

**Mainstream Media as Guardian  
of Racial Hierarchy:  
A Study of the Threat Posed by  
Minister Louis Farrakhan  
and the Million Man March**

by  
**William E. Alberts**

Dr. William E. Alberts is Hospital Chaplain at Boston Medical Center and teaches social science in the Veterans Upward Bound Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston. A Unitarian Universalist minister, he received his Ph.D. from Boston University in the field of psychology and pastoral counseling. He has written numerous essays and articles on religion and racism and politics in Boston which have appeared in newspapers, magazines and journals. His most recent research report is entitled *The Role of Mainstream Media in Discrediting Black Candidates: The Boston Mayoral Campaigns of 1983 and 1993*, published by the William Monroe Trotter Institute.

## Foreword

This Research Report focuses on one of the most important events in the political history of Black people in the United States: the Million Man March, October 16, 1995. This event generated much enthusiasm in the Black community of the United States; but it also generated derision and anger. Some have dismissed this event as meaningless, others believe that since it was led, in large part, by Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam, it should be decried and ignored at the same time. Generally, what Dr. William Alberts, the author of this report, refers to as the “mainstream” media, abdicated objective reporting and analysis to political commentary and opinions. It may be important to point out that Dr. Alberts happens to be a White, Christian minister. The significance of this is that the Million Man March was probably supported by many other White people, as well as Latinos, Asians, Arab-Americans and others who did not have their stories reported in the media.

Dr. Alberts utilizes the concept of “racial hierarchy” to describe and analyze the media coverage of the Million Man March by three newspapers, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*, during the period between December 1994 and November 1995. He argues that the media’s coverage utilized racial double-standards in its review of the Million Man March as well as biased and ahistorical analyses of the leadership of Min. Farrakhan regarding this event. The author tries to show that the media’s racial bias in its coverage of Min. Farrakhan, and perhaps Black America, in general, is exploitative and divisive. He adds that such coverage reflects intensifying racial divisions in the United States and is a major reason for continuing difficulties in building racial bridges among people in this country. At times, Dr. Alberts refers to *the* racial hierarchy or *the* white-dominated hierarchy suggesting that the racial, economic, cultural, and psychological manifestation of a racial order have become entrenched in United States society.

The Million Man March was indeed a controversial event. Hopefully, it was an event that will encourage dialogue and honesty about race among Americans in this country. Along this line, the Preface by Rabbi Bruce Kahn, of Temple Shalom in Chevy Chase, Maryland, is critically important. I believe that the sentiments reflected in Rabbi Kahn's words will contribute to greater and more honest dialogue about race. Rabbi Kahn indicated to me that he was not overly impressed with the thoroughness of the study of the author, but feels that the evidence offered by Dr. Alberts regarding the media's racial bias is compelling. As he wrote to me, Rabbi Kahn feels that the "media bias regarding the African-American community is scandalous." Rabbi Kahn is insistent regarding the need for dialogue. He participated in the Million Man March and was inspired by it. Rabbi Kahn proposes that the volume of racial vitriol be lowered and even eliminated; but this cannot happen without dialogue, honesty and reaching out to each other.

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James Jennings  
Director

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Dr. William E. Alberts  
Hospital Chaplain  
Boston Medical Center

## Preface

I am White. I am a rabbi. I attended the Million Man March where I stood hour after hour in the midst of a sea of excited, highly principled, welcoming Black men. I listened to the speeches and shared in the grandeur of an extraordinary moment in history. Mostly, it was my privilege to bear witness to how important this gathering was to the African Americans who were present.

On that Monday, I was enveloped in an overwhelming sense of joy, pride, responsibility, thoughtfulness, hope and love. Yet, no one seemed to dodge one bit an awareness of what is wrong and what needs repair in Black neighborhoods across America. Speaker after speaker, especially Minister Louis Farrakhan, confronted self-destructive behavior by too many Black males in a hard-hitting, no nonsense, clearly defined and agonizingly descriptive fashion. The people around me did the same. No cover-ups. But there was so much more that made this day unique. It was a day of atonement and affirmation. This was a day for recognizing that most Black men in America care about their families, work hard, have a love of God and country, and possess a strong and positive moral code which embraces confession and atonement. That is not a message that is perceived by the media or transmitted by it.

While I disagree, at times most vigorously and on moral grounds, with several points William Alberts advances in this report, I find his evidence compelling. He reveals media too often determined to make the news and shape the opinions of readers. When it comes to reporting on African Americans in general and Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, in particular, this weakness is most pronounced. Reporters are driven to take the quotes that will antagonize the reader and do not let go of those words. Convey a negative impression and generate conflict, regardless of how out of line that is with the point and mass of a presentation. There seems to be a mission,

conscious or subconscious, to put before the American people as much bad stuff about Blacks as possible. Proportionality is lost. Responsibility for the impact of what is reported is not assumed. The overall shaping of attitudes of viewers and readers of the news is, at best, disregarded. Make the story sizzle. Get people going. Make a splash. These seem to be the goals.

I can say with reasonable assurance that my intense contacts over the years with members of the African-American community, especially clergy, tell me that the White community has no understanding whatever of the suffering endured by African Americans over history or now. The role of systems controlled by White America in perpetuating that suffering is something most worthy of in depth and continuous reporting. But doing that takes a different agenda from that which seems to motivate reportage today. That agenda of disservice will prevent us from ever understanding Minister Farrakhan or the Nation of Islam. Yes, the Minister says things that I consider terribly bigoted, hurtful and false. Yes, I believe he has wrong and inadequate information and understanding of Judaism, Zionism and Israel. I am appalled by his defense of a group of middle eastern leaders I consider to be among the most despicable in the world.

But as offensive as such aspects are, I believe through dialogue and shared study we can work out these problems. The war of insults must end. It is a distraction which deflects attention from the real issues at the heart of the Minister's messages before the March, at the March and since the March. We all must learn about, confront and seek to understand every holocaust, including the Black Holocaust. It is different from the Jewish Holocaust. But there is nothing less important about it. The Jewish Holocaust was more concentrated, more recent, and it was an out and out attempt at genocide which murdered close to forty percent of the entire Jewish population in the world. The

Black Holocaust was vastly longer, taking vastly more lives, and its residual impact also remains cataclysmic.

It is not possible to measure the anguish of Jews ripped from their homes and families and tortured in the camps. There is no way to measure the anguish of Africans ripped from their homes and families and tortured on slave ships and beyond. What an affront it is to them all to suggest that one group suffered more. When pain and terror and inhumanity and death go beyond levels any of us can comprehend or tolerate, what value is there in trying to crown a winner? There are no winners. There are only victims.

We must know the stories of the victims. We must learn and grasp the meaning of the torment of Africans in America over the centuries. Each group must know enough and feel enough about the other to see life through that group's eyes; life as it has been and as it is now. Instead of doing that we rush to judgment and flail away at each other bolstered by harmful media reports that lead us to faulty conclusions.

I am White. I am a rabbi. Long before the March I began reaching out to try to understand the suffering Minister Farrakhan addresses. Since the March I have exchanged views and information with several of his key associates on the East Coast. I am encouraged by the dialogues. I believe we can advance our knowledge, understanding and empathy so that the rhetoric that echoes across the land will be both empathic and useful, focusing on defining problems and generating solutions to advance truth, peace, justice, equality and opportunity.

There is only one Black American who could have pulled off the Million Man March. Give him the credit he deserves for doing so. It was one of the single most positive events in the social history of our country. The people who were there attended for several reasons, not all of which had

to do with Minister Farrakhan. But without him the March would not have been envisioned nor would it have succeeded. It did succeed. If it did nothing more than give a huge boost to the trampled upon ego of the Black American male, it succeeded.

Minister Farrakhan is not *the* leader of the African-American community. He is one of the leaders within that community. It seems clear to me that despite what I consider to be the horrifying insults that have issued from the Minister, the people who listen to him do not go chasing down Jews, or gays or Whites or Koreans to beat them and murder them. They do not do that for two reasons: First, he warns them against such violent behavior. Second, these verbal onslaughts do not constitute the main thrust of his message. As unacceptable as they are, they are also tangential. His listeners know that. They are sufferers who know how tough it is to get a fair shake as Black people. They want that to change. They hear in Minister Farrakhan's words inspiration and instruction to begin to bring about that change. That is the message on which he focuses and on which they focus. That is not the message on which the media focuses. William Alberts' study makes that clear.

Rabbi Bruce E. Khan  
Temple Shalom



## Introduction

The only time a government official recognized that a million Black men attended the Million Man March in Washington, D.C., on October 16, 1995<sup>1</sup> was when President Bill Clinton, shortly before the March's main program began, remarked, "One million men are right to be standing up for personal responsibility. But one million men do not make right one man's message of malice and division. No good house can ever be built on a bad foundation."<sup>2</sup> Clinton used the figure of 1 million to brand as divisive the very man whose call for a Day of Atonement, Reconciliation and Responsibility brought this historic "sea of black men" together. Clinton then reverted to the U.S. Park Police's far lower count in saying, "I honor the presence of hundreds of thousands of men in Washington today."<sup>3</sup> Clinton himself was a thousand miles away, having been forced by the Million Man March to address the country's increasingly visible racial division—in a speech to a predominantly White University of Texas student body. The President's criticism of Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan was repeatedly quoted by editorial writers, columnists and news reporters in their coverage of the March.

In fact, the planned Million Man March led mainstream print media to engage in a feeding frenzy in its criticism of Minister Farrakhan as a divisive force. He was constantly portrayed as "anti-white," "anti-Semitic," "anti-gay," "anti-Catholic," "anti-Asian," "racist," "sexist," "bigot," "hate-monger," "separatist" ". . . and God knows what else."<sup>4</sup> The seemingly editorialized lynching of Min. Farrakhan's reputation was so pervasive that even a news reporter could write, "Organizers backed off the assertion that support for the march equaled support for Mr. Farrakhan, fearing that larger issues might be obscured by Mr. Farrakhan's reputation among many blacks and whites as a racist and hatemonger," and four paragraphs later the reporter added, "Despite the calls to separate the

leader from the event, the march . . . could prove a turning point for Mr. Farrakhan, *who is known by many Americans mostly for his racist comments* [italics added].”<sup>5</sup>

The media’s apparent aim was to discredit Farrakhan, “the event’s controversial originator,”<sup>6</sup> and to undermine the March. The constant vilification of Min. Farrakhan, “who has been criticized for years as a divisive force for espousing anti-Semitism and black separatism,”<sup>7</sup> communicated to Black men that attending the March would be tantamount to endorsing and enhancing the Nation of Islam leader’s polarizing views. Opposition of traditional Black civil rights and political leaders and feminists to Farrakhan and the March was solicited, featured and emphasized. A national debate was facilitated, if not orchestrated, between opponents and organizers over “whether the march will serve as a unifying or divisive force [which] is perhaps the event’s central unresolved question.”<sup>8</sup> That question was answered repeatedly by print media, which used various mainstream Black leaders, editorials, op-ed opinion pieces and selective quotes by news reporters to assert that the March’s “message” of hope could not be separated from the “messenger” of hate. Interestingly enough, when the Washington Mall overflowed with African American men, the media found many ways to separate “the message” and the marchers from “the messenger.”

This is a study of mainstream print media’s coverage of the Million Man March and of its initiator Minister Louis Farrakhan. The study is of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*’s coverage of the March and Farrakhan from the March’s announcement in *The Washington Post* on December 12, 1994<sup>9</sup> through November 14, 1995. The time period offers a study of their coverage from the earliest reports of the March, to the increasing number of stories and columns as the October 16 event approached, through the extensive accounts and commentary of the March itself, and the ensuing stories and opinion pieces for a four-week post-March period. The

analysis itself is of the news stories, op-ed pieces, editorials and other columns appearing in the three newspapers, including around 190 articles in *The Washington Post*, 85 news stories in *The New York Times* and 60 news articles in *The Boston Globe*. Certain news stories appearing in the three papers before December 12, 1994 and after November 14, 1995 are quoted as they relate to particular points in the study. The study assumes that mainstream print media function to protect this country's racial hierarchy and that the three newspapers serve as a representative sample.

The study also contains a survey of literature published by some Jewish organizations on Farrakhan's "relentless record of hate" against "Jews, whites, Christians and homosexuals."<sup>10</sup> The purpose of the survey is to help the reader be aware of the extent of the charges that have been leveled against Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam. Some of the charges and commentary in this literature will lead to a brief discussion of the position some Jewish people appear to occupy on the White-dominated hierarchy and how their own conditioning and apparently unrecognized privilege as White persons may prevent them from understanding the social realities of African Americans in this country.

The study proposes that the mainstream print media's intense criticism of Farrakhan is to portray him as a divisive force in order to undermine the threat his power to unify African Americans poses to the country's White-dominated racial hierarchy. A related aim is to protect this hierarchy of race, power, wealth and access from his message about "white supremacy" upon which the country was founded and is maintained. In this regard, considerable print was used to defend against "the messenger" when he applied President Clinton's own words to the nation itself: "No good [country] can be built on a bad foundation." As guardians of the racial hierarchy, mainstream print media intervene to defend against any threat to the status quo, whether that threat be racial discord in the

street or the unifying power of a million peaceful Black men on the Washington Mall. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the public's understanding of the kinds of biased coverage employed by dominant, White-controlled watchdog media whenever African Americans confront the inequities of the assumed democracy's racial hierarchy and threaten its stability.

The analysis that follows reveals three kinds of bias in the three mainstream<sup>11</sup> print media's coverage of Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Million Man March. The first underlies their constant and generalized condemnation of Farrakhan as a "racist," "separatist," "anti-white," "anti-Semitic," "sexist," "anti-gay," "anti-Catholic" and even "anti-black." This tactic involves a form of White magical thinking that may be termed the *racism of equality*: the belief that racism is primarily an interpersonal problem between Black and White individuals and not institutional with an ingrained history and unacknowledged White-favored hierarchy of access to "the pursuit of happiness." This belief permits the denial of society's racial hierarchy and allows Minister Farrakhan (or any African American) to be seen as a "racist" for being "anti-white"—rather than as an oppressed person reacting to his oppressor. The first bias also reveals a double standard: the media's strong condemnation of Farrakhan's assumed hatred of gay persons, women and Jews is not matched by similar condemnation of the homophobia, sexism and anti-Semitism practiced by far more dominant and influential groups in American society.

The second bias in the print media's coverage of the March is seen in the attempt to discredit Farrakhan by associating him and his message with White supremacists and their ideologies, and by disassociating him from traditional and revered Black leaders. Finally, the print media's coverage of the Million Man March reveals a tendency by newspaper columnists and writers to impose their reality *on*, rather than disclose the reality *of* the marchers and Farrakhan.

The study suggests that there is no serious national intent to recognize and address the historic, entrenched racial inequities that continue to plague and divide American society. The prospect and appearance of Farrakhan and one million Black marchers on the national scene caused considerable concern about the country's "racial divide"<sup>12</sup> among mainstream media and political leaders alike. But an official bipartisan and biracial request to form a Presidential Commission to study the continuing inequities, represented by the appearance of "a sea of black men" overflowing the nation's Capitol, was ignored by Clinton and not pursued by the mainstream media. The study indicates that neither mainstream political leaders nor media appear ready to acknowledge and confront the racial inequities of a White-dominated racial hierarchy from which they derive their own power and preferential access. The biases analyzed here operate to redefine the problem of racism whenever society's racial hierarchy is threatened.

### **The "Racism of Equality"**

The print media's coverage of Minister Farrakhan consistently characterize him as a "separatist," "anti-white," "anti-Semitic," "sexist," "anti-gay," and "anti-Catholic." Their repeated references to Farrakhan as "anti-white" and "racist," however, usually offer no substantiating rational explanation. Nothing is presented to explain how a Black person with no real political, economic and legal power can be a racist in a White-dominated, racially stratified society that enslaved his African ancestors and maintains an inequitable, White-favored hierarchy that continues to oppress African Americans. Instead, there is the unexplained assumption that racism is primarily an interpersonal problem between individual Black and White persons. To reduce racism to individual personal relationships is to engage in what may be called *the racism of equality*. Such "democratic" thinking

is rooted in denial: it allows the media to protect the inequitable White-favored hierarchy by pretending it does not exist.

The assumption that racism is “in large measure” a matter of individual “minds and hearts,” as President Clinton emphasized in his Texas speech,<sup>13</sup> allows White persons to remain oblivious to their own favored position in the hierarchy and to the discrimination suffered by Black persons and other people of color at the bottom of the social ladder. They are protected from awareness that their whiteness is an *invisible* means into the mainstream of American life. What is self-evident to them appears to be that “*all men* [italics added] are created equal . . . [and] endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights.”<sup>14</sup> This constitutional legacy from the Founding Fathers includes the hierarchy’s historical conditioning that “all men” referred to *White* men—women did not count as far as voting was concerned and Blacks were slaves and, therefore, property since each counted only three-fifths of a man in the new democracy’s representative government.<sup>15</sup> Thus, White men take for granted as God-given their constitutional right of access to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,”<sup>16</sup> while remaining insulated from the awareness of their privileged position in the hierarchy and the continuing discrimination endured by Black persons.

In reality, for White males, affirmative action consists of their whiteness: it entitles them to advantages in a society that protects them from being conscious of their favored position. The racially-stratified hierarchy offers them a separatism that renders Black persons invisible at the bottom and the separatism they enjoy is unmatched by any attempt at such unifying power of African Americans espoused by Farrakhan. Ironically, when their separatism and favored position in the hierarchy are threatened by the power of one million united Black men or by affirmative action programs, columnists and politicians alike begin to emphasize equal opportunity for all and appeal

for a “color-blind” society—which, in actuality, are attempts at denying and maintaining the head start and favored access enjoyed by White persons in the hierarchy.

The assumption that Black and White individuals are equally responsible for racism presupposes an integrated society with equal access to all and therefore with equal responsibility of all. Thus, the racism of equality serves to homogenize the hierarchy: the “cream” becomes invisible and remains at the top; White persons enjoy unacknowledged favoritism; and White-selected Black leaders and other “integrated” Black persons give the appearance of equal access to all—and, thus, the equal responsibility of all.

