a neo-colonial analysis to further argue that they were subject to an "indirect rule" by the black middle class, a colonized elite that administered the colonial interests. *Id.* For post-colonial literature of the time, see, e.g., AIMÉ CÉSAIRE, DISCOURSE ON COLONIALISM (1955); FRANZ FANON, THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH (1963); ALBERT MEMMI, THE COLONIZER AND THE COLONIZED (1957).

42. See Peller, *supra* note 5, at 808-10.

power over these institutions could blacks and whites relate to each other on just terms.<sup>43</sup> Education and integration alone could not cure racial domination; only a commitment to "Black Power" could achieve that goal.<sup>44</sup> In contrast to the integrationists' embrace of colorblindness, black nationalists championed race-consciousness.<sup>45</sup> They argued that race created its own perspective, which was complex, historical, and contextual.<sup>46</sup> According to black nationalists, no perspective offered a "color-blind" option for viewing racial struggles and racial justice.<sup>47</sup> Thus, black nationalists' race-conscious perspective and vocabulary of power, subordination, and colonialism, challenged the integrationist universalist perspective that talked about race in terms of prejudice, discrimination, and integration.

### 3. Integrationist and Black Nationalist Ideologies Clash over the Direction of the Civil Rights Movement

For a time in the early 1960s, the public perceived both black nationalists and integrationists as militant advocates for resistance to current racial structures.<sup>48</sup> Both militantly challenged the Southern myth that race relations were peaceful and that African Americans were content with their racial status.<sup>49</sup> Direct action, militant-integrationist groups like SNCC and CORE arose during this convergence. When the ideologies again diverged in 1966 and 1967, and the integrationist rhetoric of prejudice, discrimination, and segregation took on an accommodationist flavor, SNCC and CORE members were forced to choose between their commitment to resistance and their integrationist ideology. With the call to black power, these organizations eventually chose the nationalist analysis that

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43. *Id.* at 810.

44. *Id.* at 808.

45. *See id.* at 761.

46. *Id.* at 794 ("Nationalists presented the time bound, messy, and inherently particular social relations between nations as the central ground from which to perceive race.").

47. *Id.* at 762. Any perspective begins from a particular set of assumptions shaped by a person's or group's experience in a racialized world. These assumptions were open to criticism, especially the dominant assumption that the current arrangements of power and institutions are natural and neutral, and that equal access alone would create a just society. *Id.*

48. *Id.* at 815, 828-29.

49. Neither the integrationist nor the black nationalist worldviews were analytically destined to adopt accommodation or resistance agendas. For example, in earlier periods, black nationalism had an accommodationist agenda such as "Back to Africa" programs in which nationalists and white supremacists agreed that African Americans should be deported from North America. *Id.* at 826-27.



described race relations as a product of power, subordination, and colonialism.<sup>50</sup>

This generation of nationalism threatened the identity of both the black middle class and progressive whites, and these groups began to champion integrationism as a more comfortable way to think about race and racial justice.<sup>51</sup> "Black Power" was softened and absorbed by the mainstream as "cultural diversity."<sup>52</sup> The integrationists' non-confrontational values of universalism, prejudice, and discrimination became the ethical way to understand race. Society's adjustment to the new "cultural center" soothed the rupture of the late 1960s.<sup>53</sup>

Peller's analysis concludes that the story of 1967 is the struggle for the direction of the civil rights movement, the cultural bargain between whites and integrationists, and the subsequent marginalization of black nationalism. As a result, discussion about racial justice today is limited to prejudice, discrimination, and segregation.<sup>54</sup> This Essay will examine an additional term of the cultural bargain between integrationists and the mainstream that Peller does not consider. I argue that a black-Jewish family drama also set the stage for additional terms to be added based on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

### *B. Jewish Progressives and Black Nationalists Part Ways over Black Power*

Accompanying the first story—that 1967 was a struggle over how the civil rights movement should challenge dominant society—is a second story about how that struggle impacted black-Jewish relations. The tellers of this second story are usually interested in the history of the family drama between blacks and Jews in the United States, and usually examine the relationship from an integrationist viewpoint.<sup>55</sup> According to these historians, the early civil rights movement of the 1960s was a period of important cooperation and agreement between blacks and Jews.<sup>56</sup>

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50. *Id.* at 829.

51. *Id.* at 835-41.

52. *Id.* at 835.

53. *Id.* at 844.

54. *Id.* at 844-45.

55. See Julian Bond, *Introduction* to STRANGERS & NEIGHBORS, *supra* note 17, at 1 ("I want to talk about the historic relationship between American blacks and Jews."). The volume examines relations between the two groups, beginning with the slave trade and continuing through Emancipation, the Great Depression, the period between World War II and 1967, and 1968 to the present.

56. Cornel West has said that this time was "certainly . . . an age in which there

As in the integrationist-black nationalist split, black power tolled the end of the coalition between the two groups. Thus, scholars interested in this family drama's history and the future of the black-Jewish coalition usually begin with the late 1960s. Michael Lerner and Cornel West write, "if we wish to start a process of healing and repair between Blacks and Jews, we are going to have to come to grips with the fallout from the ending of the Black-Jewish relationship during the civil rights movement of the fifties and sixties."<sup>57</sup>

Of course, Jews of different political backgrounds responded differently to black power and the subsequent demand by organizations like SNCC for black control. Jewish conservatives, speaking mostly from outside the civil rights movement, immediately categorized the calls for black power as "reverse racism" and specifically "anti-Semitism." This group made special appeals to other Jews, arguing that black nationalist organizations signaled a rising anti-Semitism and an increasingly dangerous Left.<sup>58</sup> Norman Podhoretz told the American Jewish Committee, "whatever the case may have been yesterday, and whatever the case may be tomorrow, the case today is that the most active enemies of the Jews are located not in the precincts of the ideological Right but in the precincts of the Radical Left."<sup>59</sup> Jewish neoconservatives utilized the integrationists' universalist perspective, arguing that the black nationalists and other Leftists preached tolerance, but that black power was actually intolerant because it did not recognize the equal and universal humanity of every individual.<sup>60</sup>

Jewish radicals and liberals involved in the movement from the early 1960s often took the view that anti-Semitism did not totally explain black power, but they thought black power had betrayed them by excluding them from the movement. "After years of [Jewish] self-sacrifice, SNCC in particular and Black militants in general turned on their erstwhile allies and told them to get out of the Movement, accused them of attempting to dominate and manipulate Black organizations, and acted as though all they had offered was worthless."<sup>61</sup> Like many

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was a significant coming together for a moral cause, a political cause." MICHAEL LERNER & CORNEL WEST, *JEWS AND BLACKS: LET THE HEALING BEGIN* 82 (1996).

57. *Id.* at 80.

58. KAUFMAN, *supra* note 15, at 214.

59. *Id.*

60. *Id.*

61. LERNER & WEST, *supra* note 56, at 86. However, some radical Jews continued to support black nationalism. See MURRAY FRIEDMAN, *WHAT WENT*

integrationists, Lerner identifies the source of betrayal and conflict in black nationalists' preference for particularism over universalism and in their race consciousness. "The distinguishing factor between those who were treated right and those who weren't was not how long they stayed or what risks they were taking. What distinguished them was the color of their skin. If they were white they were being kicked out."<sup>62</sup> To Lerner, the black nationalists' embrace of race consciousness substituted irrational "skin color" for more neutral assessments of merit—such as how long participants stayed or what risks they took.

Progressive and neoconservative Jews often implicitly agreed on the neutrality of universalism and merit. Thus, the perceived betrayal both forced progressive Jews to admit that their values of liberalism and universalism were being undermined by skin color and bolstered the credibility of the Jewish neoconservative position.<sup>63</sup>

While the period after 1967 is often characterized as the demise of black-Jewish relations, there is an implicit ideological agreement on integrationism that underlies the narrative. Even the breakdown of the black-Jewish coalition is often recounted from an integrationist viewpoint, where blacks irrationally turned "inward" in 1966 and 1967 and chose separation and "Black Power" over integration and coalition. Today, the ideological boundaries of the black-Jewish family drama remain stably integrationist, grounded in universalism, tolerance, and merit. In the next section, I will clarify this common ideological ground between integrationists and Jews.<sup>64</sup>

## II. Lost Pages: Strained Black-Jewish Relations over the Arab-Israeli War

With all of the political and cultural turmoil surrounding the narrative of the late 1960s in the United States, it would be strange to think that the Arab-Israeli War in June of 1967 went unnoticed by any of these groups. Indeed, while the war does not usually receive attention in the typical summary of the decade, it actually generated strong political tensions between nationalists and integrationists, as well as between blacks and Jews.

The Arab-Israeli War accelerated the need for black

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WRONG? THE CREATION AND COLLAPSE OF THE BLACK JEWISH ALLIANCE 268-73 (1995).

62. LERNER & WEST, *supra* note 56, at 88.

63. *Id.* at 86.

64. See *infra* notes 162-197 and accompanying text.

nationalists to decide between theoretical consistency and disciplinary repercussions from the movement on the one hand, or ideological compromise and status quo on the other. The Arab-Israeli War also had a strong impact on the identity of American Jews, introducing a point of agreement for conservative, progressive, and radical Jews—support for Israeli military action—at the same moment that progressive coalitions with non-Jews were under strain.<sup>65</sup> Finally, the war tested the integrationists' ideological and pragmatic commitments to their objectives; in the midst of battling black nationalists, a pro-Arab statement would risk damaging alliances with Jewish progressives and radicals. Therefore, the substance of the compromise and the corollary on support for Israel was at some level the product of timing. Integrationists were ready to bargain with the American mainstream, progressive Jews and black nationalist coalitions were at a breaking point, and the Arab-Israeli War made support for Israel a key issue for the realignment of black-Jewish coalitions.