If racism is “in large measure” a problem between Black and White individuals, then the solution is basically interpersonal rather than institutional or governmental. This apparently hierarchical-protecting, victim-blaming reasoning is seen in the only concrete and well-publicized solution to the racial divide Clinton put forth in his Texas speech: “First, today I ask every governor, every mayor, every business leader . . . most important, every citizen—in every workplace and learning place and meeting place all across America to take personal responsibility for reaching out to people of different races . . . to sit down and talk through this issue . . . honestly and frankly.”<sup>17</sup> The racism of equality dominating Clinton’s speech made headlines: “Clinton, in Solemn Speech Chides Racists of all colors,”<sup>18</sup> “Clinton Challenges whites, blacks to help ‘clean our house of racism’,”<sup>19</sup> and “Rift Between blacks, whites ‘Is Tearing at the Heart of America’.”<sup>20</sup>

The media itself stressed the seriousness of the “rift” between Black and White persons “tearing at the heart of America.” In an article that appeared in the *Washington Post* three days before Clinton’s speech, columnist Charles Krauthammer wrote that “only one” issue “could justify” his willingness to “sacrifice” the “dismantling of the welfare state” by “. . . voting for Powell for

history, all of us owe Louis Farrakhan a thank you for having told all of us, if the pain level is great enough for him to be a leader, then we all have a lot bigger challenge ahead.”<sup>27</sup>

The media’s concern about the seriousness of the “great divide” was shared by a biracial, bipartisan group of six members of Congress: two days after the March they wrote a letter urging President Clinton “to appoint a bipartisan commission to study race relations in the United States since the 1960’s and to then make recommendations for improvements . . . similar to the Kerner Commission which in 1968 issued a report concluding that the United States was ‘moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal’.”<sup>28</sup> One of the six was Rep. John Lewis, Democrat of Georgia, who was at various times listed by the media as one of the Black leaders not supporting the March, and whom *Washington Post* columnist Robert D. Novak referred to as “still an icon for the civil rights movement . . . [who] courageously said no to the march” because its aim was “the elevation of Minister Farrakhan and the redemption of Rev. Chavis.”<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, Lewis did not receive or inspire positive commentary about this call for the Commission.

The six House members’ call for a Kerner-like commission received less than enthusiastic coverage and support from the three newspapers. *The Boston Globe* devoted a brief paragraph to the call for the presidential commission in a story on “To some eyes, a Mall full of votes.”<sup>30</sup> *The Washington Post* devoted a small column of eight paragraphs to it called “Lawmakers Urge Panel on Race,”<sup>31</sup> which followed at the bottom of a larger piece entitled “Farrakhan Threatens To Sue Park Police Over March Count.”<sup>32</sup> *The New York Times* began its story on page one but mixed in another message seen in the front page’s double caption: “After March, Lawmakers Seek Commission on Race Relations,” and directly underneath in smaller bold print, “Farrakhan Eager to Stay in National Spotlight.”<sup>33</sup> Only four of the 26 paragraph-long story were devoted to the lawmakers’ call for the



commission. Alongside the story was a photograph of a huge pile of trash from the March, with a large poster from the March sticking out and leaning over the pile (as if placed there), with the Capitol Building in the background above and with the caption underneath: "Refuse flew on Capitol Hill yesterday as a tractor cleaned up after the Million Man March. On Monday, a crowd officially estimated at 400,000 heard various black leaders speak about pride and racial solidarity."<sup>34</sup> No editorials or columns appeared in support of the call for the bipartisan presidential commission.

In his message at the March, Farrakhan himself stated that "the Kerner Commission revisited their findings 25 years later and saw that America was worse today than it was in the time of Martin Luther King Jr. There's still two Americas—one black, one white, separate and unequal."<sup>35</sup> In 1993, on the 25th anniversary of the Kerner Commission report, a new study by the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation did, in fact, revisit the Commission's findings and echoed the Kerner Commission's warning that "our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."<sup>36</sup> The new study, called "Cities Losing Race With Time," found that,

All major cities studied by the Kerner Commission have been resegregating. . . . Credit, housing, and job discrimination on the basis of race have gained new footing. Infant mortality, unemployment and poverty have increased and life expectancy has decreased among the black population since the 1968 report.<sup>37</sup>

The media's grave concern about the "racial divide" and strong opposition to Farrakhan as a "separatist" and "racist" are not accompanied by similarly strong support for a commission that would study and make recommendations for alleviating the very divisiveness Farrakhan is accused of exploiting and intensifying. The media's primary concern appears to be that of protecting the hierarchy from Farrakhan's message about "white supremacy" and not advocating a commission that might substantiate his message and threaten the racial status quo—as did the Kerner Commission's

findings in 1968. It is assumed that Clinton ignored the call for a presidential bipartisan commission-- and apparently the 1993 report as well—because he himself does not want to “open the can of worms” that such a commission probably would find underneath the foundation of the hierarchy—which would make it even more difficult for Clinton to pacify “the angry white male voters.”<sup>38</sup> For Clinton, the “rift . . . ‘tearing at the heart of America’ ” seemed to be a public relations problem more than a racial problem. It would appear that both the primary political leaders and newspaper guardians of the hierarchy would rather focus on individual relationships than on another in-depth study of “the rift between blacks and whites . . . that ‘is tearing at the heart of America.’ ”<sup>39</sup>

### **The Double Standard in the Print Media’s Coverage of the March**

The media’s extensive condemnation of Farrakhan as “anti-gay,” “sexist,” and “anti-Semitic” also appears to reveal a *double standard*. The double standard may be seen in the apparent lack of similar media condemnation of homophobia, sexism and anti-Semitism practiced by far more powerful groups in American society than the Nation of Islam. Historically, in this country gays and lesbians have been, and continue to be, discriminated against by church and state alike.

#### *Homophobia*

In 1996, the government passed a Defense of Marriage Act, supported by various Christian groups, that bars federal recognition of marriage between gay and lesbian couples. The Act denies them the legal status that would strengthen their relationship with insurance and other legitimizing and affirming benefits. At the same time the Senate passed the Defense of Marriage Act, it defeated a bill that would have prevented job discrimination against gay and lesbian persons.<sup>40</sup> During the

1996 presidential campaign, the Clinton campaign matched a Dole campaign ad on family values aired on Christian radio stations with one of its own that “emphasizes the Democratic president’s support for ‘our values,’ including the ban on gay marriage.”<sup>41</sup> The Clinton campaign may have been influenced by a poll that revealed “six in 10 Americans disapprove of gay marriages regardless of whether the couple is male or female.”<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, gays and lesbians are discriminated against in many places of worship where the practice of “homosexuality”—which has been a dominant issue among denominations for years—is believed to be “incompatible with Christian teachings.”<sup>43</sup> In most denominations, ordination remains the sanctified domain of heterosexuals only. The Presbyterian Church (USA) does now allow “the ordination of gays—as long as they remain celibate and disavow their past sexuality.”<sup>44</sup>

Protestants and Catholics alike have combined their rejection of homosexual behavior with a professed acceptance of gay and lesbian persons. For example, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* states, “Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth . . . and need the ministry and guidance of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship which enables reconciling relationships with God, with others and with self. Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice *incompatible* [italics added] with Christian teaching, we affirm that God’s grace is available to all.”<sup>45</sup> Professing that “homosexual persons . . . are individuals of sacred worth” in one breath and condemning “the practice of homosexuality [as] incompatible with Christian teaching” in the next breath is to engage in forked-tongue theology. Such a profession would seem to be *worthless* since a person’s sexual orientation is a basic part of his or her whole identity. One is what one does. Furthermore, to require a person to renounce rather

than rejoice in an integral part of his or her being is an insidious form of homophobic violence wrapped in “God’s grace,” rather than an affirmation of a gay person’s “sacred worth.” Ironically, such a “ministry and guidance of the Church” would appear to be a tragic obstacle to gay and lesbian persons “in their struggles for *human fulfillment*” [italics added].

The position of the Roman Catholic Church toward sexual orientation is similar to that of The United Methodist. At its meeting, “the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops . . . reaffirmed the church’s opposition to same-sex marriages and called on government officials to reject efforts to grant homosexual unions the legal status of marriage,” which pressure probably helped to lead the U.S. Senate to pass the Defense of Marriage Act. In their statement, the Bishops said, “Church teaching insists homosexuals ‘have a right to and deserve our respect, compassion and understanding and defense against bigotry, attacks and abuse.’ . . . But . . . ‘at a time when family life is under significant stress, the principled defense of marriage is an urgent necessity for the well-being of children and families and for the common good of society’.”<sup>46</sup> Here “compassion” and “respect” would seem to be code words for contempt and rejection. It is far easier to “defend against” physical “attacks and abuse.” Given the blatant anti-gay sentiments professed by powerful church and state organizations, it would seem that the media might focus more of its attention on those beliefs and practices that are far more oppressive than any homophobic tendencies of Farrakhan and The Nation of Islam.

### *Sexism*

Yet another double standard, observed in the print media’s coverage of the Million Man March, involves the strong criticism of Farrakhan for the exclusion of Black women from the March

and for the related belief that atonement, reconciliation and responsibility call for African American men to assume their rightful place as “the head of the family.” As will be seen in the following pages, news stories focused considerable coverage on the controversy over the all-male nature of the March. Editorials and columns joined in condemning Farrakhan as a “sexist” for his “bitterly contested insistence that the marchers be men only.”<sup>47</sup> The titles of numerous opinion pieces especially waged the battle of the “sexism” of Farrakhan: “Black Women: Our Place Is In the Home?”<sup>48</sup> “Despite Paradox, Black Women Support March: Though Excluded, Many Endorse Event’s Theme of Male Atonement,”<sup>49</sup> “The Art of the Snub,”<sup>50</sup> “A Woman’s Place Is in the March: Why Should I Stand by My Man When He’s Trying to Step Over Me?”<sup>51</sup> “Black Sisterhood Caught in a Vortex of Gender and Race,”<sup>52</sup> “Behind the Scenes the Women Count,”<sup>53</sup> “Black Women Are Split Over All-Male March on Washington,”<sup>54</sup> “A Million Men, No Women,”<sup>55</sup> “Million Man March: We Shall Overcome in a Better Way,”<sup>56</sup> “Give March a Chance,”<sup>57</sup> “Black Herstory,”<sup>58</sup> and, “A Welcome For Women On the Mall: Most Heed Call to Stay Away From March, Meet Elsewhere.”<sup>59</sup>

The condemnation of The Nation of Islam for believing that the rightful place of Black men is at “the head of the family” is not matched by similar editorial and op-ed page condemnation of the Roman Catholic Church for believing that only men can be priests and therefore the rightful heads of the Church. And, what about the Mormon Church? The Mormon Church is controlled by an all-male hierarchy in which men only can enter the lay priesthood and become bishops of local congregations.<sup>60</sup> It is still a newsworthy novelty in various Protestant denominations for women to serve as pastors of local churches and especially to be ordained as bishops. Cutting the “umbiblical” cord of patriarchy practiced by mainstream Christian denominations would seem to be far more challenging and needed than “hacking” away at The Nation of Islam. Furthermore, the exclusion and

depreciation of women, whatever their race, still pervade at every level of America's White-male-dominated society, and appear to receive far less editorial concern and exposure than that given to Farrakhan and the Million Man March.

What the newspapers did not give any attention to was the Mission Statement of the Million Man March.<sup>61</sup> The Mission Statement itself was the product of the on-going discussion of an expanding, inclusive and diverse circle of men and women in the African-American community.<sup>62</sup> It was a collective document whose formulators "acknowledge with deep appreciation Min. Louis Farrakhan's development of the initial idea of the March and his willingness to share it with us, and invite us all to participate in it and help shape its form and content for the common good of our people." The Statement continued, "It is in this spirit of openness and cooperation for the common good that we seek to put forth in this document a vision of possibility that will advance the struggle for an empowered community, a just society and a better world."<sup>63</sup> The "vision of possibility . . . put forth" includes the reason for "the priority-focus on men":

. . . we self-consciously emphasize the priority need of black men to stand up and assume this new and expanded responsibility without denying or minimizing the equal rights, role and responsibility of black women in the life and struggle of our people.

Our priority call to black men to stand up and assume this new and expanded sense of responsibility is based on the realization that the strength and resourcefulness of the family and the liberation of the people require it; that some of the most acute problems facing the black community within are those posed by black males who have not stood up;

that the caring and responsible father in the home; the responsible and future-focused male youth; security in and of the community; the quality of male/female relations, and the family's capacity to avoid poverty and push the lives of its members forward all depend on black men's standing up;

that in the context of a real and principled brotherhood, those of us who have stood up, must challenge others to stand also; and that unless and until black men stand up, black men and women cannot stand together and accomplish the awesome tasks before us.<sup>64</sup>

### *Anti-Semitism*

A double standard is also evident in the media's constant criticism of Farrakhan as "anti-Semitic" and the apparent absence of equal exposure of and outrage against the anti-Semitism of Catholic and Protestant Christians. From the time the Million Man March appeared on the horizon until the sun set on it, news stories, opinion pieces and editorials repeatedly reminded readers of and assailed Farrakhan's "anti-Semitism." One week before the Million Man March, the Op-Ed page of *The Washington Post* carried a column called "The Quotable Minister," which contained a list of anti-White, anti-Christian, anti-Catholic, anti-feminist, separatist, and anti-Jewish "statements by Farrakhan and positions taken by his official publication, 'The Final Call'."<sup>65</sup> The list was collected, and evidently submitted to the *Post* for publication by "the Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish civil rights organization which criticizes Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan as a 'hate-monger'."<sup>66</sup> On the eve of the March, a front-page *Boston Globe* story called "D. C. gets set for march" focused on Farrakhan having "spent the day before the march in virtual seclusion. . . . Farrakhan left other black leaders, most notably Rev. Jesse Jackson, to confront questions about [italics added] the black Muslim leader's statements about Jews and racial separation, and his status as the march's principal speaker."<sup>67</sup> The story continued, "Jackson on 'Meet the Press,' said Farrakhan 'has obviously' uttered anti-Semitic remarks in March when he said Jewish bankers financed Adolph Hitler's campaign that killed millions of Jews. . . . But Jackson said he supported the March despite the remarks' 'painful' nature, because of the widespread pain in the black community."<sup>68</sup>

There appears to be widespread avoidance by the media of requiring Catholic and mainline Protestant Christians "to confront questions about" and be held accountable for their denominations's anti-Semitism. One week after the March a *Boston Globe* story reported on the New England

Holocaust Memorial dedicated to the six million Jews “murdered by the Nazis and their too-willing allies in other European countries” during the Holocaust.<sup>69</sup> The story quoted Holocaust survivor and keynote speaker Elie Weisel: “Weisel, his voice tinged with bitterness . . . said he will never understand why the Western world was silent when the genocide began in 1939 and continued until the last days of the Third Reich in 1945. ‘Think of the solitude of the victims, how alone they were.... The world knew but stood silent. . . . Why didn’t the leaders of the world, our friends, why didn’t they speak up with greater vigor?’ ”<sup>70</sup> At the ceremony, “Cardinal Bernard Law spoke of the *inaction* [italics added] that was the response of many gentiles to the Holocaust. . . . ‘Here we are reminded that pernicious ideas, however grotesque, can lead to apocalyptic consequences *if left unchallenged* [italics added]. . . . Christians betrayed their faith in the sin of anti-Semitism . . . never again.’ ”<sup>71</sup> Massachusetts Governor William Weld “drew applause when he praised last week’s Million Man March which drew hundreds of thousands of African-American men to the nation’s capitol, but denounced its organizer, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. ‘That Million Man March seemed pretty wonderful in all ways, except the man at the top,’ he said.”<sup>72</sup> The news story made no reference to any comment Weld may have made at the dedication ceremony to the six million Jews “murdered by the Nazis and their too-willing allies in other European countries.”

Unlike Jesse Jackson, who was left “to confront questions about” Farrakhan’s “anti-Semitic remarks,” Cardinal Law was not required by the *Globe* “to confront questions about” the “inaction” of the Roman Catholic Church: why it “was silent when the genocide began in 1939 and continued until the last days of the Third Reich in 1945.” Cardinal Law was not left “to confront questions about” the Reich concordat the Vatican arranged with Hitler which guaranteed protection of the Roman Catholic Church’s status quo in exchange for loyalty to the state. The Reich concordat’s



“decisive advocate in Germany was Eugenio Pacelli,” Cardinal Secretary of State, “who had long associations with Germany as nuncio in Munich and Berlin,”<sup>73</sup> and who in 1939 became Pope Pius

XII. Church historian Klaus Scholder wrote of the cooperation of the Roman Catholic Church with the state required by the concordat:

This duty of loyalty followed not only from individual articles of the concordat (e.g. Article 16, the bishops’ oath of loyalty; and Article 30, a prayer for the prosperity of the German Reich and Volk), but even more from the content of the concordat as a whole, which guaranteed a “depoliticizing of the clergy and the associations” in exchange for concessions by the state so while the concordat bound the state, given the unequal balance of power it bound the church even more.<sup>74</sup>

Scholder wrote further that,

There is no doubt that there was a potential for resistance against the theory and practice of National Socialism in the two great churches (as Hitler rightly saw from the beginning). But at no time was this potential for resistance activated to any great extent by the church governments in the two churches [Catholic and Protestant]. . . . In fact, right up to the end of the war no German bishop on either the Catholic or Protestant side was arrested for political reasons. . . . What actual resistance was offered to the regime by the churches always came from below: from pastors, communities and individual Christians. As the lists of victims show, they also had to bear the full burden of the persecution. Quite often, for political reasons, church governments even refused to show solidarity with those who had been arrested and condemned.<sup>75</sup>

Cardinal Law was not asked “to confront questions about” a photograph taken in 1933, the same year that the Vatican concluded the concordat with Hitler’s Third Reich: the photograph is of certain Catholic prelates and vicar-generals at a Catholic Youth Day in Berlin on August 20, 1933. Each is dressed in liturgical garb and has his arm raised in the notorious Hitler salute.<sup>76</sup> Nor was Cardinal Law left “to confront questions about” Adolph Cardinal Bertram, Bishop of Breslau and senior German prelate who, upon learning of Adolph Hitler’s death, “in his own hand . . . gave all the parish priests of the archdiocese instructions ‘to hold a solemn requiem in memory of the Fuhrer and all those members of the Wehrmacht who have fallen in the struggle for our German Fatherland,

along with the sincerest prayers for Volk and Fatherland and for the future of the Catholic church in Germany'.<sup>77</sup>

Pope John Paul II evidently anticipated and confronted such questions with denial. In June of 1996, Pope Paul visited Germany to beatify three priests and a nun who were murdered for resisting the Nazi ideology. In his prepared proclamation, the Pope “unexpectedly left out the following passage: ‘The four beatified persons symbolize the many Catholic women and men who, at the cost of many and diverse sacrifices, rejected National Socialist tyranny and resisted the brown Nazi ideology. They are thus part of the resistance offered by *the whole church* [italics added] to a system contemptuous of God and human beings’.”<sup>78</sup> According to the Vatican spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Balls, the omitted passage is still part of the “written text of the speech” which is “the official record of the Pope’s views on the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Hitler regime.”<sup>79</sup> *New York Times* writer Alan Cowell stated, “Thus the Pope will be on record as claiming a far more assertive church role against the Nazis than historians do. But he avoided openly saying so in front of a German audience that had been taught differently.”<sup>80</sup> Cowell’s story assumes that Pope Paul did a “sidestep.” But *The New York Times*, *Boston Globe* and *Washington Post*, all of which carried news stories reporting Pope John Paul II’s obvious lack of truthfulness, appeared to do a “sidestep” of their own. No editorial or Op-Ed page column used the occasion to require Pope John Paul II “to confront questions about” the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the Holocaust—questions that would be appropriate for Protestant churches to confront as well.