*A. Rebellion: Black Nationalists Pursue Theoretical Consistency and Adopt a Pro-Palestinian Position*

The outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War pressured an increasingly internationally oriented black nationalist movement to decide whether its historical connections to Jewish nationalism outweighed a rising sympathy for Palestinian nationalism.<sup>66</sup> After intense inner conflict, the black nationalists adopted a critique of Israel that was consistent with their characterization of racism as subordination (rather than discrimination), belief that racism was systematized through colonialism (rather than segregation), and vision of racial justice that required a redistribution of power.<sup>67</sup> It is true that some black nationalists also articulated expressions of anti-Semitism.<sup>68</sup> However, anti-Semitism alone cannot account for the consistency between the black nationalists' critique of racial subordination in America and their extension of that theory to

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65. KAUFMAN, *supra* note 15, at 214.

66. W.E.B. DuBois, A. Philip Randolph, and Paul Robeson had all made statements in support of Israel. See FRIEDMAN, *supra* note 61, at 230-31.

67. See *supra* notes 36-38 and accompanying text.

68. One commentator has noted that anti-Semitism "was present in the black community . . . sometimes virulently." MELANI MCALISTER, *EPIC ENCOUNTERS: CULTURE, MEDIA, AND U.S. INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1945-2000* 99 (2001); see also *id.* (citing an enhanced animosity in poet Imamu Baraka's "dagger poems" for Jews, as opposed to whites generally (quoting IMAMU AMIRI BARAKA, *SELECTED POETRY* 106-07 (1979))).

Palestinian nationalism.

This section argues that the black nationalists' embrace of a historicized perspective prompted them to challenge basic ground rules of the black-Jewish family. They introduced to American racial politics a new "Middle East consciousness"—a realization that members of the black-Jewish family could not take stock of their own struggles or their relationship to one another without confronting events in the Middle East.<sup>69</sup> Next, I argue that black nationalists eventually identified with Palestinians because it was consistent with their colonialist critique of power.<sup>70</sup> Finally, this section describes two major black nationalist interventions regarding the Arab-Israeli War: the SNCC newsletter and the Conference on New Politics.<sup>71</sup>

### 1. Birth of a Middle East Consciousness: Black Nationalists Challenge the Black-Jewish Family Ground Rules

The black nationalists' view that race was socially constructed prompted them to question the adequacy of dominant religious and cultural texts of liberation that formed the black-Jewish family "ground rules." A first set of ground rules, the universality of the Judeo-Christian religious discourse used by the black-Jewish family, was challenged through black nationalist exploration of Islam.<sup>72</sup> A second set of ground rules challenged by the black nationalists was the family agreement that blacks and Jews in America were "brothers-sufferers' in the same boat."<sup>73</sup> Both sets of rules led back to a third, previously implicit rule that blacks should support Jewish nationalism and the state of Israel.

When black nationalists confronted the ground rules, they also began to view the conflict in the Middle East as a conflict of competing nationalisms. In doing so, black nationalists articulated a sort of Middle East consciousness that parallels, at an international level, their domestic race consciousness.<sup>74</sup> It was from this perspective that the black nationalists made their racial analyses of the Arab-Israeli War and then adopted a pro-Arab position.

Malcolm X was one of the first black nationalists to challenge

69. See *infra* notes 72-87 and accompanying text.

70. See *infra* notes 88-112 and accompanying text.

71. See *infra* notes 113-123 and accompanying text.

72. See *infra* notes 76-81 and accompanying text.

73. HAROLD CRUSE, *THE CRISIS OF THE NEGRO INTELLECTUAL* 483 (1967); see *infra* notes 83-87 and accompanying text.

74. See *supra* notes 39-47 and accompanying text.

the family ground rules. By introducing Islam (and rejecting Christianity) as a text for liberation, Malcolm X upset Judeo-Christian discursive agreements, which had served as the sole religious text for the black-Jewish family. He then used his position outside the black-Jewish family to apply a colonialist analysis of the Middle East similar to his critiques of the colonial relationship between blacks and whites in the United States. "The Jews [sic] who with the help of Christians in America and Europe, drove our Muslim brothers out of their homeland, where they had been settled for centuries and took over the land for themselves."<sup>75</sup> According to Malcolm X, African Americans had more in common with Arabs than with Jews, as both occupied a subordinated position in society and thus had common grounds for struggle.<sup>76</sup>

While Malcolm X's position did not have the same impact as later black nationalist interventions, the Nation of Islam was also cross-pollinating a more radical wing of the civil rights movement. Radical civil rights workers listened, and began to question for themselves the idea that African-American Christianity and American Judaism were universal texts of the oppressed. They listened globally and heard Christianity used to justify imperialism, Israel's increasing regional power, and the southern whites' use of Christianity to maintain segregation.<sup>77</sup> The Nation of Islam in general, and Malcom X in particular, had made a strong case that Christians and colonialists talked the same way, and that Islam, as the religion of many colonized people, may also be a way of talking about revolution.<sup>78</sup>

Stokely Carmichael was one product of the cross-pollination. Carmichael's first demonstration was on behalf of Israel.<sup>79</sup> He remembered, "someone at the U.N. had said something anti-Semitic; I can't exactly remember who, but [the Young Peoples Socialist League] drew up a big picket-line at the U.N."<sup>80</sup> By 1968, Carmichael had begun to see the conflict in the Middle East as a clash of Jewish and Palestinian nationalism. "A few years ago I

75. Benjamin Ginsberg, *THE FATAL EMBRACE: JEWS AND THE STATE* 167 (1993) (quoting Malcolm X).

76. Malcolm X, Speech at Boston University (February 15, 1960), in MCALISTER, *supra* note 68, at 99. "The Arabs, as a colored people, should and must make more effort to reach the millions of colored people in America who are related to the Arabs by blood. These millions of colored people [in America] would be completely in sympathy with the Arab Cause!" *Id.* at 99.

77. MCALISTER, *supra* note 68, at 95.

78. *Id.* at 94-96.

79. Clayborne Carson, Jr., *Blacks and Jews in the Civil Rights Movement*, in STRANGERS & NEIGHBORS, *supra* note 17, at 578.

80. *Id.* (quoting Stokely Carmichael).

was for the Jewish people of Israel. I wanted to know why the Arabs were bothering the Jews—I couldn't figure it out . . . [Now] we make it clear that we see the Arab world, not only as our brothers, but also as our comrades-in-arms."<sup>81</sup>

In his 1967 book, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, Harold Cruse applied the analytics of the black nationalists' historical perspective to challenge the "brother-sufferer" ground rule of the black-Jewish family, challenging the ideas that "both the Negro and the Jew are helpless"<sup>82</sup> and that "the Negro's best friend is the Jew."<sup>83</sup> Relationships between blacks and Jews, according to Cruse, are subject to power dynamics,<sup>84</sup> and the "brother-sufferer" rule is the result of Jewish intellectuals' power to frame the agenda of racial justice for blacks "on *their own* terms from *their* position of social power."<sup>85</sup> When the clashing nationalisms of blacks and Jews became apparent in 1967, the "brother-sufferer" terms gave way and the coalition became strained. From there, Cruse says, there must be a prefatory clarification that blacks must ask: "Where do Jewish intellectuals of *Commentary* stand on the question of international Zionism?"<sup>86</sup> If that question remained unasked, "no Negro or Jew is prepared to discuss, in any serious way, any alleged approaches to better Negro-Jewish relations at home or abroad."<sup>87</sup>

By challenging two sets of ground rules of the black-Jewish family, Malcolm X and Harold Cruse illustrated that questions about Israel lay close beneath the surface of black-Jewish relations in the United States. In effect, these domestic challenges produced a Middle East consciousness, a recognition that group relations between blacks and Jews (and Arabs) in the United States are inevitably tied up with the fate of Israel and Palestine.

## 2. Black Nationalist Theory of Global Subordination and Colonialism Lay the Groundwork for a Pro-Palestinian Position

The black nationalists' historicized perspective brought the politics of the Middle East to the surface of black-Jewish relations.

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81. CARMICHAEL, *supra* note 2, at 136.

82. James Baldwin, *The Harlem Ghetto*, in NOTES OF A NATIVE SON (1957) quoted in CRUSE, *supra* note 73, at 488.

83. CRUSE, *supra* note 73, at 476.

84. *Id.* at 494-95.

85. *Id.* at 481.

86. *Id.* at 494.

87. *Id.* at 494-95.

black nationalists felt solidarity for Palestinians for the same reasons they felt solidarity with the colonized people of African nations. Their perspective on the Arab-Israeli War dovetailed with their view of racism as subordination and their theory that racism was systematized through colonialism. The black nationalists' embrace of Arabs as "comrades" had both "pull" and "push" dimensions. On one hand, black nationalists felt an international "pull" to analogize their own subordination to that of the Palestinians and oppressed peoples around the world. On the other hand, black nationalists felt a domestic "push" out of the integrationist camp. The pro-Arab position was the result of both forces.

Pulling black nationalists was a growing international consciousness and maturing theory of global subordination and colonialism. On June 7, 1967, James Forman of SNCC wrote: "Obviously the 'gut' reaction in many people is against Israel . . ." <sup>88</sup> This reaction was a direct consequence of the anti-colonialist critique that black nationalists had developed. The black nationalist critique was cosmopolitan; it had begun to analogize itself and ally itself with anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world. And throughout the world, anti-imperialists supported the Palestinians. Gandhi had called Zionism, "an accomplice of British imperialism." <sup>89</sup> Nkrumah considered Israel "as an imperialist enclave" and Nyerere characterized "the establishment of the State of Israel as an act of aggression against the Arab people." <sup>90</sup> The 1961 Casablanca Conference, attended by six African nations, passed a resolution stating Israel was "an instrument in the service of imperialism and neo-colonialis[m] not only in the Middle East but also in Africa and Asia" and expressing deep concern about Israel's "depriving the Arabs of Palestine of their legitimate rights." <sup>91</sup> UN resolutions condemning Israel's occupation of the West Bank passed with the support of many black African states. <sup>92</sup> The black nationalists fit easily into this company. Ralph Featherstone,

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88. FORMAN, *supra* note 13, at 493.

89. Benjamin Rivlin & Jacques Fomerand, *Changing Third World Perspectives and Policies Toward Israel*, in ISRAEL IN THE THIRD WORLD 328 (Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitleson eds., 1976) [hereinafter Rivlin & Fomerand]; see also Joseph Helling, *Anti-Semitism in Sub-Saharan Africa with a Focus on South Africa*, 14 EMORY INT'L L. REV. 1197 (2000) (supplying the basis for anti-Semitism in South Africa through comparative historical perspective).

90. Rivlin & Fomerand, *supra* note 89, at 340 (quoting Nkrumah and Nyerere) (internal quotations omitted).

91. *Id.* at 342.

92. *Id.* at 344.



SNCC's program director, said SNCC was drawn to the Arab cause because of a vision of a "third world alliance of oppressed people all over the world—Africa, Asia and Latin America" and that he believed "Arabs have been oppressed continually by Israelis and by Europeans as well in such Arab countries as Algeria."<sup>93</sup>

The view that Jewish nationalism was subordinating Palestinian nationalism had two primary roots. First, Israel resembled other colonial projects in Africa and Asia. "Jews in Palestine were not viewed as natives but as foreigners, exponents of Western culture and agents of Western imperialism."<sup>94</sup> Early Zionists had employed various ideological tools for the acquisition of land, such as the notions of progress and science in a backward land and hierarchical schemes of social evolution.<sup>95</sup> Second, Israel had the friendship and support of many imperialist allies: France supplied it arms in 1961; it was viewed as siding with apartheid because of an influential Jewish population in South Africa; Israel favored Tshombe over Lumumba in the Congo; and it relied heavily on the United States for military and economic aid.<sup>96</sup> Israel, Great Britain, and France sided together in the Suez operation in 1956.<sup>97</sup>

Significantly, black nationalists did not base their pro-Arab position on an inquiry into whose skin was darker. Rather, black nationalists felt solidarity with Arabs because they viewed them as being in a similar situation of political, economic, and social subordination. James Forman makes this distinction, seeing the Israeli-Arab tension as a reflection (but not a mirror-image) of the black-white tension in America:

We cannot, for instance, just explain glibly the events in the Middle East as a struggle of blacks against whites when the actors themselves have a different viewpoint. That is not to say we must not speak of racism, for racism is involved in the Middle East crisis. But it is a serious error to even think one can eliminate racism without dealing with the fundamental

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93. Gene Roberts, *SNCC Charges Israel Atrocities*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 14, 1967, at A1.

94. Rivlin & Fomerand, *supra* note 89, at 327.

95. George E. Bisharat, *Land, Law and Legitimacy in Israel and the Occupied Territories*, 43 AM. U. L. REV. 467, 486 (1994). See generally EDWARD W. SAID, *THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE* (1979). Berl Katznelson, a Jewish Agency leader, wrote in 1937, "Never before has the white man undertaken colonization with the sense of justice and social progress which fills the Jew who comes to Palestine." John Ruedy, *Dynamics of Land Alienation*, in *THE TRANSFORMATION OF PALESTINE* 119, 357 (Ibrahim Abu-Lughod ed., 1971).

96. Rivlin & Fomerand, *supra* note 89, at 328, 342; Helling, *supra* note 89, at 1218.

97. Rivlin & Fomerand, *supra* note 89, at 328.

cause of exploitation, the unequal distribution of wealth throughout the world, and the desire of those who have control of the wealth to keep it.<sup>98</sup>

Thus, the articulation of solidarity with the Arab world goes much deeper than the familiar critique that black nationalists identified with Arab groups because they simply decided to see Arabs as "Black."<sup>99</sup> Black nationalists began with race, but located race by examining social systems of hierarchy and colonialism; they did not merely force together an untethered, formalist solidarity between nonwhite peoples.

The vision of remedy also pulled black nationalists into the pro-Arab camp. Because black nationalists were developing a critique of subordination and colonialism, they did not believe, as integrationists did, that Jewish and Palestinian nationalism each competed equally. Thus, unlike the integrationists, black nationalists believed that something more than "peace" alone (like "colorblindness" alone) was needed. Black nationalists' calls for justice in the Middle East echoed their domestic calls for "a radical transformation of the status quo institutional practices . . . before identifiable black and white communities could relate on a just basis."<sup>100</sup> Forman saw black nationalist support for justice for the Palestinian people as imperative, "regardless of how raggedy the formulation of our position."<sup>101</sup> For Forman, SNCC's position against Israel was tied up with the black nationalists' own destiny to struggle against racism, capitalism, and imperialism.<sup>102</sup> Stokely Carmichael also did not shy away from the call for radical

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98. FORMAN, *supra* note 13, at 494. Eldridge Cleaver also expressed this idea when calling Israel a "new face of colonialism." Eric Pace, *Cleaver Is Cheered in Algiers as He Denounces Israel as an American Puppet*, N.Y. TIMES, July 23, 1969, at 13. Cleaver's remarks are evidence that black nationalists viewed race and racism in terms of colonialism, rather than suffering: "We recognize that the Jewish people had suffered," he said, but continued, "the United States uses the Zionist regime that usurped the land of the Palestinian people as a puppet and a pawn." *Id.*

99. See, e.g., ROBERT G. WEISBORD & ARTHUR STEIN, BITTERSWEET ENCOUNTERS 108-09 (1970). Weisbord and Stein attribute the solidarity between black nationalists and Arabs to "new vogues in racial nomenclature":

For most nationalists the concept 'black' has become synonymous with nonwhite . . . . It was in this vein that Malcolm, echoing Elijah Muhammad observed, 'the red, the brown and the yellow are indeed all part of the black nation. Which means that black, brown, red, yellow, all are brothers, all are one family. The white one is a stranger. He's the odd fellow.' Having redefined the meaning of black it is possible to include Arabs in the same racial family as Afro-Americans.

*Id.* at 109.

100. Peller, *supra* note 5, at 810.

101. FORMAN, *supra* note 13, at 496-97.

102. *Id.*

transformation.<sup>103</sup>

[I]n order just to live, the Arabs are going to have to fight. In order to live, we will have to fight . . . . We don't care what the State Department says . . . as long as we have legs . . . they cannot stop us from going to Syria . . . . We will go where we want to go, learn what we want to learn, see what we want to see, talk with whom we want to talk, and fight with whom we want to fight.<sup>104</sup>

In addition to the cosmopolitan "pull" of world events, black nationalists were undergoing a domestic "push" out of the integrationist camp. The integrationists' unwillingness to speak in terms of power, both at home and abroad, only pushed the Middle East consciousness nearer to the surface of the debate. Many black nationalists viewed their pro-Palestinian positions as a "coming out," an important theoretical moment when they decided that ideological consistency was more important than a compromised political effectiveness.<sup>105</sup> Harold Cruse wrote:

It has become almost axiomatic that one can determine just which political, economic, cultural, or civil rights 'bag' any Negro intellectual is in, by whether or not he is willing to criticize American Jews [and Israel] publicly. If he is wary, he is either ignorant of the facts of life in multi-group America, or else organizationally involved with a Jewish and/or Zionist influence, as is prevalent in certain civil rights groups.<sup>106</sup>

For the black members of SNCC in particular, the anti-Israel position was an exhibition of SNCC's willingness to break with the integrationists.<sup>107</sup> Some scholars today have identified SNCC's position as a "coming out for a whole generation of young blacks,"<sup>108</sup> and "the central issue by which SNCC militants demonstrated their own militancy and tested the loyalty of their erstwhile white allies in the New Left."<sup>109</sup>

Black nationalists had decided to transgress the limits imposed by integrationists and the black-Jewish coalition just at the moment when Israel became a highly charged issue.<sup>110</sup> SNCC demonstrated its own cognizance of this moment in the fall of 1967, acknowledging in a newsletter article that its pro-

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103. CARMICHAEL, *supra* note 2, at 142. Carmichael uses Fatima Bernawi, who was sentenced to life in prison by Israeli occupation forces for her resistance activities and membership in Al-Fatah, as an example. *Id.*

104. *Id.* at 142-43.