The media’s rightful and needed denunciation of those who would deny the Holocaust is not matched by similar reaction toward dominant Christian groups who continue to deny their involvement in the Holocaust. Their denial of complicity may be one reason Elie Weisel, in a “voice

tinged with bitterness . . . will never understand why the Western world was silent when the genocide began . . . and continued.”<sup>81</sup>

One influential force that has refused to recognize the right of Jews to live in their own theological state is the 15.6-million-member Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest American Protestant denomination. In June of 1996, the Convention’s almost 14,000 delegates passed a resolution to boycott the Walt Disney Company for providing health care benefits to the partners of gay and lesbian employees—an act viewed by the Convention as “promoting homosexuality over family values.”<sup>82</sup> At the same time, the SBC also adopted another resolution: “to convert Jews to Christianity.”<sup>83</sup> The resolution stated that the Convention “would direct our energies and resources toward the proclamation of the Gospel to the Jews,” and “appoint a missionary to work among Jews in the United States.”<sup>84</sup>

*New York Times* writer Gustav Niebuhr also reported that the “resolution and the missionary appointment put the Southern Baptists at odds with . . . the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) . . . the United Methodist Church . . . [and] the Roman Catholic Church . . . which encouraged dialogue between Christians and Jews while strongly discouraging efforts at conversion.”<sup>85</sup> But “the Southern Baptists’ resolution noted the emphasis among other Christian groups on seeking dialogue . . . rather than conversion . . . [is] ‘an organized effort on the part of some either to deny that Jewish people need to come to *their Messiah, Jesus, to be saved* [italics added]; or to claim, for whatever reason, that Christians have neither right nor obligation to proclaim the Gospel to the Jewish people.’ ”<sup>86</sup> The Anti-Defamation League’s inter-faith affairs director, Rabbi Leon Klenicki was quoted as feeling “‘very sad’ about the resolution. ‘Especially after the Holocaust, Christians have no right to talk about

a mission to the Jews. . . . They should talk about a mission to the Christians because it was in Christian Europe that the Holocaust occurred,' ” he said.<sup>87</sup>

The Southern Baptist Convention is actually carrying to a “*theo-logical*” conclusion: the anti-Semitism implicit in the Apostolic-like belief, held by Catholics and Protestants alike, that “God so loved the world that he gave his *only* Son [italics added], that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”<sup>88</sup> Ironically, this idea invites a “Christocentrism” that is not unlike Hitler’s belief in a superior race. A superior religion attracts a similar mind set that needs certainty, demands conformity and rationalizes intolerance. Christocentric belief mitigates against the capacity to “think,” as Elie Weisel said, “of the solitude of the victims, how alone they were.” Such a Christocentrism not only encourages an obliviousness to the existence of Jews but to their right to exist as Jews. Behind the Southern Baptists’s resolution is the refusal to recognize and respect the democratic, never mind the God-given, right of Jews to be who they are. Underlying many Christians’s beliefs that Jesus is “the only begotten Son of God” and “the Saviour of the world” lurks a theology of anti-Semitism.

A similar *theo-logical* conclusion of Christocentrism applies to Muslims and other groups who are seen as “unsaved.” Implicit in the belief that “God . . . gave his only Son” to “the world” is the judgement that “whosoever” does not “believe in him” shall “perish.” In the name of a “loving” God, those who reject Christ as their Saviour are believed to be condemned to hell—and thus can be sent or allowed to go to or live in hell. Punishment is deserved. A theology that sees Jews and Muslims and others as fair game for conversion is less likely to be concerned about their being fair game for a political ideology or foreign policy (or domestic) that holds a similar contempt for their birthright to be who they are. This same *theo-logical* deduction also imposes its intolerance on Catholics

whose faith in their church may be judged by certain Protestants as not Christ-centered enough. A similar intolerance is visited upon Protestants by certain Catholics who may believe that only their church is built on the one true foundation. The need to “Lord” it over Jews and other non-Christians also pervades community-wide gatherings attended by persons of various religions at which programs end, “In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour of the world.” If such Christians are oblivious to Jews in their midst, it is unlikely that they would make themselves aware of, and concerned about, the persecution of those not in their midst.

The anti-Semitic Christocentrism of a 15.6-million-member Southern Baptist Convention calls for at least as much editorial and opinion piece outcry, analysis and denunciation as that devoted to the far less influential Minister Louis Farrakhan and the much smaller Nation of Islam. But that did not happen. No editorials followed in the three newspapers to address the Southern Baptists’ resolution. Nor did any of the newspapers’ columnists follow with opinion pieces. Two weeks after the resolution was passed a “guest opinion” piece by lawyer Leonard Garment called “Holier Than Us?” did appear in *The New York Times*.<sup>89</sup> The *Times* news story on the resolution consisted of 11 small paragraphs at the bottom of page 12A.<sup>90</sup> *The Boston Globe* news story on the resolution was one of seven one-paragraph-long stories listed under “National Briefs.” *The Washington Post* carried the most extensive news story on the resolution.<sup>91</sup>

While *The New York Times* did headline one “Letters” page with the title, “Southern Baptists’ Evangelism to Jews Offends,”<sup>92</sup> one of the three letters published was written by United Methodist minister Gerald H. Anderson who is a member of the World Council of Churches’ Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People.<sup>93</sup> Rev. Anderson took issue with the *Times* news story’s statement “that the United Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church are ‘strongly discouraging efforts

at conversion’.”<sup>94</sup> Anderson stated that The United Methodist Church has “no” such “official statement,” that rather Methodism encourages “dialogue . . . but dialogue does not displace mission, unless we are prepared to rewrite the New Testament.”<sup>95</sup> He also wrote, “In addition, John Paul II, in his 1991 Encyclical ‘Redemptoris Missio,’ said that ‘for all people—Jews and Gentiles alike—salvation can only come from Jesus Christ,’ and ‘the church calls all people to conversion.’”<sup>96</sup> Rev. Anderson concluded, “The Southern Baptist resolution may not be popular, but it is biblical.”<sup>97</sup> Of the three letters published by the *Times* under the title “Southern Baptists’ Evangelism to Jews Offends,” only one took offense.

Farrakhan himself was quoted as stating that his Islamic faith is “the only true religion of God” and as ascribing unique authority to himself: “. . . Who represents Christ: Pope John Paul II or the Honorable Louis Farrakhan?”<sup>98</sup> His “relentless record of hate”<sup>99</sup> is extensively documented in reports of the Anti-Defamation League and The American Jewish Committee and in Dr. Harold Brackman’s book, *Ministry of Lies*.<sup>100</sup> The reports and book are deserving of note and comment in this discussion of the media’s perceived double standard in not confronting with equal vigor the pervasive anti-Semitism of far more influential groups than Farrakhan’s.

The Anti-Defamation League published a 10-page special report on “Louis Farrakhan: In His Own Words—1994” to show that any “movement” of his “toward moderation and increased tolerance . . . is illusionary, a charade.”<sup>101</sup> The report states that “right up to the present Farrakhan has tried to distract attention from the fact that his aides, his publications and his own utterances have been racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic and homophobic.”<sup>102</sup> The report then documents Farrakhan’s “own utterances” against “whites,” “Jews,” “Christians,” “homosexuals,” “women,” “civil rights legislation,” “integration,” “those who disagree with his views,” and “the U.S. government.”<sup>103</sup>

The Anti-Defamation League published a similar report on “The Nation of Islam: The Relentless Record of Hate”<sup>104</sup> This report includes excerpts from speeches given by Farrakhan that “demonstrate the Nation of Islam leader’s refusal to depart from his bitter, divisive message of racist and anti-Semitic scapegoating.”<sup>105</sup> The excerpts of his “bitter. . . message” focus again on “Jews,” “whites,” “homosexuals” and “the U.S. government.”<sup>106</sup>

A significant part of the report also contains excerpts of speeches delivered by Farrakhan’s “former national assistant, Khalid Abdul Muhammad,” with special focus on his speech in November of 1993 at New Jersey’s Kean College.<sup>107</sup> Parts of the “obsessively anti-Semitic, racist, anti-Catholic and homophobic speech . . . were published by the ADL in January of 1994 in a full-page *New York Times* advertisement.”<sup>108</sup> The speech was condemned by various Black civil rights leaders “for its racism and anti-Semitism.”<sup>109</sup> It was also condemned by President Clinton, Vice-President Gore, the Senate and House of Representatives.<sup>110</sup> Farrakhan suspended Muhammad “from his duties, and condemned ‘the manner’—but not ‘the truths’—of the Muhammad speech.”<sup>111</sup>

The Anti-Defamation League released yet another report on “Federal Funds for NOI Security Firms: Financing Farrakhan’s Ministry of Hate.” The thrust of the report is that the Nation of Islam preaches “a litany in which Jews are ‘bloodsuckers,’ whites are ‘devils,’ and separate states for the races are imperative,” and thus the “millions in income” its “*de facto* arm” of “vaunted” security forces reaps from public contracts to patrol inner city housing projects amounts to “taxpayers . . . subsidizing a ministry of hate.”<sup>112</sup> Throughout the reports, Farrakhan is condemned not only as an “anti-Semite” but as “anti-white,”<sup>113</sup> and the Nation of Islam as “racist to the core,”<sup>114</sup> having “invested tremendous energy in trying to promote hatred of whites—and especially hatred of Jews—throughout the African-American community.”<sup>115</sup>

Similar to the mainstream media, these reports do not explain how hating White people for their historic and continuing systemic oppression makes the oppressed “anti-white,” and therefore “racist.” Here, the focus is on the oppressed’s symptom and not on the oppressor’s “sin,” with an apparently strong emphasis on integration, equal opportunity and responsibility that denies the existence of a White-favored hierarchy. The assumption of these reports—that an oppressed minority with no political, economic or legal power can be “racist”—leads this writer to make assumptions about the position generally occupied by the Jewish community on the White-dominated hierarchy. It would seem that like White Christians, the whiteness of most Jewish people is also their invisible means into the mainstream of America’s hierarchical life. The history of the Jews is filled with suffering and their strong defense against anti-Semitism is very much needed. But their belief that Black people can be “racist” in a White-dominated society is revealing: they, too, enjoy an access to “the promised land” of a White-favored hierarchy that appears to also render them oblivious to the reality of African Americans. The fact of their being White (those of European descendants) indicates that their own tragic historic oppression does not qualify them to fully understand the oppression of Black people.

The inability of some Jewish scholars to adequately comprehend the reality of African Americans is seen in Harold Brackman’s book, *Ministry of Lies: The Truth Behind the Nation of Islam’s “The Secret Relationship Between blacks and Jews.”*<sup>116</sup> The book is a response to the Nation of Islam’s publication entitled *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*,<sup>117</sup> which seeks to prove that Jews played a major role as traders and owners in the enslavement of Africans. Brackman refutes each charge of Jewish domination of the “slave trade.” He cites, for example, “the classic study of the trade by Frederic Bancroft [which] listed over 125 professional slave traders in



Richmond, Charleston, and Memphis; eight of [whom] were Jews . . . [and] none . . . were ‘major traders’.”<sup>118</sup> Nor were any Jews “slave traders” “in the entire states of Kentucky and Mississippi.”<sup>119</sup> Brackman also refers to an 1830 survey of “Southern families [who] owned slaves: . . . there were only twenty-three Jews among the 59,000 slave holders owning 20 or more slaves and just four Jews among the 11,000 slave holders owning 50 or more slaves. In other words, the South’s ‘master class’ of big plantation owners was 99.9% non-Jewish.”<sup>120</sup> Brackman then notes, “Also in 1830, 11,912 slaves were owned by 3,647 free ‘persons of color’ who outnumbered Jewish slave holders by fifteen to one.”<sup>121</sup> Brackman also refutes the charge that “Jews ‘dominated’ the slave trade in New England” and stated, “With regard to the handful of Jews in Newport, New York and Charleston who participated, the important historical question is not their motives but the extent of their involvement.”<sup>122</sup>

This writer believes that *the important historical fact* is that Jews had even a “handful” of involvement in the enforced slavery of Black people. Their involvement indicates their own level of acceptance and participation in a White-dominated hierarchy’s oppression of Africans. The statement that “11, 912 slaves were owned by 3,647 free ‘persons of color’ ” not only begs the moral question but does violence to this important historical fact. The vulnerable “free ‘persons of color’ ” themselves had been forced into slavery and the persons who became their “slaves,” with the permission of the White-controlled hierarchy, were Black individuals—and perhaps some indigenous persons, but not Jewish people.

Brackman also misses *the important historical fact* in attempting to refute the Nation of Islam’s charge that “Jews ‘raped and exploited black women with abandon’.”<sup>123</sup> He states that “*The Secret Relationship* . . . is given to ideological labels rather than historical analysis” in that it “applies

the word 'rape' to every instance of interracial sex in slavery times."<sup>124</sup> There "certainly were" rapes, Brackman continues, ". . . but even under slavery there were interracial unions that require a different term such as 'cohabitation' or 'common law marriage'."<sup>125</sup> He adds that "in New World slave societies . . . like the Caribbean where whites were a small minority and women—especially white women—were scarce, interracial sex was both pervasive and accepted as legitimate."<sup>126</sup> "Accepted as legitimate" by whom? Black women forced to kneel in slavery had no legal rights! Brackman misses the fundamental historical fact of the *rape* of slavery itself, which already had forced Black women into a prostrate position. It is as if he is saying that even though they were already prone and powerless, they did relax "under" those circumstances and "accepted . . . interracial sex."

Brackman's inability to understand the historical and current reality of African Americans is also seen in his comparison of the suffering endured by Black and Jewish persons. He calls "the forced transfer of millions of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas . . . a monumental crime against humanity," but disagrees with its characterization "as 'the black holocaust'."<sup>127</sup> He asks, "Was the purpose or intent of the Atlantic slave trade to destroy or annihilate black Africans as a people? No, the purpose was not mass extermination but rather massive exploitation of their labor for the unjust enrichment of others."<sup>128</sup> Conversely, "The goal of Nazi camps like Auschwitz was dead Jews for the lime pits; the goal of the Atlantic slave trade was live blacks to be sold to the plantation owners."<sup>129</sup> Brackman assumes that the "motive of the slave owners may have been mercenary gain rather than genocidal murder," but recognizes that their "*reckless disregard of human life* [italics added] resulted in millions of deaths," and "looked at this way . . . was indeed a genocidal enterprise."<sup>130</sup> But Brackman believes that "it is extremely important for accurate historical understanding . . . to keep in mind the difference between a system that killed millions as a by-product

of other purposes like labor exploitation and the extraction of profit, and a system—the Nazi death camps—whose sole reason for existence was total annihilation of a people.”<sup>131</sup>

Brackman again unwittingly does violence to the past and current reality of African Americans. The enslavement of Africans involved far more than a “reckless disregard for human life” that “resulted in millions of deaths.” Africans were not only seen as exploitable but as *expendable*. In a paper dealing with racism in the Americas, Dr. Jeane Sindab, Executive Secretary of the World Council of Churches Programme to Combat Racism, stated that “the Goree curator in Senegal puts the total number of Africans who lost their lives during the middle passage, or before by resisting capture, at 200 million. The number of slaves who actually reached the Americas were in the tens of millions.”<sup>132</sup> Sindab also quotes writer Paul Garden Lauren’s description of the enslavement of Africans: “In terms of total numbers, focus upon a particular place and tragic brutality it had no parallel in human history. . . . In many ways it was the most inhuman aspect of European history. For the middle passage remained for centuries one of the most brutal experiences inflicted by men upon men.”<sup>133</sup>

The cover and title of Brackman’s paperback book—*Ministry of Lies: The Truth Behind the Nation of Islam’s “The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews”*—is laid out in various colors, with only the word “*Truth*” spelled in the color White. The association of truth with White may be a coincidence. But Brackman’s indictment of the charges contained in *The Secret Relationship* appears to be colored by an inability, as a member of the dominant White society, to understand the reality of African Americans.

This brief survey of the Jewish literature on Farrakhan’s “relentless record of hate” reveals the omission of the context of a most offensive anti-Semitic statement attributed to the Nation of

Islam leader. The Anti-Defamation League's special report on "Louis Farrakhan: In His Own Words" matter-of-factly states that Farrakhan said, "Hitler was a very great man."<sup>134</sup> Kenneth S. Stern, the American Jewish Committee program specialist on anti-Semitism and extremism, wrote,

On March 11, 1984, he [Farrakhan] said: "Here comes the Jews [sic] don't like Farrakhan, so they call me a Hitler. Well, that's a good name. Hitler was a very great man. He wasn't great for me as a black person, but he was a great German. He rose [sic] Germany up from nothing. Well, in a sense you could say there's similarity in that we are rising our people up from nothing." When asked to clarify his remarks, Farrakhan said that Hitler "was indeed a great man, but also wicked—wickedly great." As further clarification, Farrakhan "explained" that "The Zionists made a deal with Adolph Hitler, the same people that condemn me for saying Hitler was great but wickedly great."<sup>135</sup>

Following is an excerpt from a transcript of the actual comments about Hitler made by Farrakhan in his March 11 radio broadcast:

Here comes the Jews don't like Farrakhan, so they call me Hitler. Well, that's a good name. Hitler was a very great man. He wasn't great for me as a black person, but he was a great German. *Now I'm not proud of Hitler's evil against Jewish people, but that's a matter of record* [italics added]. He rose Germany up from nothing. Well, in a sense you could say there's similarity in that we are rising our people up from nothing. *But don't compare me with your wicked killers* [italics added].<sup>136</sup>

It can be argued that the description of Hitler is similar to that used by William L. Shirer, author of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, and honored by Israel before his death a few years ago. Shirer wrote in the Preface, "Adolph Hitler is probably the last of the great adventurer-conquerors in the tradition of Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon. . . ." <sup>137</sup>

In 1984, *Boston Globe* columnist David Nyhan reported that the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith deleted Farrakhan's words, "Now I'm not proud of Hitler's evil against Jewish people, but that's a matter of record. . . . But don't compare me with your wicked killers."<sup>138</sup> Nyhan wrote that the ADL defended the deletions: "Alan Schwartz, assistant director of research for the ADL, in New York, said in a phone interview . . . that he omitted the two sentences for reasons of

brevity and that he in no way twisted Farrakhan's remarks to make the black Muslim leader seem more pro-Hitler than he is."<sup>139</sup> Nyhan quoted Schwartz at length:

"I don't think it is misleading at all," he [Schwartz] said. His omissions did not "substantially alter the import and meaning" and "clearly, he was seeking to promote the idea of a positive attitude toward Hitler." Quibbling over the omission of the two sentences is "splitting hairs," he said. "It was a statement, at the bottom line, in praise of Hitler, which is a moral outrage," Schwartz maintained. Schwartz and other ADL officials interviewed about this believe the case is open-and-shut.<sup>140</sup>

Nyhan then articulated the ADL's obvious distortion of Farrakhan's words: "But the fact remains: Farrakhan originally said, 'I'm not proud of Hitler's evil against Jewish people,' and he added, 'Don't compare me with your wicked killers.' To delete these phrases changes Farrakhan's meaning."<sup>141</sup> However, neither readers in 1984 nor during the March were made aware of Farrakhan's rejection of the comparison with and condemnation of Hitler as one of "your wicked killers." The deletion of such a critical context and the reported explaining away of its significance could indicate a tendency (on the part of those who constantly condemn Farrakhan as anti-Semitic) to only report and print the news that *fits* the agenda or bias of the racial status quo. The omission of such an important context makes suspect other charges against Farrakhan. It also indicates the need of an in-depth study of the "secret relationship" between Jewish and Blacks committed to uncovering the whole truth rather than only those facts that fit preconceived views.