105. Carson, *supra* note 79, at 585.

106. CRUSE, *supra* note 73, at 487.

107. Carson, *supra* note 79, at 583.

108. MCALISTER, *supra* note 68, at 114.

109. Carson, *supra* note 79, at 585.

110. MCALISTER, *supra* note 68, at 114.

Palestinian position was simultaneously alienating it from integrationism and the black-Jewish coalition:

Perhaps we have taken the liberal Jewish community or certain segments of it as far as it can go. If so, this is tragic, not for us but for the liberal Jewish community. For the world is in a revolutionary ferment . . . . Our message to conscious people everywhere is "Don't get caught on the wrong side of the revolution."<sup>111</sup>

Thus, Black nationalists confronted the Middle East politics leaking out through cracks in the Black-Jewish family. The Black nationalists were pulled toward solidarity with the Arabs by their increasingly cosmopolitan view of racial politics and the dominant third world position that Palestinians were subordinated by Jewish nationalism. They were also being pushed out of integrationist camps because, as I discuss in more detail later, the integrationists elevated domestic coalition over global consciousness.<sup>112</sup> This prioritization imposed a silence on the cornerstone of the black nationalist critique of colonialism.

### 3. From Theory to Practice: Two Black Nationalist Pro-Palestinian Interventions

Two specific responses of black nationalists to the Arab-Israeli War pressured black-Jewish family relations: a newsletter circulated by SNCC in the summer of 1967, and the actions of the Black Caucus at the National Conference on New Politics in August of 1967. First, in its June-July 1967 newsletter, SNCC published an article entitled "Third World Round Up, The Palestine Problem: Test Your Knowledge,"<sup>113</sup> after the central committee decided to examine the history of the conflict.<sup>114</sup> Before the publication, James Forman, head of SNCC's International Program and abroad in Africa at the time, wrote two letters to SNCC's executive secretary, Stanley Wise, cautioning him that a pro-Arab position must be carefully crafted in order to limit the backlash against them. "If by chance or by design we were to take a position on the Arab-Israeli war such as we took on the war in Vietnam, the reaction would be fantastic against us."<sup>115</sup> Forman's

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111. Carson, *supra* note 79, at 584 (quoting *The Mid-East and the Liberal Reaction*, SNCC NEWSLETTER (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), Sept.-Oct. 1967, at 5).

112. See *infra* notes 164-197 and accompanying text.

113. *Third World Roundup, The Palestine Problem: Test Your Knowledge*, SNCC NEWSLETTER (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), June-July 1967, at 4-5 [hereinafter SNCC NEWSLETTER].

114. IN STRUGGLE, *supra* note 12, at 267.

115. *Id.*

advice was not heeded, and the newsletter, published before his return, listed thirty-two "documented facts" on "the Palestine Problem."<sup>116</sup> The article stated that during the war "Zionists conquered the Arab homes and land through terror, force, and massacres."<sup>117</sup> Accompanying the article were drawings and photographs, one of which depicted Israelis holding Arabs at gunpoint, with a caption that read: "Zionists lined up Arab victims and shot them in the back in cold blood. This is the Gaza Strip, Palestine, not Dachau, Germany."<sup>118</sup>

The black nationalists' second intervention in the Arab-Israeli War occurred in August of 1967, at the National Conference on New Politics. The Conference brought together two thousand people from many diverse groups in hopes of finding a new direction for progressive politics.<sup>119</sup> Among the black delegates' demands were "a condemnation of Israel as an aggressive, imperialist power."<sup>120</sup> Forman, who had abandoned caution after SNCC had taken its pro-Arab position, signaled the new international perspective. He spoke to the Black Caucus about his frustration with the new dogma of coalition politics at all costs, even to the extent of denying the organic connection between the civil rights movement and the dissent about the war in Vietnam.<sup>121</sup> Forman argued that "there can be no new concept of politics, no new coalitions, unless those of us who are the most dispossessed assume leadership and give direction to that new form of politics."<sup>122</sup> In order to both show solidarity with "the most dispossessed" and to resist the pressure to dissociate the domestic and the international, the convention adopted an article that condemned "the imperialistic Zionist war" between Israel and the Arab states, noting, "this condemnation does not imply anti-Semitism."<sup>123</sup>

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116. *Id.*

117. SNCC NEWSLETTER, *supra* note 113, at 4.

118. *Id.*

119. FRIEDMAN, *supra* note 61, at 232-33.

120. FORMAN, *supra* note 13, at 498.

121. *Id.* at 500.

122. *Id.* at 502.

123. Warren Weaver, Jr., *Parley on New Politics Yields to Militant Negroes' Demands*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 3, 1967, at A1. Later, the black Caucus voided the Israel resolution, but, according to Friedman, "the damage had been done." See FRIEDMAN, *supra* note 61, at 233.

*B. Reaction: Jews Respond to the Arab-Israeli War and the Black Nationalist Pro-Palestinian Position*

The Arab-Israeli War also had deep implications for the identity of Jews in America.<sup>124</sup> First, Jewish conservatives, liberals, and radicals responded collectively to their common concern for Israel and happiness with its victory. Second, Jews responded in several ways to the black nationalists' pro-Arab stand. The SNCC newsletter and the National Conference on New Politics introduced another tension to an already tense coalition between emerging black nationalists and the liberal and radical Jews who supported them.

For many American Jews, the Arab-Israeli War greatly elevated Jewishness and the identification with Israel as an aspect of Jewishness. "Neither the Holocaust, nor the founding of Israel, nor the Exodus phenomenon, separately or in combination, exerted an impact on American Jews comparable . . . . It 'turned millions of American Jews into Zionists.'"<sup>125</sup> Of course, Israel and Zionism were important to Jews before 1967. Many Zionists saw Israel as necessary to protect themselves from another Holocaust.<sup>126</sup> Michael Lerner has noted that in addition to the pragmatic function of Israel as protection, asserting a claim to Israel was also a "healthy self-affirmation" for Jews and an "assertion of self-worth in the face of a world that both oppressed and demeaned us."<sup>127</sup>

Even with Israel's undercurrents of meaning before 1967, however, many American Jews were unprepared for the impact of the Arab-Israeli War. In August of 1967, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg wrote of the abrupt, dramatic change that the war brought. He wrote that many Jews did not expect that "grave danger to Israel could dominate their thought and emotions to the exclusion of everything else; many were surprised by the depth of their anger at those of their friends who carried on as usual, untouched by fear for Israeli survival and the instinctive involvement they

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124. I make no attempt here to comment on the long and complicated relationship between Jews and Israel generally. Rather, I discuss the Jewish interest in Israel after the Arab-Israeli War only in its implications for the two narratives that this paper traces: the integrationist/black nationalist split and the black-Jewish family drama.

125. PAUL BREINES, *TOUGH JEWS: POLITICAL FANTASIES AND THE MORAL DILEMMA OF AMERICAN JEWRY* 58-59 (1990). Breines also notes that Israel eclipsed civil rights as a top issue for Jews. *Id.*

126. MICHAEL LERNER, *THE SOCIALISM OF FOOLS: ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE LEFT* 19 (1992).

127. LERNER & WEST, *supra* note 56, at 116.

themselves felt.”<sup>128</sup> Michael Lerner, while recognizing some legitimate critiques of Israeli policies toward Palestinians on the West Bank, viewed the Arab-Israeli War in the simple terms of a military victory: “Israel did not occupy the territories out of some inner drive for expansion or to satisfy religious or Zionist aspirations, but rather in response to a real military threat.”<sup>129</sup>

American Jews additionally had a domestic response to the black nationalists’ pro-Arab position and their own ties to the civil rights movement. The timing of the war was such that criticism of Israel became a highly charged issue at the same time that black nationalists had decided to transgress the limits imposed by integrationists and the black-Jewish coalition.<sup>130</sup> Like the integrationists<sup>131</sup> and the mainstream, Jews responded to the international fury of black nationalists by shepherding it back into domestic borders. For Jews, this took the form of either classifying the pro-Arab position as automatically anti-Semitic, in the case of Jewish conservatives, or by leaving an ailing coalition, in the case of Jewish progressives and some Jewish radicals.<sup>132</sup> For most Jews, however, there was little room for black nationalists to both criticize Israeli policies and escape the charge of anti-Semitism.<sup>133</sup>

#### 1. Jewish Responses to the Black Nationalists’ Pro-Palestinian Position Spanned the Political Spectrum

Many Jewish conservatives who were already hostile to the civil rights movement construed the black nationalist pro-Arab position, and particularly the SNCC newsletter, as evidence of rampant anti-Semitism in the black community.<sup>134</sup> Will Maslow, executive director of American Jewish Committee (AJC), called the newsletter “shocking and vicious anti-Semitism”<sup>135</sup> and said, “[t]here is no room for racists in the fight against racism.”<sup>136</sup> The Anti-Defamation League also described SNCC as racist, anti-

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128. KAUFMAN, *supra* note 15, at 199-200 (quoting Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg).

129. LERNER, *supra* note 126, at 89-90.

130. MCALISTER, *supra* note 68, at 114.

131. See *infra* notes 190-192 and accompanying text.

132. Some Jewish radicals did remain within the black nationalist movement and may have been part of the “self-flagellation” dynamic Peller discusses. Peller, *supra* note 5, at 841; Interview with Gary Peller, Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center, in Washington, D.C. (Oct. 9, 2002).

133. Carson, *supra* note 79, at 584.

134. *Id.*

135. *Id.*

136. Kathleen Teltsch, *SNCC Criticized for Israel Stand*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 16, 1967, at A28.

Jewish, and anti-Zionist.<sup>137</sup> The black nationalists' international and theoretical critique of Israel was quickly folded in to the black-Jewish family drama. Jewish conservatives were the earliest and the most outspoken critics of SNCC, and their criticisms had the simultaneous effect of setting the boundaries of an acceptable critique of Israel and requiring disassociative public statements from progressive Jews and African Americans within the civil rights movement.

Liberal and radical Jews found themselves in the crossfire between black nationalists, conservative Jews, and their own newfound identification with Israel. Some progressive Jews felt pressure to respond to the Jewish neoconservative charges of anti-Semitism. Folksinger Theodore Bikel, who had participated in numerous benefit concerts, and Harry Golden, editor of the *Carolina Israelite*, quickly followed the lead of the AJC denunciations, announcing their resignation from SNCC, even though they did not belong to the organization.<sup>138</sup> The Jewish Labor Committee said that SNCC has "now irrevocably joined the anti-Semitic American Nazi party and the Ku Klux Klan as an apostle of racism in the United States."<sup>139</sup> Rabbi Harold Saperstein "privately informed SNCC leaders that he could not continue to support a group that 'so readily allowed itself to become a mouthpiece for malicious Arab propaganda.'"<sup>140</sup>

Many progressive Jews also found that what they deemed anti-Semitic in the civil rights movement opened their eyes to a more prolific anti-Semitism in the larger black community.<sup>141</sup> In order to reconcile what they saw as widespread anti-Semitism and their sympathy with the plight of African Americans, progressive Jews mitigated the critique of Israel by explaining it as a symptom of a frustrated and ailing black nationalist movement. According to this view, the statements against Israel were not a significant international critique, but rather the product of American racial tensions, African Americans' frustration at the slow pace of reform, and anti-Semitism's tendency to arise in such turmoil.<sup>142</sup> The pro-Arab stand, then, was just the venting of frustration in terms of hatred of any person who was not black.

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137. WEISBORD & STEIN, *supra* note 99, at 104.

138. Carson, *supra* note 80, at 584.

139. Teltsch, *supra* note 136, at A28.

140. Carson, *supra* note 80, at 584.

141. *Id.* at 585.

142. Gary Rubin, *African Americans and Israel*, in STRUGGLES IN THE PROMISED LAND 357, 361 (Jack Salzman & Cornel West eds., 1997).



In this way, Peller's assessment of the liberal and progressive whites' reaction to black nationalism could probably also encompass progressive Jews' reaction to the black nationalists' Pro-Arab position.<sup>143</sup> In describing white reaction to black nationalism, Peller stated that "[t]he rageful rhetoric of hate against whites adopted by many nationalist groups and leaders seemed to confirm to whites the idea that black nationalism and white supremacy were identical manifestations of irrational and indiscriminate hate."<sup>144</sup> Because progressive Jews had such a high involvement in the movement, they were probably even more inclined than the liberal and progressive whites that Peller described to "either withdr[a]w from racial politics altogether or m[ake] alliances with 'moderate' and mostly middle-class blacks around the commitment to integrationism, understood as the transcendence of race consciousness."<sup>145</sup>

Jewish radicals, who were involved at a very personal level in the civil rights movement, felt an added sense of betrayal at the black nationalists' pro-Arab position. Many of them were still stinging from the black power demands of organizations like SNCC,<sup>146</sup> and the subsequent anti-Israel stand confirmed to them that black nationalists wanted no coalition with Jews. SNCC's position on Israel has been described as "a wrenching break with Black-Jewish radicalism,"<sup>147</sup> and an omen that black nationalists had actually regressed from the radical black-Jewish tradition.<sup>148</sup> The characterization of the black nationalists' position as regressive echoed the simultaneous debate between integrationist universalism and black nationalist race consciousness. By taking an anti-Israel stand, black nationalists had relapsed into "Middle East consciousness" instead of "transcending" the debate by making a universal plea for peace.

Martin Peretz's experience with the Conference for a New Politics exemplified the new rift between black nationalists and Jewish radicals in 1967 and the ultimate conclusion that the black nationalists were ailing and regressing. Peretz had put hundreds of thousands of dollars into the civil rights and anti-war movements and bankrolled much of the Conference for a New

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143. See *supra* notes 19-32 and accompanying text.

144. Peller, *supra* note 5, at 837-38.

145. *Id.*

146. See *supra* note 61 and accompanying text.

147. FRIEDMAN, *supra* note 61, at 230.

148. *Id.*

Politics.<sup>149</sup> Peretz identified with leftist politics but had also experienced a sense of Jewish renewal after the Arab-Israeli War.<sup>150</sup> When Forman, leader of the Black Caucus at the Conference, began to speak about the limitations of the "liberal-labor" leadership circle and the Conference adopted the condemnation of Israel, Peretz walked out, along with Martin Luther King, Jr., Andrew Young, and Julian Bond.<sup>151</sup> One historian of the black-Jewish family drama said, "[t]he New Politics Convention left Peretz profoundly disillusioned with radical politics . . . [t]he descent into anti-Semitism unnerved him."<sup>152</sup> Peretz viewed the demands for black power and the resolution against Israel as connected and as evidence that "[t]hese people were not his comrades."<sup>153</sup> He, too, sought future allies with what he saw as a less regressive perspective on social justice.<sup>154</sup>

While Jewish withdrawal from SNCC had begun before the newsletter, it accelerated after the summer of 1967. American Jews sharply curtailed their financial contributions to SNCC.<sup>155</sup> While it is uncertain exactly how much SNCC depended on Jews for financial assistance, their contributions appear to have been substantial.<sup>156</sup> SNCC could not weather the multiple tensions that arose from splitting with integrationists and from losing the support of the Jewish community.<sup>157</sup>

## 2. SNCC's Response to Charges of Anti-Semitism Go Unheard

Amidst the Jewish outcry and divestment in SNCC, SNCC's response to the charges of anti-Semitism went largely unheard. SNCC, however, continued to insist that one could, and should, be able to critique Israel without being anti-Semitic. Ralph Featherstone said at a press conference after the newsletter's publication, "[o]ur position was clearly anti-Zionist, not anti-Semitic . . . . It was a bit disconcerting to us, the reaction from the Jewish community, in that anything that is not pro-Jewish is

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149. *Id.* at 232.

150. *Id.*

151. *Id.* at 233.

152. KAUFMAN, *supra* note 15, at 211.

153. *Id.* at 212.

154. *See id.* (arguing that radicals, revolutionaries, and millenarians turned Peretz away from the anti-war movement and closer to his Jewish roots).

155. WEISBORD & STEIN, *supra* note 99, at 104.

156. Carson, *supra* note 80, at 576.

157. FRIEDMAN, *supra* note 61, at 231.

interpreted as anti-Jewish.”<sup>158</sup> H. Rap Brown made the same point: “We are not anti-Jewish and we are not anti-Semitic . . . . We just don’t think Zionist leaders in Israel have a right to that land.”<sup>159</sup>

James Forman also did not think the newsletter was anti-Semitic, and attributed the collapse of the difference between critiquing Israel and anti-Semitism to the same forces stifling the black nationalist project. “[N]one of [SNCC’s efforts to clarify its position] really mattered to some. SNCC had come out in support of the Arabs, as far as the Zionists were concerned, and that was enough. No formulation of our position would have satisfied the Zionists and many Jews.”<sup>160</sup> Forman made a direct link between the integrationist critique of race consciousness and the Jewish critique of SNCC’s Middle East consciousness and pro-Arab position:

Leading Jewish organizations had joined others in the liberal-labor syndrome to attack us as too radical back in the days when the subject was not the Middle East but Mississippi. We were too radical then, for not supporting domestic policies of the administration, as we were too radical now—for opposing American foreign policy, for seeing Israel as an imperialist power in the service of, and serving, that policy.<sup>161</sup>

Thus, SNCC’s hope of critiquing Israel was folded into a particular domestic story of black-Jewish relations in America and anti-Semitism in the black community. While progressive Jews did counterbalance the charge of anti-Semitism with empathy for the frustration that black nationalists were feeling at the slow pace of reform, they nevertheless saw the pro-Arab statement as a regressive withdrawal from a radical coalition.

*C. Mediation: Integrationists Find Common Ground with Jews and Dismiss Black Nationalists’ Critiques*

Like many Jewish-Americans, integrationists had a dual response to the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, but unlike Jewish-Americans, their responses were one step removed from commentary on the war itself. Integrationists had little need to stake out an independent position on Israel: the black nationalists and Jews had set most of the boundaries of the debate. Instead,

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158. Douglas Robinson, *New Carmichael Trip*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 19, 1967, at 8.

159. *Id.*

160. FORMAN, *supra* note 13, at 496.

161. *Id.*

the integrationists' position in American politics pressured them to defuse the black nationalists and shore up the coalition with Jews. Thus, integrationists crafted their position on Israel wholly from inside the black-Jewish family drama and from integrationists' and progressive Jews' mutual desire to neutralize the black nationalists. Integrationist posture on Israel was a *de facto* gesture of good faith, a compromise with Jewish progressives, and resulted in relegating the black nationalist pro-Palestinian position to a chapter in the family drama. The domestication process stripped down the black nationalists' critique of subordination and the budding Middle East consciousness, to a simple charge of anti-Semitism that coincided nicely with emerging concepts of "reverse racism."

The compromise between integrationists and progressive Jews seemed natural for cultural, pragmatic, and ideological reasons. Both groups shared the Judeo-Christian tradition, and hence a historical embrace of the Exodus narrative for their struggles.<sup>162</sup> Each group also believed that a fractured coalition could spell the end of the civil rights movement.<sup>163</sup> The cultural and pragmatic factors created an opportunity to fuse together a more fundamental ideological convergence between Jews and integrationists that applied to both racial and Middle East politics.