The genocide of six million Jews by Nazi Germany was a horrific crime, made even more inhuman by the silence of the Western world which failed to "think of the solitude of the victims, how alone they were."<sup>142</sup> A similar kind of obliviousness is imposed on African Americans today by an inequitable, White-favored hierarchy that uses beliefs in equal opportunity, integration and the racism of equality to deny it exists. In this hierarchy, many African Americans endure a slow, silent,

systemic, invisible genocide, made all the more insidious by denial. This focus on a double standard is not intended to dismiss or side-step any hateful and divisive teaching of Farrakhan's. The aim is to show how Farrakhan's assumed "anti-white racism,"<sup>143</sup> which this writer believes to be a contradiction in terms, can be used to dismiss or side-step his message about the "white supremacy" of an anti-Black racial hierarchy.

### **Associating Farrakhan with White Supremists and Disassociating Him from Revered Black Leaders**

With the White-favored hierarchy safely rationalized away by belief in the racism of equality and the use of a double standard, another bias was possible: the associating of Farrakhan with White supremists and the disassociating of him from traditional and revered Black leaders. The belief that racism is basically a personal matter between Black and White individuals is a form of "white magic" that makes disappear Farrakhan's and a White supremacist's differing histories and positions on the racially-discriminatory hierarchy. Such a denial of their contrary realities allows the media to compare Farrakhan's message about "white supremacy" with the extremism of a White supremacist. Thus, the media repeatedly equated Farrakhan with Detective Mark Fuhrman, David Duke, the Ku Klux Klan and even Governor George Wallace, Senator Joseph McCarthy, Stalin and Hitler.

A favorite was the comparison of Farrakhan with Fuhrman. The morning of the Million Man March, a *Washington Post* editorial stated,

To take the raw, offensive things Minister Farrakhan has said about white people in general, gays, Jews and others and pronounce that "some critics" have found them raw and offensive is tantamount to giving, say, Mark Fuhrman the benefit of the same qualification. One will never say that "critics" found Mark Fuhrman's commentary racist or insulting or whatever. It was all that and worse, pure garbage.<sup>144</sup>

*Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer wrote,

Colin Powell equated this popinjay with another vain-glorious racist, Mark Fuhrman. An apt equation, but there is a difference between the two. Fuhrman has been rightly banished and can never appear in polite society again. His counterpart [namely, Farrakhan], meanwhile leads a march of 400,000 people, receives the homage of a parade of black leaders and now enters the mainstream of American political life. This is more than a tragedy. It is a disgrace.<sup>145</sup>

*The Washington Post's* coverage of President Clinton's speech, delivered on the morning of the March, highlighted yet another comparison between Farrakhan and Fuhrman:

"America, we must clean our house of racism," the President told students at the University of Texas this morning, in remarks shortly before the beginning of the main program at the Million Man March.

Two men for whom many Americans are potent symbols of the house's soiled condition—march leader Louis Farrakhan and former Los Angeles Detective Mark Fuhrman—got prominent attention in Clinton's speech though not by name. "One million men are right to be standing up for personal responsibility. But 1 million men do not make right one man's message of malice and division," Clinton said in a line that aides said was intended as a rebuke to Farrakhan's history of anti-Semitic remarks.

Turning to Fuhrman, whose taped interviews laden with racial epithets became prominent in the O. J. Simpson murder case, Clinton lectured whites, "The taped voice of one policeman should fill you with outrage."<sup>146</sup>

A *New York Times* news story stated,

Without mentioning either by name, Mr. Clinton made Louis Farrakhan and Mark Fuhrman, the former Los Angeles police detective, into metaphors for the shortcomings of blacks and whites alike, challenging listeners to bridge the gulf of mistrust that persists a century and a half after Lincoln warned that "a house divided against itself cannot stand."<sup>147</sup>

*The Boston Globe* reported,

The President praised participants in the Million Man March as "right to be standing up for personal responsibility." But in a reference to Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader who organized the March, Clinton said: "One million men do not make right one man's message of malice and division. No good house was ever built on a bad foundation."

The President also singled out former Los Angeles police detective Mark Fuhrman, a witness in the Simpson trial, and said: "To our white citizens, I say . . . we must clean the house of white America of racism. The taped voice of one policeman should fill you with outrage," a reference to recordings of Fuhrman's racist comments played at the Simpson trial.<sup>148</sup>

The comparison of Farrakhan with Fuhrman makes possible the dismissing of any talk about "white supremacy" by the former. The comparison also distances the hierarchy from the obvious racism of one of its enforcers.

Farrakhan was equated with various White supremacists as if their contrary histories and realities and issues on the hierarchy's White-dominated power structure did not exist. A *Washington Post* editorial, for example, equated Farrakhan with Alabama Governor George Wallace. The editorial could not separate Farrakhan's widely resonating "message" of "responsibility" and "atonement" from his "vile anti-white, anti-gay, anti-Jewish pronouncements," any more than the newspaper could separate Alabama Governor George Wallace's spreading of "anti-black racial hatred . . . to a growing white constituency" from his appeal "to poor whites on valid . . . issues of economic hardship and alienation."<sup>149</sup> Here Wallace and Farrakhan are extricated from their different and contrary racial, political, economic, legal and social positions and realities and made to appear the same. The editorial would lead the reader to believe that Minister Farrakhan's "vile anti-white . . . pronouncements" are similar to, but *not a reaction against*, "the anti-black racial hatred" of a Governor Wallace spawned by a White-dominated hierarchy. Here the oppressed is equated with the oppressor. There is no parallel between Farrakhan and a White supremacist like Governor Wallace. They are as different as Black and White. Wallace represents the cause of the pain against which Farrakhan is reacting.



Like the *Post* editorial, columnists drew similar parallels between Farrakhan's Nation of Islam and White supremacists, as if oblivious to the opposing histories and differing realities of Black and White people. *New York Times* columnist A. M. Rosenthal cautioned against the thinking of most Americans that "the Nation of Islam and white supremacist groups are merely fringes of American society."<sup>150</sup> He told his readers that "we will have a million, or whatever, black men demonstrating under Mr. Farrakhan's chic leadership," and warned, "Still, that other thing could never happen—a mass Washington demonstration by white Nazis while we watched nodding understandably. Could it?"<sup>151</sup>

*Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen made a similar association as Rosenthal:

This march is sometimes compared to the one Martin Luther King, Jr. organized in 1963. It ought to be compared to the one the Ku Klux Klan held in 1925, when some 40,000 Klansmen marched down Pennsylvania Avenue. There, too, bigger causes were proclaimed—not lynchings and cross burnings, but "Americanism" and the immigrant threat: "Americans be on guard. The Jews control the moving picture, jewelry and clothing industries and own us financially."

If Powell or anyone else wants to know why this march should be condemned and not either ignored or supported, all they need to do is throw a sheet over Farrakhan and listen to him that way.

It's 1925 all over again.<sup>152</sup>

*New York Times* columnist Frank Rich wrote that "our cities continue on an apocalyptic spiral . . . as the likes of Mr. Farrakhan, Benjamin Chavis and their white extremist counterparts scheme to exploit the crisis [as] we wait and wait for some leader in Washington who might regard the Million Man March as an urgent call to action."<sup>153</sup>

In a piece called "Dueling Bigotries: Nation of Islam vs. white Racists,"<sup>154</sup> *The New York Times* reported "that Mr. Farrakhan and his Nation of Islam rhetorically have much in common with

the racist white right, and not just their shared anti-Semitism. Other parallels can be readily found on the World Wide Web.”<sup>155</sup> The “other parallels” involve a comparison of the similar positions of the Nation of Islam, the National Alliance (a West Virginia-based white supremacist group), Christian identity online and the Ku Klux Klan on such issues as “Separation of the Races,” “The Chosen People,” and “The State of the Union.”<sup>156</sup>

*New York Times* columnist A. M. Rosenthal compared Farrakhan to Hitler in a piece critical of General Colin Powell for his stated support of the “purpose” of the March, though unable to attend. Rosenthal wrote,

Purpose? Like every demagogue, Mr. Farrakhan presents a list of shiny “purposes” as among his objectives—self-help, respect, training, jobs, bringing a “community” together and making it powerful. That was part of Hitler’s message. Sorry, Adolph, if happens I won’t be in Munich for your march, but I support the purpose? White supremacists mouth those “purposes” as they throw filth at blacks. What would we say of whites who join demonstrations of the Fuhrmans of America, announcing they supported their “purpose”?<sup>157</sup>

*New York Times* columnist John Kifner wrote that national Anti-Defamation League director Abraham H. Foxman, “who has been sparring with Mr. Farrakhan over his disparaging remarks about Jews,” said that Farrakhan’s “speech [at the Million Man March] did not raise any possibility of dialogue.”<sup>158</sup> Kifner also stated that Foxman was “upset by the uniform Fruit of Islam guards who surrounded Mr. Farrakhan and stationed themselves along the Mall . . . [and] likened them to the supporters of Hitler and said, ‘I felt disturbed by the presence of those brownshirts’.”<sup>159</sup>

The associating of Farrakhan with White supremacists serves two purposes. The first one is to discredit Farrakhan, dismiss his message about “white supremacy” and undermine his power to unify people of color in a common struggle to change America’s hierarchy of race, access, power and wealth. The other purpose is to disassociate the hierarchy from those White people and

leaders—whose racism and power it has nurtured and enabled—who now threaten the stability of the racial status quo. The constant equating of Farrakhan with various White supremacists, from Fuhrman to Hitler, turns him into the personification of evil. Thus upon being informed by this writer of the research topic of this paper, two Caucasian and one Asian women commented separately that Farrakhan is “dangerous,” “frightening,” “sinister.” The aim of turning him into a pariah is to neutralize his message about “white supremacy” and his power to unify African Americans in a common struggle to create a level political and economic playing field.

The repeated *association* of Farrakhan with White supremacists was accompanied by numerous stories *disassociating* him from traditional and revered Black leaders in the African-American community. According to the media, the way to the Million Man March was paved with the bad intentions of Farrakhan. A raging public debate between Black leaders for and against the March, centering on Farrakhan’s role, was featured if not facilitated by the three newspapers. Apart from editorials and the op-ed pieces of columnists, many news stories on the March, often defined an event laden with controversy and divisiveness. Stories repeatedly presented the conflicting positions of Black leaders and groups prior to, during and after the March.

In a *New York Times* article titled “Black March Stirs Passion and Protests” writer Don Terry reported that, “The Rev. Henry J. Lyons, president of the largely black National Baptist Convention, which has 8.5 million members, said he was advising his followers not to take part because of the theological differences with Mr. Farrakhan’s Muslims and because women have not been included as full partners or participants.”<sup>160</sup> The story continued, “But dozens of other Christian ministers, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis, the national director of the march,

are encouraging the men in their congregations and organizations to attend.”<sup>161</sup> The story further commented that,

The goals of the march are vague, but it is generating excitement and arguments in black neighborhoods and on radio shows around the country. Some black men say the march represents a fresh bold step toward black unity and self-reliance in a national climate of racial tension, mistrust and government cutbacks. For others, who say the idea of unity is laughable because black women have been told not to come, the march could signal the beginning of a regressive retreat into self-segregation and conservative politics.<sup>162</sup>

The titles alone of news stories in *The Washington Post* suggested a march marred by conflict and discord among Black leaders and groups. They included: “Jackson Endorses Men’s March: Black Caucus, Others Back Farrakhan Event”<sup>163</sup>; “Leading Black Baptists Deny Supporting Farrakhan March: Jackson’s Statement Called an ‘Absolute Lie’ ”<sup>164</sup>; “Jackson Retreats As Black Pastors Debate on March”<sup>165</sup>; “In Last-Minute Switch, Ministers Disown March: Local Group Cites Event’s Possible Divisiveness”<sup>166</sup>; “March Has Solid Support of Blacks, Poll Finds”<sup>167</sup>; “Criticism of Farrakhan’s Million Man March Muted: Nation of Islam Leader’s Effort Pushing Him to Forefront of Black Leadership”<sup>168</sup>; and “Supporting March a Big Step for Some: Black Leaders Weigh Unity Against Political Costs and Farrakhan Factor.”<sup>169</sup>

These *Post* news stories focused on the Black leaders and groups endorsing and opposing the March, with Farrakhan at the center of the controversy. Michael A. Fletcher wrote, “More leaders are stepping forward to endorse the march even if they remain fearful of elevating Farrakhan and Chavis to new heights of leadership. The Congressional Black Caucus, Jesse L. Jackson and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference are among those backing the march.”<sup>170</sup> Fletcher then continued, “But other African American leaders are keeping their distance mostly to avoid a distracting debate about race sparked by the controversial march organizers. Even in mostly black

cities, leaders who often rely on biracial business and civic coalitions to move their agendas are wary.”<sup>171</sup> The writer stated that “several groups are not backing the march especially because of Farrakhan’s central role. Among them are the National Urban League, the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. and the National Progressive Baptist Convention.”<sup>172</sup>

In a *New York Times* story called “Organizers Defend Role of Farrakhan In March by blacks,” writer Francis X. Clines noted, “As plans for the march proceed, Representative Gary A. Franks, Republican of Connecticut, came forward as the first black member of Congress to oppose it openly, calling Mr. Farrakhan’s Nation of Islam the black racist equivalent of the Ku Klux Klan.”<sup>173</sup> Clines stated that “various black political church and social organizations, as well as black leaders have endorsed the march, including the Black Congressional Caucus and the Rev. Jesse Jackson. But among the dissenting groups are the N.A.A.C.P., the National Urban League and an organization of black Baptist ministers.”<sup>174</sup> The writer observed that “the power of Mr. Farrakhan to stir controversy and leave some black leaders wary was made clear earlier this week when Mary Frances Berry, chairwoman of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, said she would not endorse the march.”<sup>175</sup> The story then quoted her as saying, “Mr. Farrakhan routinely expresses the most despicable anti-Semitic, racist, sexist and homophobic attitudes imaginable. Mr. Chavis’ role in practically destroying the N.A.A.C.P. makes any enterprise in which he is engaged suspect.”<sup>176</sup> Clines cited other Black leaders distancing themselves from or supporting the march:

Within the Congressional Black Caucus individual expressions have ranged from the noticeable silence of Representative John Lewis, the Democrat of Georgia who is a hero of the 1960’s anti-segregation marches and one of the most respected civil rights leaders in Congress, to the joy of Representative Barbara-Rose Collins that such a day is finally occurring in American history. . . . Beyond Washington some ambivalence can be discerned among elected black officials.<sup>177</sup>

The ambivalence toward the March is seen in the title of another *Times* news story: "Black Women Are Split Over All-Male March on Washington."<sup>178</sup> Michel Marriott reported that the March had angered Black women: "While it is difficult to determine just how divided black women are about this long-planned assault on black male stagnation, there is an unmistakable buzz of debate in black women's circles about the wisdom of the march. Expressions of exhilaration and frustration can be heard from book groups to church groups, from board rooms to bedrooms. And some of the buzz is downright angry."<sup>179</sup> Marriott then referred to "increasing numbers of high-profile women . . . [who] have begun to speak out, to write and to organize in opposition."<sup>180</sup> One such woman was "Angela Davis, the dreadlocked icon of 1970s black radicalism and a philosophy professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz [who] joined a panel of five women and one man to condemn the march. . . ."<sup>181</sup> Davis was quoted as saying

the march was flawed by "retrograde politics" and outmoded models of male-dominated approaches to rebuilding black families and communities.

"Justice cannot be served," Ms. Davis said, reading from the group's prepared statement, "by countering a distorted racist view of black manhood with a narrowly sexist vision of men stand 'a degree above women.'"<sup>182</sup>

*The Boston Globe* published fewer news stories on the March, but its coverage also communicated an event swirling in divisiveness. A *Globe* news story by staff writer Zachary R. Dowdy, called "Million Man March Stirs Enthusiasm and Debate," concentrated on the dividedness of the Black community locally over the March. Dowdy reported,

Local dissension mirrors national debate over the march and its merits. National figures, such as Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Congressional Black Caucus, support it while some mainstream organizations, such as the National Urban League and two major black religious groups, the National Baptist Convention and the Progressive National Baptist Convention, which consist of more than 10 million people, do not.<sup>183</sup>

Dowdy continued, “The march strikes an especially harsh chord with black women who criticize its all-male character as exclusionary. Other black women support and embrace the march.”<sup>184</sup> He pointed out the extent of the “debate” over the March in Boston: “Opinions for and against the march, its format and its creator, are on the lips of almost everyone in Boston’s black community.”<sup>185</sup>

On successive days shortly before the March, two controversies appearing in the media further inflamed the debate between opponents and supporters of the event. The first controversy was whether support for the March meant endorsing Farrakhan. A *New York Times* story titled, “Organizers Defend Role of Farrakhan In March by Blacks” and written by Francis X. Clines, reported that “organizers today pointedly rebuffed efforts by elected blacks and other political figures to endorse the demonstration but not its leader, Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam.”<sup>186</sup> The “elected blacks” making “the attempt” were “mainline black political groups like the Black Congressional Caucus” and the “other political figures” cited as part of that attempt was “*the white House* [italics added].”<sup>187</sup> The story explained that “both the White House and mainline black political groups . . . have been emphasizing just this distinction between the march and its leader.”<sup>188</sup> The reason: “they are wary of Mr. Farrakhan whom critics view as a race-baiter and anti-Semite.”<sup>189</sup> Michael D. McCurry, White House spokesman, was quoted as trying “to draw a distinction between the goals of the march and some of its organizers whom he did not name.”<sup>190</sup> But he did name the problem: “Our problem has been all along with this march that there are some, frankly, who’ve got other agendas and other motivation who are associated with this march. . . . *But that doesn’t mean necessarily that we can’t see if we can’t get something positive coming out of the event* [italics added].”<sup>191</sup>

The controversy was also detailed in a *Washington Post* story titled, "March Called Endorsement of Farrakhan: Comments by Nation of Islam Aide, Chavis Anger Some Event Backers."<sup>192</sup> The story began with the statement that Farrakhan's top aide sparked "a furor among some march supporters and organizers" in saying "yesterday that anyone who attends [the] Million Man March on Washington is expressing support for Farrakhan and his beliefs, contradicting recent statements by Farrakhan and other march leaders."<sup>193</sup> The story continued, "Leonard Muhammad, Farrakhan's chief of staff, said at a Washington news conference that the march will serve as a barometer of support for Farrakhan and confirm his position as 'a leader of black people.'"<sup>194</sup> The story also reported that the event's national director, Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., "appeared to endorse Muhammad's view at the news conference" in asking, "Why are black men responding to this call? . . . Who else in America could have issued this call and [gotten] this type of response? . . . This is an attempt now to separate the message from the messenger, and it is not going to work."<sup>195</sup> If "the attempt" was not successful, it evidently had an impact. The following day *The New York Times* published a story entitled, "Wary of Divisions, Leaders of Million Man March Play Down Farrakhan Role."<sup>196</sup> The story stated that "Chavis . . . downplayed Mr. Farrakhan's nationwide influence among blacks. 'President Clinton is President, not the leader of white America,' he said. . . . '*Why would we even be asked such a question?*' [italics added] We have been blessed by God to have many leaders."<sup>197</sup>

The other controversy emerged shortly thereafter in the front page of *The Washington Post* in a story by Michael A. Fletcher and Hamil R. Harris entitled, "Rift Between Farrakhan, Jewish Leaders Reemerges: Nation of Islam Leader's Taped Remarks Spark Rebuttals."<sup>198</sup> The story stated that the "long-standing antagonism between . . . Farrakhan and prominent Jewish leaders resurfaced



yesterday, just three days before the Million Man March on Washington, after release of an interview in which Farrakhan accused some Jews and others of exploiting blacks financially and called them 'bloodsuckers.'<sup>199</sup> The story reported that in the interview "Farrakhan . . . said some Jews and others take money out of black communities but give nothing back, linked Jews to the American slave trade and charged that one Jewish person encouraged a murder plot against him because the person 'hated me as a Jew.'<sup>200</sup> His comments were condemned by "several Jewish leaders, who said Farrakhan's statements demonstrate continued racism and should discourage people from participating in the Million Man March."<sup>201</sup> Farrakhan's use of the word "bloodsuckers" in relation to Jewish merchants was widely reported and condemned by editorial writers, columnists and Black and White political and civil rights leaders quoted in news stories.