### 1. Cultural and Pragmatic Reasons for Common Ground

The Exodus narrative occupied a symbolic position in the civil rights chapter of the black-Jewish family drama, and it helped produce an early agreement on Israel. James Baldwin wrote in 1948 (the year Israel became a state), "[a]t this point, the Negro identifies himself almost wholly with the Jew. The more devout Negro considers that he is a Jew, in bondage to a hard taskmaster and waiting for a Moses to lead him out of Egypt."<sup>164</sup> The lack of another narrative of liberation and the similarities that both groups found in one another's struggle against slavery resulted in little tension on—and often open support for—Israel.<sup>165</sup>

The family ruptures of 1967 thrust Israel out of its "de facto agreement" status and onto center stage. For integrationists and

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162. See *infra* notes 164-165 and accompanying text.

163. See *infra* notes 166-184 and accompanying text.

164. James Baldwin, *The Harlem Ghetto*, V COMMENTARY 165, 169 (1948).

165. MCALISTER, *supra* note 68, at 114 (arguing that prior to 1967 blacks and Jews maintained a joint alliance with Israel). But see *id.* (noting that while the American black community often allied with Jews, Islam also influenced the black community, meaning that perceived black support for Israel or anti-Semitism should not be viewed solely as a representation of domestic black-Jewish relations).

black nationalists, clashing positions on the Arab-Israeli War could be seen as a clash of liberation texts (in addition to a clash of ideologies) as black nationalists explored Islam. This clash of texts took place within yet another text, the black-Jewish family drama, and the fallout could not be confined to integrationists and nationalists. Integrationist compromises with progressive Jews re-produced the alliance on the Exodus narrative, this time not “de facto” as in 1948, but with an express and conscious support for Israel.

Integrationists also had strong pragmatic reasons for supporting Israel that were often in tension with “gut” reactions to the Arab-Israeli War. The pragmatic concerns arose from the symbiosis that blacks and Jews had developed in the struggle for civil rights. Blacks depended on Jewish support politically and financially, and Jews often sought the moral support that blacks offered in foreign policy areas.<sup>166</sup> Integrationists such as CORE activists and Martin Luther King, Jr., watched SNCC collapse, in part because of the withdrawal of Jewish financial and political support.<sup>167</sup> CORE and King are two examples of integrationists who felt tortured over the decision to prioritize pragmatic concerns over their objections to Israel’s policies.

Because of its integrated character, CORE leaders believed taking a position against Israel would destroy the organization. CORE had much stronger ties to the Jewish progressives and radicals than SNCC.<sup>168</sup> The murdered Jewish civil rights workers, Alan Goodman and Mickey Schwerner, were CORE activists.<sup>169</sup> James Forman, in Africa when the war broke out, recounted his June meeting with Ambassador Maroff of Guinea, which CORE leaders Floyd McKissick and Lincoln Lynch joined.<sup>170</sup> Forman wrote that the CORE leaders wanted African nations to understand their reasons for not taking a position on the Arab-Israeli War, which Forman also “fully underst[ood].”<sup>171</sup> Already deeply embroiled in the integrationist-black nationalist split by

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166. Jake C. Miller, *Black Viewpoints on the Mid-East Conflict*, 10 J. PALESTINE STUD. 37, 38 (1981); see also Carl Gershman, *Blacks and Jews*, MIDSTREAM, Feb. 1976, at 14-15 (stating that blacks depend on Jews for support and as a “key source of financial backing for civil rights organizations,” and that Jews need blacks because Israel cannot “go it alone” and because the alliance is part of the “web of relationships that enables Jews to exercise influence in American society”).

167. FRIEDMAN, *supra* note 61, at 231.

168. See *id.* at 178 (noting that numerous Jewish Progressives were affiliated with CORE).

169. *Id.*

170. FORMAN, *supra* note 13, at 495.

171. *Id.*

supporting black power and taking an anti-Vietnam war stand, McKissick and Lynch thought an anti-Israel position would destroy CORE.<sup>172</sup> "They obviously support the position of the Arabs in their fight against imperialism. But, they stated, they felt their organization could not survive in the country if they took a public, anti-Israel position . . . . They have struggled and this I know for a fact."<sup>173</sup>

In the last year of his life, Martin Luther King, Jr. also struggled between his public goals to maintain coalitions with Jews at home and his private feelings of sympathy for the Palestinian people.<sup>174</sup> King already faced strong pressures to refrain from any commentary on international politics, and the *New York Times* criticized him for speaking out against the Vietnam War.<sup>175</sup> Nonetheless, the pressure to take a position on the Arab-Israeli War was unique. Like CORE, King had strong ties with Jewish leaders, and the black nationalists began to abandon him for being too accommodationist. King turned more to his Jewish advisors, Stanley Levison and Harry Wachtel, for advice.<sup>176</sup>

King adopted a position in support of Israel when he signed an advertisement in the *New York Times* entitled, "The Moral Responsibility in the Middle East."<sup>177</sup> The ad called for "our fellow Americans of all persuasions and groupings and on the administration to support the independence, integrity and freedom of Israel."<sup>178</sup> After the ad ran, King told some of his Jewish advisors that he thought it was too one-sided in support of Israel, but he did admit that it would strengthen relations with the Jewish community.<sup>179</sup> King's advisers, including the Jewish ones, convinced him to take the position that while "the territorial integrity of Israel and its right to a homeland were incontestable," other questions should be answered through peaceful negotiation.<sup>180</sup> "King did not have to worry too much about losing

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172. *Id.*

173. *Id.*

174. FRIEDMAN, *supra* note 61, at 250 (highlighting King's efforts to maintain coalitions with American Jews while noting his qualms about Israel's violent actions).

175. *Id.* at 247.

176. *Id.* at 235.

177. Americans for Democracy in the Middle East, *The Moral Responsibility in the Middle East*, N.Y. TIMES, June 4, 1967, § 4, at 5 [hereinafter *The Moral Responsibility in the Middle East*].

178. *Id.*

179. FRIEDMAN, *supra* note 61, at 250.

180. *Id.* at 251.

the support of the Jewish community, Wachtel told him, so long as he strode very lightly and stressed an end to violence."<sup>181</sup> Thus, King was well aware, through intuition and his Jewish advisors, that a strong position against Israel would result in the loss of Jewish support.<sup>182</sup>

King's later statements on Israel demonstrate the conflict between his pragmatic goals and his private sentiments. His statements are imbued with an almost contradictory desire to say what was necessary to maintain Jewish support and express his private moral qualms with the Arab-Israeli War. After the resolution criticizing Israel was adopted by the Conference on New Politics, Jewish leaders called on King to distance himself from the resolution. King replied that Southern Christian Leadership Coalition (SCLC) staff members

were the most vigorous and articulate opponents of the simplistic resolution on the Middle East question. Israel's right to exist as a state is incontestable. At the same time the great powers have the obligation to recognize that the Arab world is in a state of imposed poverty and backwardness that must threaten peace and harmony.<sup>183</sup>

Ultimately, King's position was a *de facto* support of Israel that resulted from his priority of keeping black-Jewish coalitions together and pursuing local agendas. "Despite King's doubts about Israel's position in the Middle East conflict, its relations with its neighbors, and his own desire to reach out to Third World supporters in the United States, he continued to support Jews and Israel strongly."<sup>184</sup>

## 2. Shared Integrationist Ideology Provides the Heart of the Bargain

The Exodus narrative and the pragmatic concerns, however, only provided the opportunity to forge a deeper harmony of ideology between integrationists and Jewish progressives. This section will revisit the cornerstones of integrationist ideology and lay side by side the comments from integrationists and Jewish progressives. I will then suggest that the joint ideology forged by these two groups is still open to the black nationalist critique.

The Jewish progressives who joined integrationists shared a

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181. *Id.*

182. See *id.* (relating King's dilemma of maintaining support of the Jewish and black communities while taking a stand on Israel).

183. *Anti-Semitism Held Immoral by Dr. King*, N.Y. TIMES, Oct. 11, 1967, at 59.

184. FRIEDMAN, *supra* note 61, at 252.

universalist perspective and a conception of racism as an irrational deviation from the truth that all humans are equal.<sup>185</sup> The command to "love your neighbor" because of that person's inner humanity is common to both integrationists and the Jewish progressives.<sup>186</sup> Integrationists saw recognition of race as preventing the ultimate recognition of shared humanity. "Since racism means a deviation from a universal norm of objectivity, it can be practiced by anyone, and anyone can be its victim, regardless of their particular historical circumstances or power relations."<sup>187</sup> Similarly, the integrationist-Jewish realignment viewed a Middle East consciousness as a hindrance to a peace process that recognized the suffering and pain of both sides and worked for an end to the violence above all else.<sup>188</sup>

Efforts to disrupt the universal humanity of all with a race or Middle East consciousness gave rise to the charge of reverse racism.<sup>189</sup> Roy Wilkins' positions on race consciousness and on critiques of Israel illustrate the transferability of universalism from civil rights to Middle East debates. On race consciousness Wilkins said, "no matter how endlessly they try to explain it, the term 'Black Power' means anti-white power.' He characterized black power as 'a reverse Mississippi, a reverse Hitler, a reverse Ku Klux Klan.'<sup>190</sup> On the SNCC Newsletter, Wilkins said: "It is a sad development that young Negroes, seeking to overcome the injustices suffered by their race, should employ against the Jews the same hateful distortions and lies that have been used for 350 years against their own kind."<sup>191</sup> Michael Lerner's view appears in harmony with Wilkins: "The whole notion of race is itself racist. It derives from and reinforces notions that certain groups of people defined in terms of inherent physical characteristics, deserve to be

185. See *supra* notes 25-33 and accompanying text.

186. Compare MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., WHY WE CAN'T WAIT 63-64 (1964) with LERNER & WEST, *supra* note 56, at 126.

187. Peller, *supra* note 5, at 773.

188. See *infra* notes 194-196 and accompanying text.

189. See, e.g., *Golden Criticizes S.N.C.C. and Quits: Finds its Anti-Semitism is Like Klan and Nazis*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 22, 1967, at 24.

190. Peller, *supra* note 5, at 789.

191. Thomas A. Johnson, *McKissick Derides Nonviolent Ghetto Protests*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 18, 1967, at 18. Wilkins' refusal to view racism as "colonialism" rather than "suffering" results in a conclusion directly opposite of Eldridge Cleaver. See Pace, *supra* note 98, at 13. Under a "suffering" framework, blacks and Jews share common ground and together they face the perpetrators of the suffering. Many other integrationists, including Whitney Young, A. Philip Randolph, and Bayard Rustin, also condemned the SNCC newsletter. See Carson, *supra* note 80, at 583-84.



treated differently from others.”<sup>192</sup>

The shared universalist perspective limited the new coalition to reform remedies, rather than redistribution. The integrationist desire to remove the formal barriers to integration and the belief that the absence of these barriers will result in the presence of harmony is also transferable to the Middle East context. Integrationists believed that “[o]nce we remove prejudice, reason will take its place; once we remove discrimination, neutrality will take its place; and once we remove segregation, integration will take its place.”<sup>193</sup>

Similarly, the integrationist-Jewish alliance shares the idea that once we remove war in the Middle East, peace will take its place. Formal equality for all sides is all that is required. The more radical Jews, such as Michael Lerner, focus on the Occupation as the aberration from equality, and thus an end to the Occupation (and possibly a formal Palestinian state to counterbalance a formal Israeli state) would mean the presence of peace.<sup>194</sup> Redistribution beyond that will transgress an assumption of neutral and equal respect for all humans. Lerner states:

In Israel [Jewish nationalism] has to translate into ending the Occupation and rectifying the injustices that have been done to Palestinians. But as a person who deeply loves my own people, I insist that the process of rectification and repair be done in a way that does not endanger my fellow Jews, does not demean the Jewish people, and does not deny our right to seek our own well-being as a people.<sup>195</sup>

King made a similar move, by first establishing a “universal” assumption that “Israel’s right to exist as a state is incontestable” and then lamenting the violence, enmity, and suffering of the two peoples.<sup>196</sup> Both Lerner and King articulate a vision of reform that identifies the deviations from a universalist system and seeks resolutions to address those deviations.

In sum, in addition to the cultural and pragmatic factors, the compromise was possible in part because of similar conceptions of universalism, racism, and reform. The opportunity arose in 1967

192. LERNER, *supra* note 126, at 2.

193. Peller, *supra* note 5, at 773.

194. LERNER & WEST, *supra* note 56, at 132-33; see also Lama Abu-Odeh, *The Case for Binationalism*, 46 BOSTON REV. 1 (2001-2002) (arguing for equality in the form of a Jewish and Palestinian binationalist state), available at <http://bostonreview.mit.edu/BR26.6/abu-odeh.html> (last visited Nov. 15, 2004).

195. LERNER & WEST, *supra* note 56, at 134.

196. *Anti-Semitism Held Immoral by Dr. King*, *supra* note 183, at 59.

when the Arab-Israeli War brought together two narratives of the civil rights movement: the black nationalist-integrationist split and the black-Jewish family drama. To accommodate the Jews who renounced black nationalism, integrationism refashioned its basic positions to include support for Israel, either explicitly, as in the advertisement signed by Martin Luther King, Jr.,<sup>197</sup> or implicitly, in the advocacy of peace without questioning the power dynamics of the war. The victory of this viewpoint had the effect of reducing the black nationalist position to domestic anti-Semitism and establishing integrationist ideology as the mainstream theory of race in the United States to this day.

### III. Coming to Terms: Arabs, Muslims, and the Prospects for a New Civil Rights Coalition

This Essay proposes that Arabs and Muslims today are asked to make the same concession for a civil rights coalition that blacks made to Jewish progressives in 1967: silence on or support for Israel. The cultural bargain between progressive Jews and integrationists continues to structure the way we talk about race in the United States, thus impacting the Arab and Muslim experience in America. A modern reconsideration of the black nationalist critique of the Arab-Israeli War in 1967 is required in order to forge a new civil rights coalition between blacks, Jews, and Arabs and create opportunities to advocate for a just peace in the Middle East.

In order to understand how compromise operates on Arabs and Muslims today, it is useful to refract the "double consciousness" experienced by many American minorities into a "triple consciousness." "Double consciousness," critical race theorists have argued, is created by racial hierarchy in American institutions such as law, education, and popular culture.<sup>198</sup> The oppressed live in a society imbued with judgments about what is valuable, ethical, intelligent, or beautiful and learn that they are not these things, even as they internalize the desire to become them.<sup>199</sup> The result is a split consciousness, the gift and burden of living in a world "which yields [an African American] no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world."<sup>200</sup> Patricia Williams writes that this double

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197. *The Moral Responsibility in the Middle East*, *supra* note 177, at 5.

198. See generally CROSSROADS, DIRECTIONS, AND A NEW CRITICAL RACE THEORY (Francisco Valdes et al. eds., 2002) (explaining the critical race theory movement).

199. W.E.B. DUBOIS, *THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK* 44-46 (1995).

200. *Id.* at 45.

consciousness, while a helpful tactic for surviving confrontation with the oppressor, also results in complete psychic isolation.<sup>201</sup> "In such an environment, relinquishing the power of individual ethical judgment to a collective ideal risks psychic violence, an obliteration of the self through domination by an all powerful other."<sup>202</sup>

Arabs and Muslims, like many other minorities, also experience the double consciousness. We see ourselves as outsiders to the mainstream American nation; we are suspected as terrorists or insurgents. On this level, coalitions between Arab and Muslim communities and civil rights advocates that might otherwise feel natural are impeded by the 1967 cultural bargain, which has limited who an Arab is and when her oppression began. For many civil rights advocates, the story of state discrimination against Arabs and Muslims began on September 11, 2001. It is true that the events of that day, and the Patriot Act that followed, have burdened the civil rights of Arabs and Muslims.<sup>203</sup> Some civil rights advocates have been roused to action because these violations stir racial memories of Japanese American internment during World War II<sup>204</sup> or of the more recent battle against racial profiling.<sup>205</sup> Often, these advocates acknowledge the threat of terrorism but seek a less repressive balance between civil rights and national security interests.<sup>206</sup>

But today's leading advocates of Arab and Muslim civil rights recognize only a shadow of the range of exclusions that these groups experience. While civil rights advocates have successfully refuted the argument that Arabs and Muslims pose a threat to national security, they have not addressed these groups' deeper isolation from dominant American institutions of power and culture. Specifically, many Arabs and Muslims are terrified to discuss publicly their deep connection to and support for Palestinians. At this level of double consciousness, Arab-Americans just feel "foreign." We have a different experience from other groups' patterns of integration and assimilation because we have a dual experience of both living in the United States and living through the exertion of American political and economic

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201. PATRICIA WILLIAMS, *THE ALCHEMY OF RACE AND RIGHTS* 63 (1991).

202. *Id.*

203. See sources cited *supra* note 3.

204. Cole, *supra* note 3, at 955.

205. Volpp, *supra* note 3, at 1576-77.

206. See generally Cole, *supra* note 3.

power in the Arab world.<sup>207</sup> This aspect of Arab and Muslim identity, like the corresponding aspect of Jewish identity, has been further galvanized by the Second Intifada in the Middle East,<sup>208</sup> even while the September 11 crackdown has made being Arab or Muslim more dangerous. Arabs and Muslims, then, have begun feeling the strong resurgence of an identity at the precise moment that dominant society has made being Arab or Muslim dangerous and "passing" desirable. The dualism has been pushed to a point of crisis.

The double consciousness becomes tripled when the racial bargain constructs Arabs and Muslims as outsiders to critical race theory. Not only do Arabs and Muslims watch ourselves through "mainstream" eyes; we also watch ourselves through the "outsider eyes." While critical race theory analyses offer many groups a basic set of tools to begin talking about their own subordination, they do not prioritize an analysis of the relationships of minority groups to one another, to our own family dramas. Critical race theory analyzes blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, Jews, and other ethnic minorities on their own separate trajectories. Sometimes these trajectories intersect, but no group is defined primarily by those intersections.

The black-Jewish family drama constructs Arabs and Muslims as outsiders to critical race theory because our existence lies primarily within the power dynamics of this family. Through these eyes, we view ourselves as highly irrelevant or highly contentious. Arabs and Muslims feel pressure to exist in a way that does not interfere with the deep recognition of the similarities between the historical oppression of Jews and African Americans. Many critical race theorists would not raise an eyebrow when Professor Cornel West and Michael Lerner state: "We need to remind ourselves that both [black and Jewish] communities have histories of oppression, which may be different in form but in which there are historical overlaps."<sup>209</sup> For Arabs and Muslims conscious of the price of coalition today, this statement signals that blacks and Jews continue to regard the 1967 chapter as the current family norms and as the current unwritten ground rules for today's civil rights advocates and coalitions. Those ground

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207. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Inventing and Re-inventing the Arab American Identity*, in A COMMUNITY OF MANY WORLDS: ARAB AMERICANS IN NEW YORK CITY 109, 114-15 (Kathleen Benson & Philip M. Kayal eds., 2002).