*The New York Times* noted that "in a report out of Chicago today, the Associated Press reported . . . Mr. Farrakhan had accused the news media of 'using words that were spoken out of context to create division.'<sup>202</sup> *The Boston Globe* also noted that "Farrakhan, speaking in Chicago yesterday, said his comments were taken out of context and that black men would not be deterred from attending the march by news stories."<sup>203</sup> *But neither newspaper cited the context to which Farrakhan was referring.*

The context is contained in an Associated Press story called "Farrakhan Claims He Was Duped."<sup>204</sup> The story reported,

Louis Farrakhan says he was duped by a reporter into describing some Jews as "bloodsuckers."

"I hate to admit that I was tricked," the Nation of Islam leader who had been frequently criticized for anti-Semitic remarks said Sunday in a speech at his Chicago mosque. Farrakhan said he was asked in an Oct. 4 interview with a reporter from Reuters Television to explain another Muslim minister's use of the term "bloodsucker." The question, he said, "was the

trap. . . . I said when I was a young man growing up, many Jewish merchants were in the black community. . . . They took from the community and they didn't give back," he said. "That's why that term was applied to those Jews. But I said they have been replaced by Palestinians, Koreans and even some of our own black people. So all of those who do this can be typed under that name."<sup>205</sup>

While Farrakhan stated that "the TV interview was held back until a few days before his Million Man March in Washington, then portions of it were taken out of context," Bob Crooke, spokesperson for Reuters America, asserted that "Reuters Television had told Farrakhan the interview would be part of a profile released right before the march. He was quoted as saying "The statement attributed to Mr. Farrakhan is accurate and in context."<sup>206</sup>

In the wake of the two controversies, *New York Times* writer Michael Janofsky pursued Rev. Jesse Jackson over the level of his support for Farrakhan. In a story titled "Debate on March, and Farrakhan, Persists as Black Men Converge on the Capitol," written for the day of the March, Janofsky stated, "Mr. Jackson, a former Presidential candidate, expressed ardent support for the march today. And while he would not condemn Mr. Farrakhan for his views, Mr. Jackson urged critics to consider 'the state of emergency in which the black community finds itself.'"<sup>207</sup> After quoting Jackson's description of the "pain and predicament . . . driving this march," Janofsky wrote, "*Mr. Jackson evaded several attempts to be pinned down on his level of support for Mr. Farrakhan*" [italics added].<sup>208</sup> Janofsky continued, "Despite calls to separate the leader from the event, the march . . . could prove a turning point for Mr. Farrakhan who is known by many Americans mostly for his racist comments."<sup>209</sup>

The newspapers not only reported the "debate" between the Black leaders, editorials and columns intensified the division by criticizing supporters and praising opponents of the March. Editorial power was unleashed in an apparent attempt to determine who the Black leaders should be

for African Americans and who they should not be. Rev. Jesse Jackson was subjected to considerable criticism for his “ardent support for the march” and refusal “to be pinned down on his level of support for Mr. Farrakhan.” A *New York Times* editorial declared, “In endorsing the march, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Black Congressional Caucus have foolishly let a misguided solidarity about the march’s public goals divert their attention from the ideas and character of its leader. Mary Frances Berry, chairwoman of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, has *correctly* [italics added] diagnosed Mr. Farrakhan’s pathology as racist, sexist, anti-Semitic and homophobic.”<sup>210</sup> The editorial also cited “the coalition of black feminists led by Angela Davis and Jewell Jackson McCabe” as “emphasiz[ing] one of the *many* [italics added] dangers inherent in this march: . . . the march’s message that it is ‘time for men to step forward and women to step back,’ ” which “they labeled as . . . an insult to 400 years of burden-sharing by [both] black men and women.”<sup>211</sup>

Jackson, however, was not the only Black leader targeted for criticism due to his open support of the Million Man March. A number of op-ed page pieces for and against the March by Black leaders was published, encouraging the “debate” and giving the appearance of providing access to the papers by those supporting the March. Yet the very prominent Black leaders who had guest columns published were criticized by columnists. *The Washington Post* printed Howard University political science chair Ronald Walters’ piece titled “This One’s Not for Followers,”<sup>212</sup> after Walters was attacked by columnist Richard Cohen in a piece called “Marching Behind Farrakhan.”<sup>213</sup> Cohen wrote,

Black manhood “needs to be reasserted,” says Ron Walters, a political science professor at Howard University. To that end he and other notable blacks are supporting the so-called Million Man March, whose organizers are Louis Farrakhan and Benjamin Chavis—one a racist and anti-Semite, the other an alleged sexual harasser. If this is asserting manhood then the children of Hamelin were mighty men one and all. They followed the Pied Piper right into

the Weser River. . . . If Walters and others, black or white, really wanted to assert manhood, they would tell Farrakhan to kiss off. Their march should be against him and his racist, antisemitic thinking—not in support of it. There is no separating this march from its leader any more than Farrakhan's good can be separated from his bad. This Pied Piper plays an ugly tune.<sup>214</sup>

Cohen also targeted other supporters of the March. He wondered what “Edward Rendell, the (white and Jewish) mayor of Philadelphia and . . . Kurt Schmoke, the (black and Christian) mayor of Baltimore” could “be thinking. Farrakhan is a virtual Renaissance man of hate: whites, Jews, homosexuals—and he's not so hot on women, either.”<sup>215</sup>

The guest column by Harvard Afro-American studies professor Cornel West, called “Why I'm Marching in Washington,”<sup>216</sup> was published by *The New York Times* after he was criticized by columnist A. M. Rosenthal. In a piece called “The Swamp of Hatred,” Rosenthal declared,

For any African-American who marches to say he is in support of Mr. Farrakhan's “purposes” but not his message of hatred is a deliberate suspension of moral and political standards, a synonym for hypocrisy. For politicians like Jesse Jackson or Al Sharpton, or writers like Cornel West, to speak from his rostrum will be to spit in the eye of Americans who believe in racial and religious conciliation. For Maya Angelou to be a token female in a demonstration that bars women will be embarrassingly obsequious.<sup>217</sup>

Neither the guest columns by Black leaders opposing the March nor the leaders themselves were criticized by the newspapers. On the contrary, Harvard public service professor of jurisprudence A. Leon Higginbotham Jr.'s piece on “Why I Didn't March” was published simultaneously in *The Washington Post*<sup>218</sup> and *The Boston Globe*.<sup>219</sup> U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Chairperson Mary Frances Berry's letter to *The Washington Post*, titled “I Have Not Endorsed the March,”<sup>220</sup> made its way into various news stories, a *New York Times* editorial and columns including Higginbotham's piece.

The day before the March prominent Black civil rights leaders Roger Wilkins and Julian Bond were quoted in separate *Washington Post* news stories as sharing the view that “you cannot separate the messenger from the message.” In one story, it was reported that “Julian Bond, an NAACP board member and veteran civil rights activist who does not support the march, was among those concerned that participation in the demonstration would be interpreted as an endorsement of Farrakhan’s views.”<sup>221</sup> Bond was then quoted: “ ‘It is clear from what Farrakhan’s lieutenants are saying that they are taking everyone who comes to the march as a Farrakhan supporter.’ ”<sup>222</sup> The other story reported that “Roger Wilkins, history professor at George Mason University, warns that those marching tomorrow cannot ignore . . . Farrakhan’s commitment to black separatism” or “his controversial views on women and Jews.”<sup>223</sup> Wilkins was reported to have added: “You can’t march down the street and say ‘I’m for black male uplift, but I’m not for Farrakhan.’ . . . Hundreds of thousands of people are marching and whatever their private thoughts are, they’re going to be viewed as supporting Farrakhan.”<sup>224</sup>

On the day of the demonstration *The New York Times* devoted a full page to “The March on Washington: Talk of Unity, Fears of Divisiveness.” The overview featured a center-of-the-page Who’s Who of Black leaders supporting and opposing the March.<sup>225</sup> The Black leaders were grouped separately under “Whether to Be One in a Million,” with those “Supporting or Attending the March” on one side and those “Not Attending the March” on the other.<sup>226</sup> Surrounding the list of 12 Black leaders “Supporting or Attending the March” and the group of 12 “Not Attending the March,” was an extensive story by Michael Janofsky titled “Debate on March, and Farrakhan Persists as Black Men Converge on the Capitol.”<sup>227</sup> Janofsky went into detail about the Who’s Who of Black leaders for and against the March. He wrote that “Mr. Farrakhan remained at the center of the debate about the

march today, but some supporters continued to argue that his role was being given too much prominence.”<sup>228</sup> Janofsky quoted “Ronald Walters, a political science professor at Howard University, who acknowledged the disgust with which many people view Mr. Farrakhan for his years of racist and anti-Semitic comments. But Mr. Walters argued that . . . the politics of one individual grows insignificant beside the everyday worries over adequate food, housing and unemployment.”<sup>229</sup>

Janofsky then presented the controversy between supporters and opponents of the March:

The rally has won the support of many leading black groups, like the Congressional Black Caucus and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as well as prominent individuals, like the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson and big-city mayors, like Dennis Archer of Detroit, Marion S. Berry Jr. of Washington and Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore, all of whom say they plan to attend.

But many other respected black voices, including leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, and the National Baptist Convention, have not endorsed the march, citing Mr. Farrakhan’s racist oratory and the separatist agenda of the Nation of Islam as wrong ideals. Roy Innis, chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality, said this weekend that march organizers were “exploiting the legitimate aspirations of the rank and file of black America.”

Expressing many of the same sentiments, black political leaders, like Representative John Lewis, a Democrat from Georgia and a veteran of civil rights battles in the 1960’s, and two black House Republicans J. C. Watts of Oklahoma and Gary A. Franks of Connecticut, said they did not plan to march.

In New York, H. Carl McCall, the State Comptroller, was adamant about refusing to attend.... But several officials said that they plan to attend, and that they considered the march important. “Anytime you put that many people together in unity, it’s excellent,” said Adam Clayton Powell 4th, a New York City Councilman. . . .

The march has also been denounced by black women’s groups and gay and lesbian groups for excluding them from participating. [S]everal black women, including Maya Angelou, the poet, and Rosa Parks, from the early civil rights period have been invited to speak. . . . But as many leading black voices have withheld their support, they have nonetheless expressed sympathy for the goals of the march. To shore up support, organizers last week backed off an assertion that support for the march equaled support for Mr. Farrakhan, fearing that larger issues might be obscured by Mr. Farrakhan’s reputation among many blacks and whites as a racist and hatemonger.<sup>230</sup>

Even after the March, the newspapers continued to criticize March supporters and to praise those who chose not to participate. In a *Boston Globe* editorial, entitled “Farrakhan’s brothers,” the writer assumed, “The Million Man March was not quite the Farrakhan coronation many feared it would become but the fact that Jesse Jackson allowed himself to be treated essentially as an afterthought speaks volumes.”<sup>231</sup> *Washington Post* writer Richard Cohen spoke “volumes” in a column called “What Was Jesse Jackson Thinking?”<sup>232</sup> *New York Times* columnist A. M. Rosenthal also wondered about Jackson: “Once I expected candor from Jesse Jackson and sometimes got it. But there he was—a big man in a big demonstration with no whites, no women, no Asians, no Latinos. The new rainbow—unisex and unicolor.”<sup>233</sup> *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer also zeroed in on Jackson: “And on this stage, Jesse Jackson illuminated the sad trajectory of his career and, perhaps symbolically, of the traditional civil rights leadership. . . . [A] man who had once marched with King and run for President, reduced to a warm-up act for the strutting popinjay that Jackson himself had once, long ago, brought to the national scene.”<sup>234</sup> *Washington Post* writer Robert D. Novak faulted Jackson’s “duality in his speech on the Mall. While pleading with black fathers to take an interest in their children’s schooling, he delivered an absurd assault on Wall Street and corporate America for investing in prisons.”<sup>235</sup> Novak was clear that the aim of the March was “the elevation of Minister Farrakhan and the redemption of Rev. Chavis. That is why,” Novak continued “Rep. John Lewis of Georgia, still an icon for the civil rights movement a generation after he sustained vocal and physical abuse from white racists, courageously said no to the march.”<sup>236</sup>

General Colin Powell became one of the media’s favorite leaders of African-American race to set over against Farrakhan. *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer, advocating the

presidential candidacy of Colin Powell, wrote that the Million Man March was indicative of the “black separation coursing through the country.”<sup>237</sup> He stated that “against this tragic turn toward black separatism comes Colin Powell, a man who calls his autobiography not a personal journey, not an African American journey but ‘An American Journey’; whose self-identity is one of soldier, patriot, and, above all, American . . . proudly American . . . proudly black.”<sup>238</sup> Krauthammer further noted that “Powell proudly identifies with the integrationist vision. His very history personifies it,” and that “for such a man to win the presidency would have a transforming effect on Americans’ view of racial possibilities. Among African Americans it would present, by stunning counter-example, the single greatest challenge since King to the voices of separation and alienation.”<sup>239</sup>

Farrakhan invited Powell to speak at the March,<sup>240</sup> but Powell declined, “because of commitments to promote his autobiography, ‘My American Journey’.”<sup>241</sup> But on the morning of the March, Powell spoke out against Farrakhan in a *CBS This Morning* interview, and his comments received considerable coverage. A *New York Times* story, called “Powell Praises Marchers, But Denounces Farrakhan,” stated that Powell said he did not attend because “I was concerned that my presence on the stage with Farrakhan might give him a level of credibility.”<sup>242</sup> He likened Farrakhan to Detective Mark Fuhrman and said, “We’ve come too far in this country; we cannot go back into the swamp of racism. And whether it comes from Minister Farrakhan or a Mark Fuhrman, it’s the same thing.”<sup>243</sup> While deploring “the message of Minister Farrakhan,” Powell said that he could not “ignore what’s happening in the presence of several hundred thousand African Americans who care about themselves, . . . their future . . . the future of this country.”<sup>244</sup> A similar story appeared in *The Boston Globe* entitled “Powell condemns Farrakhan, but praises goals of march.”<sup>245</sup>



Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* “News Analysis” stories on the March the following day not only cited Powell’s condemnation of Farrakhan but emphasized Powell’s popularity. *Times* writer R. W. Apple, Jr. stated, “General Powell equated Mr. Farrakhan with Mark Fuhrman, the Los Angeles detective in the Simpson case, describing both as racists who could not be tolerated.”<sup>246</sup> Apple later concluded his analysis with, “General Powell is shown by some polls to be the most respected man in the country regardless of race.”<sup>247</sup>

In his news analysis on the March, *Washington Post* writer David Maraniss referred to Powell as “the most popular black man in America today—among whites at least.”<sup>248</sup> Maraniss then proceeded to Powell’s comments on the March and Farrakhan: writing that had he attended, Powell would have been “‘torn between the opportunity to present a message of family and reconciliation, but . . . a little reluctant to lend much credibility’ to Farrakhan. Earlier in the day, during an hour-long interview on CBS, Powell had placed Farrakhan’s form of racism in the same category with that of former Los Angeles police detective Mark Fuhrman, the notorious witness of the Simpson trial. ‘We’ve come too far in this country; we can’t go back into the swamp of racism whether it comes from Minister Farrakhan or Mark Fuhrman.’ ”<sup>249</sup>

But even General Colin Powell, “the most respected man in the country,” was criticized by certain columnists for not condemning the March as well as Farrakhan. *New York Times* columnist A. M. Rosenthal perceived that Powell was unwittingly supporting “the swamp.” He saw as “a disappointing reply” Powell telling Farrakhan “that he would be out of town for the demonstration but supported its ‘purpose’—without specifying what it was.”<sup>250</sup> Rosenthal went on to state that Farrakhan’s purpose was to lead people into “The Swamp of Hatred,”<sup>251</sup> which was the title of his column.

*Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen also believed Powell “weakly responded”<sup>252</sup> to Farrakhan’s invitation, which led Cohen to write a column called “Just Say No To Farrakhan.”<sup>253</sup> Cohen stated that “It is with some reluctance that I reproach Powell, whom (the record will show) I admire. But with the fame—not to mention all those books being sold—comes a certain accountability. If you look like a leader, you better act like one. In that regard Powell may turn out to be just another pretty face.”<sup>254</sup> Cohen then contrasted “Powell’s supine response with the snappy words of Mary Frances Berry, Chairperson of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and an African American. . . . ‘I do not support the leadership of Mr. Farrakhan. . . . Mr. Farrakhan routinely expresses the most despicable, antisemitic, racist, sexist and homophobic attitudes imaginable.’”<sup>255</sup> Cohen then said, “That, General Powell is how you issue an order.”<sup>256</sup>

*Washington Post* columnist Robert D. Novak wrote that Powell’s response to Farrakhan’s invitation to the March contributed to “Farrakhan’s tour de force.”<sup>257</sup> He stated that “Powell’s political advisors were appalled when his office announced that, in response to Farrakhan’s invitation, the general did approve of the march but could not be there because of a previous engagement.”<sup>258</sup> According to Novak, the advisors said “that Powell would fix that when he was interviewed by ‘CBS Morning News’ just as the march began.”<sup>259</sup> But Novak did not believe Powell corrected himself: “He did call Farrakhan’s racist, antisemitic remarks ‘a disgrace,’ comparing the Nation of Islam leader with rogue cop Mark Fuhrman. But Powell went on to say of the 400,000 marchers, ‘They are coming here for the purpose of uplifting African Americans as part of the American community.’”<sup>260</sup> Powell’s “response to Farrakhan’s invitation” and support “of the 400,000 marchers” led Novak to add, “Thus did the currently most popular American of any color join President Clinton and much of the political establishment in adding credibility to Farrakhan’s thrust for national black leadership.”<sup>261</sup>

The person whom the media turned to especially in its use of Black leaders to undermine Farrakhan's leadership among African Americans was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The media's repeated association of Farrakhan with White supremacists was matched by the constant disassociation of him from Martin Luther King. In a *New York Times* news story called "Black March Stirs Passion and Protests," writer Don Terry appeared to editorialize in comparing the Million Man March with the 1963 March on Washington led by Dr. King:

Mr. Chavis . . . said he expected more than 1.2 million black men to attend. If even half that number shows up, the march will more than double the size of the famous 1963 March on Washington, when the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. *electrified* [italics added] 250,000 *men and women of all colors* [italics added] with his "I have a dream" speech, imploring the country to live up to its ideals of fairness. The march [on the other hand,] has been shrouded in other controversies, including charges of sexism.<sup>262</sup>

*Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer contrasted King's emphasis on "integration" with Farrakhan's on "separatism." He wrote,

In an ironic and tragic turn of the civil rights revolution, there is today a powerful movement within the black community away from Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of integration toward a new kind of separatism, self-imposed and adversarial. Its most extreme advocate is, of course, Louis Farrakhan, who portrays African Americans as an occupied people in an alien land.<sup>263</sup>

In his piece called "Marching Behind a Bigot," *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen stated,

Are we to conclude that in all of black America, 12.5 per cent of the population and about 35 million people the only person who can command a vast audience and lead a march on Washington is not, as formerly, a humane and enlightened minister [Martin Luther King Jr.], but a gutter Jew-hater cum [sic] racist?<sup>264</sup>

*New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert disassociated Farrakhan from King in a piece entitled, "Harmony or Discord?" He wrote,

On that long-ago August afternoon, Dr. King dreamed that some day children of all races could play together, learn together, live together. A nation listened as he said, "I have a dream today!"

Today there will be another gathering in Washington. . . . It will not be an attempt to bring seemingly disparate elements together—to explore for example, the sameness of the rhythms that run through music and the human heart. And unlike the effort by Dr. King and his colleagues in 1963, it will not be an attempt "to transform the jangling discords of our nation" by celebrating, in blatant and brave defiance of all the odds, the ideal of brotherhood.

Today's gathering is the opposite of that. It is the theme of inclusiveness turned upside down. Whites need not apply, nor women of any hue. Instead of unity, it has promoted divisiveness on many fronts. As if whites vs. blacks were not conflict enough, Louis Farrakhan has succeeded in pitting blacks against blacks.<sup>265</sup>

*The Washington Post* carried an extensive front-page story by David Maraniss the day of the March on two brothers entitled, "Worship and Brotherhood on the Road to Washington: For Chicago Siblings Fond Recollections of King's 'Dream' in 63."<sup>266</sup> The brothers, whom Maraniss interviewed, both "cherish[ed] King's speech."<sup>267</sup> The one brother's "favorite line . . . was about the children: 'that one day . . . little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.'"<sup>268</sup> Maraniss continued,

They came from march organizer Louis Farrakhan's city, but they did not come because of him. For the most part, they said they want nothing to do with him, especially not with his expressions of hate. They came because they wanted to say something about themselves and to be a small part of the long struggle for civil rights in America.<sup>269</sup>

Maraniss pointed out that "the Watkins brothers did not drive to Washington to make a religious statement, nor to express black separatist sentiments."<sup>270</sup> They grew up "under de facto segregation in Chicago . . . but never lost faith in King's dream of a truly integrated society."<sup>271</sup> Maraniss' concluded,

And when they arrived on the Mall yesterday and walked toward the Lincoln Memorial, as Bobby was overcome by the echoes of Martin Luther King's voice, James reflected on how things would be if King were still alive. "Would there be a Million Man March?" James

Watkins asked. "Would King be leading the march instead of Farrakhan? I sure would love to hear him tomorrow."<sup>272</sup>

In his news analysis of the March, *New York Times* writer R. W. Apple Jr. stated,

Today's was the largest assembly of black Americans in the capitol since the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke in 1963 of his great dream—a dream that appealed to the government to help build a color-blind society. But this time the appeal was by blacks to blacks and, if not explicitly separatist, spelled out no clear role for white people.<sup>273</sup>

In a piece entitled "Asleep in History 101," *Washington Post* columnist Edwin M. Yoder, Jr. complained that many Americans have a short memory regarding race relations. He lamented,

The saddest aspect of this amnesia is that the movement to right these wrongs so promisingly begun by Walter White, Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr. and their like, has sunk into attitudes of victimology under the influence of reprobates like Louis Farrakhan and Benjamin Chavis. The White-Marshall-King ideal was an equal break for all: to be judged one by one as persons, according to the content of one's character. The Farrakhan-Chavis ideal is inverted racism.<sup>274</sup>

*Boston Globe* political cartoonist Paul Szep contrasted Farrakhan with King in a drawing of Farrakhan. Farrakhan's features were formed and filled in by masses of Black marchers, some with arms raised as if worshipping him or symbolizing a Black power salute. On the side, two Black persons are standing beside each other, and the taller one (perhaps a father) is pointing to Farrakhan and saying to the smaller one, "I knew Martin Luther King. . . . 'And this Farrakhan guy is no Martin Luther King!'"<sup>275</sup>

The media's role in polarizing Black leaders and dividing the Black community over the Million Man March was denied by Ombudsperson Geneva Overholser writing for the *Washington Post* in a column entitled "The Struggle for Inclusiveness."<sup>276</sup> Overholser noted that the "O. J. Simpson verdict [and] now . . . the Million Man March [have] all of America [focused on] the subject of race."<sup>277</sup> She realized that "for a long time, U.S. newspapers . . . contributed to the division among races by falling short of telling the story of *all* Americans."<sup>278</sup> She stated that "one

reason not all of American life was represented in newspapers is that not all of American life was represented in newsrooms.”<sup>279</sup> But Overholser assumed that “newspapers are better able now to include all the voices [because] they have come a long way from the days of homogeneity.”<sup>280</sup> She emphasized, “The *Post* in particular. This newsroom today is filled with men and women, young and old, of every color, looking like the world they cover.”<sup>281</sup>

In all fairness, the media did allow certain “voices” in defense or support of the March to be heard. In a piece called “A Chance To Purge The Poison,” *Washington Post* columnist Courtland Milloy wrote, “To criticize Farrakhan while minimizing the oppressive conditions that gave rise to him strikes me as especially naive. . . . The Nation of Islam is not the ‘Sons of the Gestapo,’ nor some white supremacist militia that seems to be blowing up America bit by bit with far less foul press than Louis Farrakhan gets.”<sup>282</sup> In another column, Milloy reported a conversation with a Jewish woman at a birthday party: “She said the Nation of Islam reminded her of Nazi Brownshirts, although they are, in fact, a small group of unarmed men who get rid of drug dealers in public housing projects and bring order out of the chaos in America’s penal system.”<sup>283</sup> Milloy’s favorable commentary on the good work of the “unarmed men,” however, did not lead him or the *Washington Post* to respond three weeks later when the contract of a security firm in Baltimore run by Nation of Islam members was canceled. This event was only reported by the *Post* as “tremendously disappointing” to Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke who called the cancellation “politically motivated,” and led Abdul Arif Muhammad, general counsel for the Nation of Islam Security Agency, to accuse the Department of Housing and Urban Development of bowing “to the pressure of the American Jewish League and the American Jewish Congress.”<sup>284</sup>

In another *Washington Post* article called “The March, Men and the Greater Good,” columnist Dorothy Gilliam wrote, “One soul-shattering statistic tells me it’s urgent for African American men to come together in the Million Man March on Monday: 79,680 African American boys and men were killed between 1985 and 1993—many of them by other young African American men.”<sup>285</sup> She stated that it is “a world of steadily deteriorating black communities . . . a world in which congressional leaders have responded, at best, with a giant yawn, and, at worst, with a rash of vicious, ignorant, punishing legislation designed to redirect to the rich even the crumbs that the poor had been allowed. So,” continued Gilliam “to all who object to this march because it is Farrakhan’s idea, I say ‘Get real,’ and look at the problems this march focuses on.”<sup>286</sup>

*Boston Globe* columnist Patricia Smith also urged people to “Give march a chance.”<sup>287</sup> She stated, “Once it became clear that the event was inevitable—that it was well-organized, dignified and appealing to a growing number of men—it became necessary to swiftly and methodically crush the organizer and the spirit of the march.”<sup>288</sup> Smith noted that “some Jews and women are incensed that their alleged detractor is in the national spotlight, but there’s one important fact they’re overlooking. . . . In the urban jungle many inhabit, it’s not open season on Jews and women. They are not being blamed for everything from the breakdown of the modern family to the kidnaping of two toddlers in South Carolina to the gradual poisoning of society.”<sup>289</sup>

*Boston Globe* columnist Derrick Z. Jackson wrote two pieces that focused on positive elements of the March: “Lift every voice and sing in unity in Washington march”<sup>290</sup> and “By taking a stand, they defied a million stereotypes.”<sup>291</sup> Jackson also wrote a column called “The Million Man Chop,” in which he pointed out the inconsistency of “white commentators” eager to drain Farrakhan’s “swamp of hatred” but not their own “swamp of hatred”—seen in the Atlanta Braves

baseball team's "Million Man Chop" that "keeps alive the message that the only good Indian is a dead Indian."<sup>292</sup> Jackson's point: "white commentators tell black men to give Farrakhan the ax. They do not tell white sports fans to give Ted Turner the chop."<sup>293</sup>

Following the March, *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry wrote that the leadership Farrakhan "brings is necessary and possibly lifesaving for . . . thousands of young men, already in trouble or on the verge, who are starving for responsible leadership."<sup>294</sup> Aware that "Farrakhan offers a picnic table laden with good dishes and a few foul—even poisonous—ones," Raspberry concluded that "until somebody comes forth with a less-flawed banquet for a leadership-starved generation, we might want to put off upending the table and begin teaching our children what is good for them—and what they shouldn't swallow."<sup>295</sup>

Interestingly, most of these very few "voices" finding any good in the Million Man March were those of Black columnists. Their "voices" were actually drowned out by a chorus of other "voices." This small sprinkling of "voices" serves another function: they help mainstream media assume the appearance of having a "multi-colored" newsroom. If "newsrooms" today are "filled with men and women . . . of every color," as *Washington Post* Ombudsman Geneva Overholser claimed, the editorial and publisher's offices are White-directed. This assumption is readily substantiated in this analysis of editorials, columns and news stories on the Million Man March and Farrakhan. Thus, the nature and the extent of "the struggle for inclusiveness" in "newsrooms" to which Overholser referred is determined by White owners and managers. Rev. Jesse Jackson alluded to that fact when he asserted, one year following Overholser's claim, that "the media has not done a good job of keeping up [minority hiring] because some of the most segregated places [in America] are newsrooms."<sup>296</sup>



*The Washington Post*'s censure of one of its own Black writers may indicate the extent to which "all the voices" are, in fact, included in newspapers across the nation. Nathan McCall was criticized in the *Post* and made to appear devious for writing an upbeat column on Farrakhan and the March without informing readers that Farrakhan had been circulating a \$6 million book proposal of his autobiography and that McCall would assist him in writing the book.<sup>297</sup> Upon learning of the intended book proposal, a *Post* story set the record straight: " 'We simply had no idea,' said Jodie T. Allen, Outlook's editor. . . . Had she known about the book proposal, Allen said, 'we would have made it clear that Nathan was working with Louis Farrakhan.' Readers, she said, 'should have known that this was not some *independent observer* [italics added] looking at the march from the outside.' "<sup>298</sup> The *Post* also "made it clear" in a noticeably framed editor's note on the op-ed page: "An article on the Million Man March by Nathan McCall should have disclosed that McCall's agent had approached a publisher about the possibility of his co-authoring an autobiography of march leader Louis Farrakhan. Outlook was unaware of this proposal until last week."<sup>299</sup> McCall was quoted as saying that "there is no book. . . . It's an idea. . . . The news has falsely implied I am working with Farrakhan and that's just not the case."<sup>300</sup> But Ombudsman Geneva Overholser used McCall as an example of the *Post*'s ability to scrutinize itself and not just others: "From time to time we show that we *can* print stories that embarrass us. Just last week media writer Howard Kurtz noted that an Outlook piece on Louis Farrakhan by Nathan McCall, a Post reporter on leave, had failed to disclose that McCall is planning to write a book with Farrakhan."<sup>301</sup>

McCall was portrayed as less than objective. Perhaps what he wrote about the racial hierarchy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. may also have been objectionable:

The Million Man March represents a kind of therapy for black men . . . a chance to come together and confront our shortcomings and celebrate our strengths . . . and . . . get a little

bit of this tension off of our chests. The strain inside us comes from interrelated forces operating within and outside African-American communities nationwide; it's a confluence of social, economic and political powers that seem to be working in unison to bring us down.... And none of those pressures shows any signs of letting up. I follow news accounts of those constantly high unemployment, poverty and death rates. . . .

But the depression that many black men feel is not just confined to the so-called underclass. I see plenty of hardworking, law-abiding middle-class and professional blacks—men who play meticulously by the white man's rules—frustrated and enraged because they see those rules manipulated to white advantage. . . . I suspect that, for some white Americans, complaints about Farrakhan are a smoke screen to conceal their blanket contempt for any black man who attempts to lift us up. White America may now pledge allegiance to the memory of Martin Luther King but black America has not forgotten that King, who preached love, peace and every other noble virtue that we claim to embrace, was intensely disliked and opposed by many whites when he was alive. His plan for a march on Washington 32 years ago was also described as divisive, unnecessary, [and] potentially violent.<sup>302</sup>

If Nathan McCall was not “some independent observer looking at the march from the outside” as *Washington Post* Outlook editor Jodie T. Allen charged, any bias did not prevent him from disagreeing with Farrakhan over the exclusion of women from the March:

There is one group that I sympathize with in all this: black women. I think it was a mistake not to include sisters in the march. It's true that if black men atone for their wrongs, black women stand to benefit. But they, too, need to be there for this therapy—they're hurting as much as anyone. I'm hoping that those who feel strongly enough about taking part will come out to the Mall and join the men.<sup>303</sup>

If *Washington Post* writer Nathan McCall lacked the objectivity of an “independent observer” in his column, “Makes Me Wanna March,” opinion pieces, editorials and even certain news stories about the March and Farrakhan's speech that made numerous writers want to cry reveal far less objectivity. The meanings given to the behavior of the marchers and the criticisms of Farrakhan's speech and motives lead to yet another bias discovered in the study.

## Imposing Reality on, Rather Than Disclosing the Reality of the Marchers and Farrakhan

The print media's coverage of the Million Man March reflects *the inability of writers to understand the reality of African Americans*. They tended to impose their reality *on* rather than disclose the reality *of* the marchers and Farrakhan. This tendency to interpret rather than experience another's reality is seen in the commentary of *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer who reduced the marchers to a mindless mass. Following the March, he wrote,

Farrakhan craves validation from the white establishment. He called the march to get it. A man who can *summon* [italics added] 400,000 people to the steps of the capitol is a man that the white establishment feels obligated to treat with respect. Farrakhan made the case quite *cunningly* [italics added]: "If my heart were that dark [with anti-Semitism], how is the . . . message so bright . . . the response so magnificent?" Meaning: If he's really so bad, how does one explain the hundreds of thousands of men, overwhelmingly of goodwill and decency, who followed him there?

The answer, as no child of this century can be unaware, is that *millions of people of decency and goodwill can give—have given—legitimacy and power to leaders of the darkest hearts* [italics added]. Stalin's fellow travelers included numberless people of idealism and good intent. But that tells us nothing about Stalin's goodness, much about his cunning.

Among large sections of Monday's marchers, there was a genuine heartwarming sense of camaraderie, solidarity and goodwill. It was Farrakhan's genius to understand that if he could summon such people he could appropriate that good for himself. And he did. . . . The political fact of the day was created on the stage, a stage that Farrakhan and his personal militia quite literally controlled. On this stage, speaker after speaker, after praising God, praised Farrakhan. On this stage, one mainstream leader after another saluted him.<sup>304</sup>

The assumption that participants lacked the integrity of their own self-directed convictions also was attributed to Black leaders by *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen. His belief that Farrakhan's "mind is infected with the maggots of bigotry" led him to assert that Black leaders who supported the March were not in their right mind: "I don't need you to validate me," he [Farrakhan] told white America on Monday, and that, of course, is the truth of it. What he needs is other blacks to validate him. And that, out of weakness or misguided sincerity, too many black leaders have done. On Monday, there was only one leader present. All the others were followers."<sup>305</sup>

The failure to recognize the ability (let alone the right) of Black individuals to think for themselves, and make informed decisions, about Farrakhan and the March is reflected in a piece written by *New York Times* columnist A. M. Rosenthal:

Once, a blink ago, the Farrakhan drive for resegregation in the name of black power, the deliberately threatening ugliness of language and manner, infuriated virtually all Americans. Nobody outside the Nation of Islam seemed to think Mr. Farrakhan was fashionable, dignified or anything but loathsome. Certainly nobody thought that one day assorted black politicians, writers and entertainers would become part of his entourage in an all-black, all-male demonstration in Washington. Somebody sold the rainbow.

By now, it does not matter whether a million men march with Farrakhan or a third that many. The attention paid to him, and the support or silence from African Americans outside the Nation of Islam, give him national publicity, which gives him status, which gives him political influence and power. Some African Americans tell me it is black business, so stay out. Not on your life, or mine. Nothing is so important in America than what blacks and whites do in the name of race, to themselves or each other.<sup>306</sup>

In a post-March column, Rosenthal followed up with a similar perception of the marchers as irresponsible people who needed but failed to receive strong leadership to discourage them from participating in the March:

The inspiration was supposed to move black men to take more responsibility for their own actions and for the problems of crime, drugs, poverty and abuse of women. But if the demonstrators did not hold themselves responsible or were not held responsible by American leaders and American society for building up the messenger of separation, then how can they ever be expected to hold themselves responsible for anything else?

Did not American leaders, elected or not, have their own responsibility—to urge black men to stay away because separation would destroy their own future? . . . Mr. Clinton and Mr. Powell both decided to play it safe—denounce Mr. Farrakhan, but not urge African Americans to vote against him with their feet, which might have carried a political price. They stayed out of town, and out of leadership. The marchers played into the hands of anti-black racism. The demonstration made problems like drugs, poverty, crime and violence sound as if they were invitations to the march—matters for blacks only. For this both blacks and whites will suffer.

Only one leader, one group, can profit from this *perversion of reality* [italics added]. The day belonged to Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam. To deny this reality, to refuse to state

and acknowledge its damage, will do the country even more harm than was done on the day of Louis Farrakhan's march.<sup>307</sup>

The inability, or unwillingness, to recognize—which is the precondition for affirming—the marchers as authentic human beings in themselves is seen in a piece by *Washington Post* columnist Robert D. Novak:

Farrakhan has pulled off a remarkable tour de force in winning such widespread approval of his "message." But, what exactly is that message: Farrakhan's ostensible call for "atonement and reconciliation" was overshadowed by the overriding anti-white racism of his 2 1/2-hour keynote harangue. It is an open question how many African American men came to the Mall to atone and how many came instead to vent their hostility against life in America. . . .

If Farrakhan's dominance were not reason enough for white and black leaders to disconnect from the march, his new lieutenant and organizer—the Rev. Benjamin Chavis—should have been. Chavis, charged with sexual harassment and financial mismanagement as executive director of the NAACP, nearly brought down that venerable organization. . . . Chavis' theme has never been atonement, much less self-responsibility. . . .

Mass marches in Washington over the past 30 years have had definable targets. . . . *But nobody made clear to the hundreds of thousands of black men Monday what they were really after* [italics added]. To the political world, it was obvious enough: the elevation of Minister Farrakhan and the redemption of Rev. Chavis.<sup>308</sup>

A *Washington Post* article by Mary McGrory entitled "Talking Race," wrongly assumed that Black men can't think for themselves. She began her piece by stating that,

After listening to Bill Clinton's admirable speech from Austin about race in America, I did exactly what he told me to do: I went out and talked about race with black people.

It was easy. I went to the Mall, to the Million Man March organized by Louis Farrakhan, and went at it with a number of black men . . . [who] were perfectly willing to talk—and to escort me through the ever-widening divide between the black and white views of the world.<sup>309</sup>

McGrory reported talking with five African American men about their and her mostly differing views on the March, Farrakhan's "anti-Semitism," the attitudes of Jews toward Blacks, the O. J. Simpson verdict, Clinton and Colin Powell.<sup>310</sup> During the conversations, she injected, "Probably

nobody noticed that when his turn came for atonement and reconciliation, Farrakhan, who, my circle reminded me, was 'just the convener of the march, not the leader,' exhibited none for past excesses."<sup>311</sup> Upon being "escorted through the ever-widening divide," McGrory concluded, "*Black America has been getting its information from Farrakhan who is eaten alive with paranoia and an inability to shut his mouth*" [italics added].<sup>312</sup> Evidently the few marchers she "went at it with" must have gotten to her for her to react with such an apparently angry and irrational generalization. (And to think that it was Nathan McCall who was described as not being an "independent observer"!)

Another writer made assumptions that suggest a paternalism and arrogance born of obliviousness to the reality of African Americans. *Washington Post* writer Steve Twomey's "A Newsworthy Message From The Marchers" was,

Marchers said frequently that they resent outsiders judging who should lead them. But who speaks for the black community is an important public issue. And in this case, it's Farrakhan, a man who—however worthy his call to end violence and promote responsibility—salts his utterances with suspicion and prejudice and, I suspect, doesn't really believe in the United States of America the way most of us do.

Although few at the march endorsed the whole Farrakhan package, far too many seemed too willing to pass off his outrageous rants over the years as merely a downside to a great leader whose inspirational messages were the engine behind the turnout. One guy said that when your house is on fire, you don't worry about who's calling the fire department. So the only one with a phone in all of black America is Louis Farrakhan? If so, what a comment on the paucity of leaders.

In the end, a white face bobbing in the black sea couldn't help but be moved by the turnout, the friendliness, the delight on the faces, the camaraderie, the tranquility—and be depressed that all this stemmed from the call of a deeply flawed man and from so many deeply entrenched problems facing us all. In a better America, the man's appeal will fade and the nation will solve its problems, and no one will feel the need to march like this again.<sup>313</sup>

Twomey's assumptions leave much of his apparently hierarchical thinking unstated between the lines. Farrakhan obviously "doesn't believe in the United States of America the way most of us

[white people] do” because the America he believes that he and other Black persons are living in is “separate and unequal.” If there are “so many deeply entrenched problems facing *us all*” [italics added], evidently “the only one with a phone in all of” *White America* is Louis Farrakhan. With all that “friendliness, the delight on the faces, the camaraderie, the tranquility,” America would be worse off indeed if no one “will feel the need to march like this again.”

*Washington Post* columnist Edwin M. Yoder, Jr. actually used history as if to escape from the reality of African Americans. His obliviousness to the reality of African Americans is seen in his use of Black history to assume that what was “startling” about the O. J. Simpson verdict was not the very different reactions of White and Black persons to his acquittal, but the astonishment of White people to the jubilation of Black persons.<sup>314</sup> Yoder then revealed his own unawareness in writing, “Any one who is shocked by the reaction of black people when one of their own *beats the system* [italics added] . . . has slept through American History.”<sup>315</sup> Yoder evidently assumed that Black people were elated because Simpson “beat the system” and not because the system finally worked in “one of their own” being found innocent by a predominantly Black but integrated jury’s unanimous verdict. Evidently in Yoder’s mind, Black jurors could not think objectively when it came to deciding the guilt or innocence of “one of their own . . . even if . . . he is a rather odd representative of black consciousness.”<sup>316</sup> He communicated that he shared the same sentiment as the many White people who believed Simpson was and should have been found guilty.

After presenting a brief history of the discrimination against Black people in America, Yoder wrote, “American blacks are entitled to a sense of grievance about the way the law *was so long used* [italics added] to restrict them to gathering the crumbs under the national table. It is a human response to a special history, but it is also a sterile response.”<sup>317</sup> Yoder did not explain why the

continuing “grievance” of Black people, including the grievances that led so many to march, was “a sterile response.” It was as if their “gathering the crumbs under the national table” were history. Yoder would like to have separated the March from Farrakhan. He hoped that the “next time there’s a million man march, perhaps it will be led by worthier figures—Roger Wilkins, Vernon Jordan, Ben Hooks and others, and perhaps it will take the form of a study-in, open to the young of every race. The purpose should be to teach the lesson Lincoln tried to teach us more than a century and a quarter ago: We cannot escape history.”<sup>318</sup>

Since association with a leader of “such bigotry”<sup>319</sup> did not discourage “unaccountable” numbers of Black men from marching, *the flip side of the media’s hierarchical coin was to separate the marchers from Farrakhan*. Black men, portrayed as not being able to think for themselves, were perceived on the Washington Mall as asserting their independence from Farrakhan. Marchers seen as a mindless mass by certain writers were seen by others as having minds of their own—*which could be read*. The media’s failure to understand the reality of Black Americans is further seen in the interpretations of what the marchers on the Mall were thinking and feeling and doing. The unconscious arrogance and paternalism of numerous writers were disclosed in their assumptions, generalizations and distortions of the reality of the marchers and Farrakhan. The perceptions of these writers were, in reality, projections of their own biased agenda. That agenda: to diminish the power and influence of Minister Louis Farrakhan to unify and lead people of color at the bottom of the hierarchy to create an equitable balance of power.

*Washington Post* writer Steve Twomey was one of several writers who disclosed that agenda in disassociating the marchers from Farrakhan. With his “white face bobbing in the black sea,” Twomey perceived,



the march dwarfed him [Farrakhan]. He became a sideshow. At times during the day, many in the crowd weren't even paying attention to what was being said on the podium. They were paying attention to themselves. They were photographing themselves, videotaping themselves, tape-recording themselves, *enjoying* themselves, because they knew the day would be famous. The crowd was stunned by its own number and thrilled by its own peace, because even black men worry about other black men. . . . The message of the march wasn't Farrakhan. The message was that so many black men felt a need to be with other black men, to feel included instead of excluded, to like each other instead of fearing each other, to join and get busy. . . . If only Farrakhan had had no role.<sup>320</sup>

The marchers were contrasted with Farrakhan in another story by *Washington Post* staff writer David Maraniss called "A Clear Day, a Cloud of Contradictions." He wrote,

Yet another notable contradiction yesterday was the apparent gulf between Farrakhan's rhetoric and the mood of the gathering in the hours leading up to his address. Farrakhan's followers and separatists seemed vastly outnumbered by middle-aged professional black men who traveled to Washington not in answer to the fiery minister's call but because of their own diverse longings. . . . Men came with cameras and camcorders draped around their necks and posed for pictures in groups of six and eight. Comfortably clad in tennis shoes, sweat shirts and baseball caps, many of them roamed the streets running from the Capitol to the Washington Monument like they were at a college reunion, stopping only occasionally to listen to the speeches until the end, when first Jesse L. Jackson and then Farrakhan took the stage.<sup>321</sup>

Maraniss ended his extensive analysis by repeating his perception of the contrast between the marchers and Farrakhan:

In detailing the 1963 march in his book "Parting the Waters," a portrait of King and the Civil Rights movement, author Taylor Branch offered a concluding thought that could apply to the Million Man March as well. There seemed to be "no shape or definition" to the march from the leaders, Branch wrote. "This privilege fell to the anonymous people who had spent the night on trains and buses."<sup>322</sup>

Maraniss's attempt to undermine Farrakhan's influence is also seen in his even separating the March itself from Farrakhan: "Viewed from a cultural and sociological perspective, there was a certain momentum, if not inevitability, to the Million Man March that had little to do with Farrakhan."<sup>323</sup> Maraniss explained,

[Y]esterday's rally came at a time when race relations had returned to the forefront of the national debate. The O. J. Simpson trial and verdict, the accounts of police brutality in Los Angeles and Philadelphia, the dramatic surge in popularity of possible presidential candidate Colin L. Powell, President Clinton's rhetorical search for common ground, the congressional debate over welfare and immigration, the cycle of drug use, crime and violence in the inner cities—all of these factors seemed to have combined in the public consciousness in recent months to form a critical mass.<sup>324</sup>

Maraniss's analysis contradicted reality. An initial story on the Million Man March appeared in *The Washington Post* itself on December 12, 1994.<sup>325</sup> The planned March not only created its own momentum across the country, but along with extensive grassroots organizing, the momentum is indicated in the evidently large number of stories, featuring or mentioning the March, published in over 250 daily newspapers. The Lexis-Nexis computer data base noted, in response to the search for stories on the Million Man March between December 12, 1994 and October 15, 1995 (the day before the March): "Your search has been interrupted because it probably will retrieve more than 1,000 documents." The search for stories on Farrakhan for that same time period also received the same notation.

Maraniss further distorted reality in writing that "President Clinton's rhetorical search for common ground" was part of a "critical mass" that gave "a certain momentum . . . to the Million Man March that had little to do with Farrakhan." Clinton was not searching for "common ground" but for a safe place to hide from the "racial divide."<sup>326</sup> The Million Man March provided the momentum that forced "President Clinton's rhetorical search for common ground," which he found in Texas *on the morning of the March*. Maraniss's apparent need to diminish Farrakhan's power and influence is seen in his putting Clinton's "cart" before Farrakhan's "horse."

Resembling Maraniss's news analysis on "A Clear day, a Cloud of Contradictions" was *New York Times* writer R. W. Apple, Jr.'s "News Analysis" of the March which had a similarly divisively

focused title called “Ardor and Ambiguity.”<sup>327</sup> Whereas Maraniss used “contradictions” to separate the marchers from Farrakhan, Apple employed “ambiguity” to blur the relationship. He assumed,

The day was entangled in ambiguity and illuminated by ardor. From most of the orators, the message was clear enough: black men must unify, take responsibility for their own well-being and that of their families, and in the words of Damu Smith of Greenpeace, “lay down our Uzis and Tec 9’s and not kill each other anymore.” But the assembly’s organizer, Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam, sounded a much more aggressive and divisive note, calling for African-American leadership in building “a more perfect union” but also attacking Lincoln, the Founding Fathers, President Clinton and “the power and arrogance” of white America. . . .

For politicians and many others, the march presented difficult conflicts between message and messenger. Nearly everyone welcomes anything that will slow or end the downward spiral into crime, drug addiction and fractured families that has plagued black communities. But few welcome Mr. Farrakhan as the chief messenger, and most fear that he will gain legitimacy from the march. . . .

Except for Jesse Jackson, no nationally known politician took part in the march. In his television appearance this morning, General Powell equated Mr. Farrakhan with Mark Fuhrman, the Los Angeles detective in the Simpson case, describing both as racists who could not be tolerated. . . . General Powell is shown by some polls to be the most respected man in the country, regardless of race.<sup>328</sup>

President Clinton and General Powell are the only specific persons Apple cites in stating that “*few* [italics added] welcome Mr. Farrakhan as the chief messenger” in addressing the severe problems plaguing “black communities . . . and *most* [italics added] fear that he will gain legitimacy from the march.” The condemnation of Farrakhan by the President of the United States and by “General Powell . . . the most respected man in the country” did not discourage a huge throng of African American men from showing up on the Washington Mall—a throng so *unbelievably big* that the U.S. Park Police needed the repeated assistance of Boston University’s Center for Remote Sensing to count the number.<sup>329</sup> Apple appeared to have difficulty recognizing that this throng of Black men were among “the few [to] welcome Farrakhan as the chief messenger.”<sup>330</sup>

Nor was it left to columnists and writers to separate the “sheep” from the “goat.” *New York Times* reporter Francis X Clines laced his front-page news story with interpretations of Farrakhan being out-of-step with the marchers. He perceived that,

The rally was marked by a spirit of individual resolve as much as dramatic protest, with speeches by many prominent blacks, including the poet Maya Angelou and the Rev. Jesse Jackson. But it wound down in something of an ambivalent mood as Mr. Farrakhan delivered a booming, rambling keynote speech that threatened to eclipse the occasion. Before the end of the 12-hour rally, members of the audience could be seen dispersing across the Mall even as Mr. Farrakhan, surrounded by Nation of Islam guards, extended his remarks with arcane references to the Bible, numerology and black renewal, laced with his sulfurous interpretations of history and denunciations of white supremacy. . . .

Hours of intense speeches were offered to a relaxed dedicated crowd seemed more intent on its own camaraderie and personal renewal than on the abstruse passionate manner of Mr. Farrakhan’s messages in urging black men to take the initiative in their lives and communities. “black man, you don’t have to bash white people,” he declared near the end of a two-hour speech in which he seemed to relish criticizing the capital’s ranking white politicians. “All we got to do is go back home and turn our communities into productive places.”<sup>331</sup>

*Washington Post* staff writers Howard Schneider and Lonnae O’Neal Parker saw “a sea of black men”<sup>332</sup> whose presence had little if anything to do with Farrakhan. Their placing of the marchers in opposition to Farrakhan is inferred in the title of their news story: “What Counted the Most Were the Men Who Were There.”<sup>333</sup> They reported,

By the time everyone assembled on the Mall, the weeks of organizing, the controversy over minister Louis Farrakhan, the hours of speeches from the podium, all seemed secondary to the men who were there. . . . The crowd livened to the speakers later on, listening raptly to top-billed orators such as poet Maya Angelou, march organizer the Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Jesse L. Jackson and Farrakhan until after 6 p.m. . . .

But the people themselves were the main event, sending through their simple presence a message as provocative as any that came from the podium. “Brothers, brothers, look at the love,” said a tall man with a large, neatly trimmed Afro. He walked through the crowd with his arms outstretched, shaking hands. Like the crowds at other epochal gatherings in Washington—against the Vietnam War, for civil rights—they brought a seriousness of purpose along with the joy of fellowship. Whether they agreed with Farrakhan’s rhetoric, his call for a day of atonement resonated deeply. . . .

It was a day of diversity even within the black community, as the motivations of hundreds of thousands of people, from the exotic to the mainstream, sought common ground. In the end, Farrakhan's involvement neither attracted nor deterred participation. After all, explained Joseph Williams, a 34-year-old salesman from Prince George's County, the issues at stake in yesterday's march are too important to let one man's controversial views deter others from taking a stand. "The message is for black men to hold themselves accountable," said Williams, and in doing so to redefine themselves in the eyes of America.

That, said Williams and others, is the common purpose they will carry back to cities and towns across the nation. *They had not come in anger, they had not come to demand or criticize but to look within and spread a message of affirmation and pride* [italics added].<sup>334</sup>

Schneider and O'Neal Parker's ability to read the minds of African Americans led to the apparent generalization that "the sea of black men" were only concerned with their own inner depth and not with the pollution of their waters by the surrounding White-controlled shores.

*Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry saw a similar sight and heard similar voices as Howard Schneider and Lonnae O'Neal Parker: He also perceived "a sea of admirably behaving black men,"<sup>335</sup> whose reality was to be found apart from Farrakhan. Raspberry concluded that while "the Million Man March which America saw on Monday was impressive . . . more impressive for me was the other march—not the one whose focus was the platform on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol but the one experienced by the rank-and-file participants who found such hopefulness and joy in one another."<sup>336</sup> Raspberry saw and heard what he wanted to see and hear: the happy faces and voices of "a sea of admirably behaving black men" who were content with the way life is in America for African Americans, who were not the victims of any discriminatory hierarchy of access and power but the success story of American democracy, who "represented not our sins but our salvation." Thus, Raspberry perceived as "painfully out of place" at an atonement, responsibility and commitment gathering, Jesse Jackson's perception of the reality of African Americans.<sup>337</sup>

Jackson's message, vaguely alluded to by Raspberry in his article, was quite in keeping with the purposes of the Million Man March. Jackson stated,

We come here today because there is a structural malfunction in America. It was structured in the Constitution, and they referred to us as three-fifths of a human being, legally. . . . There's a structural malfunction: they ignored the Kerner report. Now we have the burden of two Americas: one-half slave and one-half free. . . . Why was the reaction to the O. J. verdict so different: Because there were wounds unhealed. There was more bile and venom toward that integrated jury that voted unanimously than the racist policeman who perjured himself.

Why did blacks and whites see it so differently? One man standing up, looking down on an apple sees red and that which is delectable; another man standing on the bottom, looking up, sees rot and sees worms. We all have a right to eat the fruit. None should have the obligation to eat the worms and eat the rot. We want an America for all of us to play on an even playing field, by one set of rules. Why march? Father King said it was the shameful condition of the Negro. Today, it's disgraceful. Why do we march? Because our babies die earlier. . . .