208. See, e.g., James Bennet, *Year of Intifada Sees Hardening on Each Side*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 28, 2001, at A3; Stephen Labaton, *Thousands March in Washington in Support of Palestinians*, N.Y. TIMES, Apr. 21, 2002, at A13.

209. LERNER & WEST, *supra* note 56, at 46.

rules usually include, for Arabs and Muslims, an amnesia about any Middle East politics that reframe the terms of "suffering" and "oppression" from a Palestinian perspective.

In sum, the double consciousness for Arabs and Muslims becomes a triple consciousness that progressive racial discussion must not include dissent from Israeli policies. First, we view ourselves, as many racial minorities do, as outsiders to "mainstream" white America. We see our own bodies as foreign to the "typical American." Second, we view ourselves as outsiders to critical race theory because few people in critical race theory apply racial distributive analyses to the issues that often interpolate Arab identity—primarily, the plight of Palestinians.<sup>210</sup> And third, of course, is the own "self," the object of the gaze of the other two consciousnesses. While not the sole source of the triple consciousness, the 1967 chapter played a key role at each level. In relation to mainstream America, critical race theory, and ourselves, the compulsion to support or stay silent about Israeli policies has truncated the history, visibility, and racial politics that Arabs and Muslims express only in our inner circles.

Rewriting the terms of the coalition requires reconsideration of the black nationalists' involvement in, and position on, the Middle East. The terms must also assert, like the black nationalists did, that the difference between anti-Semitism and a critique of Israel is larger than it appears. This difference provides new opportunities to advocate a just peace in the Middle East and to build coalitions in America between blacks, Jews, and Arabs.

The ideological agreement on universalism, racial deviance, and reform in the integrationist-Jewish compromise is still open to the black nationalist critique requiring a Middle East consciousness that parallels their notion of race consciousness. In embracing universalism, participants close their eyes to the black nationalists' subordination analyses that linked black and Palestinian struggles.<sup>211</sup> The menu of reforms presented allows only a partial frame of reference, created by oppressors and marginalizing a "reality" shared by subordinated peoples around the world.<sup>212</sup> "We must say to the white world that there are things in the world that are not dreamt of in your history and your

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210. One important and admirable exception is Adrien Katherine Wing. See, e.g., Adrien Katherine Wing, *Dueling Fates*, 24 MICH. J. INT'L L. 347, 425 (2002).

211. See *supra* notes 88-93 and accompanying text.

212. LERONE BENNETT, *THE CHALLENGE OF BLACKNESS* 35-36 (1972).

sociology and your philosophy.”<sup>213</sup> The black nationalists’ historicized, particularist view of the conflict in the Middle East analyzes the clash of Jewish and Arab nationalisms and distributional outcomes that are at the heart of the conflict.

The black nationalists’ rejection of universalism opens up an opportunity to analyze the Middle East in a subordination context and provides new avenues for resolution, but does not of necessity require a pro-Palestinian position in all circumstances. As I noted above, the analysis is not based on blind loyalty to the people whose skin is determined to be “darker.”<sup>214</sup> Rather, it is an outcome-based, distributional analysis. The narrow focus on ending the Occupation or the advocacy of “peace” does not address what black nationalists came to see as the hierarchy of the Israeli-Jewish community over the Palestinian community. “Peace,” after first assuming the legitimacy of power structures, would constitute for Palestinians the same type of “painless genocide” that black nationalists saw in the call to integrate blacks into the “neutral” American public education system.<sup>215</sup>

Rather, black nationalists advocated a “just peace” that questioned Israelis’ power advantage over the Palestinians.<sup>216</sup> On a domestic level, black nationalists criticized disproportionate U.S. military aid to Israel that increased that advantage. A *New York Times* advertisement sponsored by several black nationalist groups demanded: “[A]ll military aid or assistance of any kind to Israel must stop. Imperialism and Zionism must and will get out of the Middle East. We call for Afro-American solidarity with the Palestinian People’s struggle for national liberation and to regain all of their stolen land.”<sup>217</sup> A Middle East consciousness requires an analysis of power distribution among groups and will result in different concrete demands on the participants in the conflict, depending on who is formulating the demands and their current place in history. A true multi-racial, multi-ethnic coalition operating out of a Middle East consciousness may be our best hope of formulating just solutions to the conflict that can be accepted by all participants.

The same *New York Times* ad began by stating: “We are not

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213. *Id.* at 36.

214. See *supra* notes 98-99 and accompanying text.

215. See Peller, *supra* note 5, at 798.

216. Committee of Black Americans for Truth about the Middle East, *An Appeal by Black Americans Against United States Support of the Zionist Government of Israel*, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 1, 1970, § 4, at 4 [hereinafter Committee of Black Americans for Truth about the Middle East].

217. *Id.*

anti-Jewish. We are anti-Zionist and against the Zionist State of Israel."<sup>218</sup> Like the potential for race consciousness to talk about race without advocating racism, so can a Middle East consciousness allow its adherents to criticize Israeli policies without advocating anti-Semitism. The stakes and suffering in both the United States and the Middle East today make the articulation of the Middle East consciousness imperative. All of us—Arab, Muslim, Jew, American, Israeli, Palestinian, white, and black—have for too long shouldered the burden of thirty-seven years of silence.

### Conclusion

I have argued that the 1967 Arab-Israeli War played a significant role in the split between black nationalists and integrationists. I have also suggested that it deepened a rift in the black-Jewish family drama and figured prominently in the new integrationist-Jewish alliance created.<sup>219</sup> The black nationalists' ideological commitments allowed for the development of a Middle East consciousness that recognized alternative narratives of Middle East politics. Their view of racism as subordination and their vision of racial justice as a redistribution of power convinced them that Palestinians were subordinated in the Middle East and that a just peace would require redistribution of resources, especially a change in U.S. military aid to Israel.<sup>220</sup> The advocacy of Palestinian nationalism came despite, or perhaps because of, the black-Jewish family drama that set the acceptable limits of international critique of Israeli military operations.

At the precise moment when black nationalists broke away from integrationists, the Arab-Israeli War galvanized the identity of American Jews.<sup>221</sup> Jews had a dual response, at once championing Israel's victory in the war and condemning the black nationalist criticism of it.<sup>222</sup> The response accelerated progressive Jews' retreat from black nationalism, which had begun with black power.<sup>223</sup> They sought civil rights allies with a less threatening vision of racial justice.<sup>224</sup> The integrationists, after watching the

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218. *Id.*

219. See *supra* notes 55-87 and accompanying text.

220. Committee of Black Americans for Truth about the Middle East, *supra* note 216, at 4; see *supra* notes 88-112 and accompanying text.

221. See *supra* notes 130-129 and accompanying text.

222. See *supra* notes 134-157 and accompanying text.

223. See *supra* notes 155-157 and accompanying text..

224. See *supra* notes 165-184 and accompanying text.

black nationalists collapse in part because they refused to act within the boundaries of the black-Jewish family drama, pursued a new deal with Jewish progressives to maintain their own coalition.<sup>225</sup> It was not necessary to revamp the ideologies of either group because both believed in the central tenets of the perspective and the vision of racial justice embodied in integrationism.<sup>226</sup> The price of the ticket was the promise to prioritize the black-Jewish domestic relationship over conflicting analyses of the Middle East.

In the margins of my analysis of the 1967 chapter are the Arabs and Muslims of today. The integrationist-Jewish compromise, in addition to constraining race consciousness, also constrains a Middle East consciousness that prevents Arabs and Muslims from speaking on the same terms with the civil rights advocates speaking out for them. It has also slipped through the fingers of traditional critiques from the bottom, because those critiques are primarily interested in encouraging subordinated groups to tell their own story. Because the story of being Arab or Muslim in America exists more in the intersections of the black-Jewish family drama, rather than in a category of its own, we exist in critical race theory as "immigrants" or some undetermined form of "ethnic." We are pressured to perform in a way that does not threaten the equilibrium of suffering that Jews and African Americans are constantly trying to maintain. While alliances between blacks and Jews have achieved many civil rights victories, the nature of the current compromise on Israel has suppressed Arab and Muslim identity to the point of imposing upon us a "triple consciousness."

In the aftermath of September 11 and in the midst of the Second Intifada in the Middle East, we should re-examine the cultural bargain of 1967, and ask whether a new one should be struck among those who struggle against subordination and discrimination. We must reconsider the black nationalists' notion of a Middle East consciousness, that parallels their idea of race consciousness. A Middle East consciousness would apply a particularist, historicized view of social relations to the Middle East and explore the clash of competing nationalisms at its heart. Such a consciousness does not necessarily lead to a pro-Arab position as articulated by the black nationalists, but it does require an analysis of competing narratives and power. Like the

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225. See *supra* notes 166-197 and accompanying text.

226. See *supra* notes 185-197 and accompanying text.



potential for race consciousness to talk about race without advocating racism, so can a Middle East consciousness allow its adherents to talk about Israel without advocating anti-Semitism, allowing for good-faith coalitions between Arabs, blacks, and Jews. And like the possibilities that race consciousness offers advocates of a just peace between blacks and whites in America, a Middle East consciousness could open up a new world of possibilities for striking a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