Because we are less able to get a primary or secondary education. . . . Because the media stereotype us. We are projected as less intelligent than we are, less hard-working than we work, less universal than we are, less patriotic than we are and more violent than we are. Why do we march? We're less able to borrow money in a system built on credit and risk.... Why do we march? Because we're trapped with second-class schools and first-class jails. What is the crisis? Wealth going upward; jobs going outward; middle class coming downward; the poor expanding rapidly.<sup>338</sup>

If William Raspberry had read the mission statement of the Million Man March, he would have realized that Jackson's "appeal to the government and white people" was perhaps "painfully" *in place*. The Mission Statement's emphasis on "Responsibility" includes a section on "The Challenge to the Government" and another on "The Challenge to the Corporations." The introductory statement contains strong American democratic ideals on which the government is based and derives its authority and power:

We, the Black men and women, the organizations and persons, participating in this historic Million Man March . . . concerned about increasing racism and the continuing commitment to white supremacy in this country; deteriorating social conditions, degradation of the environment and the impact of these on our community, the larger society and the world;

committed to the ongoing struggle for a free and empowered community, a just society and a better world; recognizing that the country and government have made a dangerous and regressive turn to the right and are producing policies with negative impact on people of color, the poor and the vulnerable;

realizing that every man and woman and our community have both the right and the responsibility to resist evil and contribute meaningfully to the creation of a just and good society; reaffirming the best values of our social justice tradition which require respect for the dignity and rights of the human person, economic justice, meaningful political participation, shared power, cultural integrity, mutual respect for all peoples, and uncompromising resistance to social forces and structures which deny or limit these; declare our commitment to assume a new and expanded responsibility in the struggle to build and sustain a free and empowered community, a just society and a better world.<sup>339</sup>

Schneider and O'Neal Parker, Raspberry, and other writers and the racial hierarchy's political leaders, including President Clinton and Republican presidential candidate Robert Dole, welcomed only those messages of atonement, reconciliation and responsibility that kept the inner life of African Americans separated from their outer reality. The hierarchy's political leaders and its guardian press welcome messages that place responsibility on those at the bottom to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps.

The editorials of the three newspapers on the March joined in disassociating the March and marchers from Farrakhan. In fact, *The Boston Globe* editorial, called "A day about brotherhood," saw a platform that did not even include Farrakhan on it.<sup>340</sup> The editorial made no reference to the originator of and keynote speaker at the March. Instead, it began with a quote from the Texas speech of President Clinton who "attempted to step into the breach . . . of what divides Americans" and ended with "the words of Martin Luther King . . . 'We must learn to live together as brothers or we will perish as fools.'" <sup>341</sup> *The Washington Post* editorial on "The March" used President Clinton's words to interpret the meaning of the event for "the sea of black men" who participated as if Clinton and not Farrakhan were the keynote speaker.<sup>342</sup> The arrogance of the editorial is seen in its extensive

quoting of Clinton rather than the March's leader, or another African-American participant, to define what such a historic day meant to Black men. *The New York Times* editorial, called "Earnest Crowd, Empty Leader," also used President Clinton and Martin Luther King in its separation of the March and the marchers from Farrakhan—and in "emptying" Farrakhan of any positive quality or influence.<sup>343</sup> The similarities in the columns might lead one to assume that the editors of the three newspapers conferred with each other before writing their editorials.

While editorial writers and certain columnists ignored Farrakhan's speech, others depreciated and used it to separate the marchers from Farrakhan. The coverage of his speech especially disclosed a failure to understand or appreciate the reality of Black history and life. The following columns reveal projections of the writers' own agenda, generalizations, paternalism and arrogance. It is believed that their perception of reality was impaired by their hierarchical conditioning.

*Washington Post* columnist Mary McGrory demonstrated her need of help with reality-testing. She attributed to President Clinton the very understanding of racial openness that Farrakhan helped to inspire among the marchers. She then turned Farrakhan himself into an enemy of that openness. McGrory wrote,

Bill Clinton was marvelous on Monday. Everyone said his Austin speech on race was presidential. . . . An American president had spoken out, in simple declarative sentences, on the country's most pressing moral problem. He spoke of the need for communication between the races. Down on the Mall, in a pleasantness and openness that few anticipated, people were doing just that. . . . Not even the malign ravings of Farrakhan, energetically trashing Lincoln amid great servings of bad history and abracadabra about numbers, could stop or stain it.<sup>344</sup>

It was Farrakhan, not Clinton, who was there and led that vast throng of Black men as they turned themselves into a "sea of openness."



Another example of reinterpreting reality to fit one's preconceptions is a column called "Salt in the Pepper" by Weston Kosova, Washington correspondent for *Newsweek* magazine. Published by the *Washington Post* and subtitled "What a white Man Found at the March," Kosova wrote that, "As a white man meandering around a rally for black men, I considered myself something of an intruder."<sup>345</sup> Nevertheless, he wrote as if he had intimate knowledge of the marchers' inner thoughts:

Louis Farrakhan attempted to position himself as the main reason people were coming. Tell that to the marchers. Few of those I talked to seemed concerned with fostering Farrakhan's self-promotion. For much of the day, more people were listening to the impromptu music groups scattered around the mall than to the procession of Farrakhan-sanctioned orators. When Farrakhan at last spoke, the crowd did listen. At least at first. But an hour and a half into the speech, Pennsylvania Avenue was an exodus of men who had given up on his paranoid ramblings.<sup>346</sup>

It was here that Kosova's apparent need to discredit Farrakhan led him to engage in a glaring distortion of reality. He continued,

And then, near the end something remarkable happened. *Farrakhan asked everyone to take the hands of the men standing next to him* [italics added]. Once again, I was the intruder. But the man on my right reached for my hand, as did the man on my left. "There will be no loose ends today," he said, and smiled. "Hug the man next to you and say, 'I love you, brother' " *came the instruction from the dais* [italics added]. And we did. Despite Farrakhan's best efforts to pit blacks against whites, the men around me weren't interested in stirring old animosities. And so his words didn't quite stick.

As I left the Mall, four other marchers reached over, embraced me and called me brother. Farrakhan departed Washington in bitterness, threatening to sue over the government's head count. The marchers, meanwhile—a million, 600,000, 400,000—left elated. And left Farrakhan behind.<sup>347</sup>

It was "Farrakhan *himself* who asked everyone to take the hands of the men standing next to him," and *he was the one* who then gave "the instruction [to] 'hug the man next to you and say I love you brother.' " But Kosova found it necessary to add that, "we did [hug each other] despite Farrakhan's best efforts to pit blacks against whites." This column, with such a blatant contradiction

of reality and obvious distorted generalizations about the negativism of the marchers toward Farrakhan, should more appropriately be called, "Salt in the Wound," with the subtitle "What a white Man Did Not Find at the March." And Nathan McCall was not an "independent observer"!

Another writer, who was far from being an "independent observer," wrote an op-ed piece called "Marching and Missing Out" that *The Washington Post* also saw fit to publish. Evidently, one quality of an "independent observer" is the readiness to attack Farrakhan, which is how freelance writer Andrew Ward began his story,

A lot of commentators about the Million Man March took some comfort from the fact that during Louis Farrakhan's speech about a third of his audience drifted away. They like to think that, having rejoiced in their dignity and unity, more than 200,000 black men tuned out the minister's bughouse numerology, his elaborate Masonic theories, his personal cell-phone connection to God. But I can't read too much into their drifting away because I wandered off during the greatest speech of the 20th century.<sup>348</sup>

Ward's boyhood in India taught him that "skin color shouldn't matter," but his "adolescence spent in a prosperous Connecticut suburb" revealed that it did.<sup>349</sup> Unlike the "casual, country-club racism" manifested by many of his classmates, "I fancied myself as a lone champion of civil rights," he wrote, "and when Martin Luther King, Jr. . . . issued a call to march on Washington for civil rights I was ready."<sup>350</sup> Ward was pleased to think that he was "the only white person on the bus" carrying a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People delegation to Washington.<sup>351</sup> But he "lost touch with my bus mates and found myself among a delegation from Alabama."<sup>352</sup> He ended up holding hands and walking with "a very elderly black woman in a purple-veiled hat" who confessed "that mine was the first white hand she had ever held. Neither she nor I would have been invited to the Million Man March," he added.<sup>353</sup> Ward then added that holding her hand "was my

ultimate experience of the March on Washington.”<sup>354</sup> He explained why in words that speak for themselves:

After that I got so caught up in the momentousness of the thing that I spent the rest of the morning taking pictures, and by the time King approached the microphone, I was horrified to find that I had run out of film. I stood to see if there might be some kind of kiosk around, and when someone asked me to get out of the way, I began stumbling back through the rapt and peaceable crowd of blacks and whites as King’s dream trumpeted from the loudspeakers. I sometimes tell myself I followed at least some of his speech, may even have paused now and then and cheered with the crowd. But my distraction seems to me so stupid and so shameful now that I’m afraid I made that up.<sup>355</sup>

Along with embarrassing himself, Ward offered yet another “distraction” from the reality of African Americans on—and off—the Washington Mall. Perhaps that is why *The Washington Post* would publish a piece so painfully self-exposing and lacking any real “independent observation.”

If Ward “wandered off during the greatest speech of the 20th century,” it would appear that the mind of *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen wandered off during Farrakhan’s speech. After hearing Farrakhan speak, Cohen wanted to know, “What Was Jesse Jackson Thinking?,” since it was Jackson who “sort of introduced Farrakhan to polite society . . . [and] in the 1984 presidential campaign, he used the Fruit of Islam as bodyguards, not knowing or not caring that their leader was a racist and anti-Semite.”<sup>356</sup> Cohen actually disclosed what he was thinking:

I wanted to hear what he [Jackson] thought when Farrakhan returned, maybe for the third time, to the number 19 and its vast, although incomprehensible, importance. I wanted to hear what he thought when Farrakhan explained that the statues all around, those of Lincoln and Jefferson, were 19 feet high and—get this—Jefferson was ~~the third~~ president and Lincoln the 16th and that, my friends, added up to you know what. . . . And what was Jackson thinking when Farrakhan pronounced Jesus black and Egypt a black civilization and got into the hocus-pocus of the Great Seal and the obelisk and what happens when you deconstruct the word “atone,” coming up with all sorts of words and meanings, adding letters and hyphens until you could fit the whole world into that one word—and so what?

By then, the speech was going on two hours, and it was clear that Farrakhan was more than just an egomaniac but a man with the capacity to connect unrelated dots, painting a picture

that does not at all conform to *reality* [italics added]. If he were white, he would belong to a militia and talk about the mysterious black helicopters sent by the United Nations, and Jackson and everyone else on the platform would denounce him. . . . The march was both huge and friendly and, in some sense, a wonderful event. This was, truly, a historic day. An immense statement was being made—one that had little to do with Farrakhan—and I could both hear it and respect it. But Farrakhan is what he is—a separatist, a racist, an anti-Semite, a homophobe, a sexist and God knows what else.<sup>357</sup>

Cohen did not define the “immense statement . . . being made” by the March that he “could both hear . . . and respect.” He used most of his column to say why the March “had little to do with Farrakhan.” Cohen’s assumption that Farrakhan painted “a picture that does not conform at all to reality” and that “he would belong to a militia” and be denounced for his lunacy “if he were white,” denies the contrasting histories and realities of Black and White Americans. It was Cohen himself who painted a picture of Farrakhan that “does not at all conform to [the] reality,” of African Americans. The “reality” Cohen referred to seems to be the one that he can understand. With his cultural and hierarchical conditioning, Cohen would do well to stay away from Black churches where sermons are long and services could go on for a good three hours or longer. He especially would be wise not to attend a service in a (Black or White) church where the members speak in tongues. There he would not have to contend with “the capacity to connect unrelated dots” but with the capacity to understand a different, but no less meaningful, “prayer language of the Spirit.”

The suggestion made to Cohen about avoiding non-traditional religious services might also be offered to *Washington Post* staff writer Ken Ringle. In his commentary called “Farrakhan’s Marathon,”<sup>358</sup> he revealed that the Nation of Islam leader’s speech was beyond him—and therefore beyond marchers and television audience as well. Ringle wrote about Farrakhan,

He crammed enough material into his oration to fill a semester-long college course. But what a college! Noting that the Washington Monument just down the Mall was 555 feet high, he suggested that was momentous because, if you added a “1” to it, you got 1555, “which was

the year we (black people) arrived in Jamestown as slaves.” This will come as news to historians, since the first permanent English settlement in North America wasn’t founded until 1607, and the first blacks didn’t arrive until 1619.<sup>359</sup>

Ringle himself would do well to take a refresher course on Black history. He apparently misquoted Farrakhan in stating the latter suggested it “was momentous” for the Washington Monument to be “555 feet high . . . because if you added ‘1’ to it, you got 1555, ‘which was the year we [black people] arrived in Jamestown as slaves.’ ”<sup>360</sup> Ringle was also incorrect in assuming that “this will come as news to historians, since the first permanent English settlement in North America wasn’t founded until 1607 and the first blacks didn’t arrive until 1619.”<sup>361</sup> Excerpts from Farrakhan’s speech, published in *The New York Times* indicated he stated that “1555 [was] the year our first fathers landed on the shores of Jamestown, Virginia as slaves.”<sup>362</sup> Whatever the name of those shores in 1555, historian Winthrop D. Jordan’s classic book on slavery in America, titled *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812*, states, “. . . after 1500 Portuguese ships began supplying the Spanish and Portuguese settlements in America with Negro slaves. *By 1550 European enslavement of Negroes was more than a century old and Negro slavery had become a fixture in the New World*” [italics added].<sup>363</sup> Ringle’s attempt to prove Farrakhan historically wrong apparently led him to lose sight of the *historical wrong*.

“The heartbreaking thing,” wrote Ringle, was that Farrakhan provided no powerful “phrases to be remembered along with ‘Four score and seven years ago,’ and ‘Ask not what your country can do for you’ and ‘I have a dream.’ ”<sup>364</sup> Implied here is the notion that what is important to remember seems to be determined by one’s position on the racial hierarchy. For Ringle to find it “heartbreaking” that Farrakhan had not spoken “phrases to be remembered” discloses his failure to realize how *heartbreaking* it must be for African Americans that the very president who is credited

with freeing them from slavery occasionally stated that he did not believe they were equal to White persons, which, in fact, Farrakhan pointed out in his speech: "Abraham Lincoln, when he saw the great divide, he pondered a solution of separation. Abraham Lincoln said he never was in favor of our being jurors or having equal status with the whites of this nation. Abraham Lincoln said that if there were to be a superior or inferior, he would rather the superior position be assigned to the white race."<sup>365</sup>

In his book, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, historian James W. Loewen writes,

In conversation Lincoln, like most whites of his century, referred to blacks as "niggers." When responding to Stephen Douglas's race-baiting in the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Lincoln himself sometimes descended into explicit white supremacy: "I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which in my judgement will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I as well as Judge Douglas am in favor of the race to which I belong, having the superior position. . . . I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about the social and political equality of the white and black races [applause]—that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes."<sup>366</sup>

Loewen writes that historians do a disservice to students in not portraying Lincoln in the fullness of who he was :

Textbook authors protect us from a racist Lincoln. By so doing, they diminish students' capacity to recognize racism as a force in American life. For if Lincoln could be racist, then so might the rest of us be. And if Lincoln could transcend racism, as he did on occasion, then so might the rest of us. . . . If textbooks recognized Lincoln's racism, students would learn that racism not only affects Ku Klux Klan extremists but has been "normal" throughout our history. And as they watched Lincoln struggle with himself to apply America's democratic principles across the color line, students would see how ideas can develop and a person can grow. . . .

Lincoln . . . knew full well that the United States was conceived in slavery. . . . Nevertheless he began, "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Thus Lincoln wrapped the Union cause in the rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence, which emphasized freedom even while many of its signers were slaveowners. In so doing, Lincoln was at the same time using the Declaration to redefine the Union cause, suggesting that it ultimately implied equal rights for all Americans, regardless of race.<sup>367</sup>

In addition to noting that many signers of the Declaration of Independence were slaveowners,

Loewen also writes,

Americans seem perpetually startled at slavery. Children are shocked to learn that George Washington and Thomas Jefferson owned slaves. Interpreters at Colonial Williamsburg say that many visitors are surprised to learn that slavery existed there—in the heart of plantation Virginia! Very few adults today realize that our society has been slave much longer than it has been free. Even fewer know that slavery was important in the North, too, until after the Revolutionary War. The first colony to legalize slavery was not Virginia but Massachusetts.<sup>368</sup>

If Ringle did not find in Farrakhan's speech any "phrases to be remembered," he could have still found statements to quote such as the one about white supremacy, which would contribute to an awareness of the historic mind set that needs to be overcome for the "racial divide" to be bridged.

In his speech at the Million Man March, Farrakhan declared:

There is a great divide, but the real evil in America is not white flesh or black flesh. The real evil in America is the idea that undergirds the setup of the Western world, and that idea is called white supremacy. . . . Now, wait, wait, wait. Before you get angry those of you listening by television, you don't even know why you behave the way you behave. I'm not telling you I'm a psychiatrist, but I do want to operate on your head.

White supremacy is the enemy of both white people and black people, because the idea of white supremacy means you should rule because you're white. That makes you sick, and you produce the sick society and a sick world. . . . So either, Mister Clinton, we're going to do away with the mind-set of the founding fathers. You don't have to repudiate them like you've asked my brothers to do me. You don't have to say they were malicious, hate-filled people. But you must evolve out of their mind-set. . . . You're not well. And in the light of today's global village, you can never harmonize with the Asians . . . you can't harmonize with the dark people of the world who outnumber you 11 to 1, if you're going to stay in the mind of white supremacy. White supremacy has to die in order for humanity to live.<sup>369</sup>

Another comment of Farrakhan's "to be remembered" might be his statement about the depths of the "great divide" affecting America:

Now the President [Clinton] spoke today, and he wanted to heal the great divide. But I respectfully suggest to the President: You did not dig deep enough at the malady that divides black and white, in order to effect a solution to the problem. . . . I heard the President say today E Pluribus Unum: Out of the many, one." But in the past "Out of many comes one meant out of many Europeans come one people. The question today is out of the many Asians, the many Arabs, the many Native Americans, the many blacks, the many people of color who populate this country, do you mean for them to be made into the one?"<sup>370</sup>

A third statement of Farrakhan's "to be remembered" would seem to offer inspiration to the various clergy and members of the many faiths in America:

But, preachers, we have to revive religion in America. We have to revive the houses of God that they're not personal fiefdoms of those of us who are their preachers and pastors. But we must be more like Jesus, more like Muhammad, more like Moses, and become servants of the people in fulfilling their needs.<sup>371</sup>

A comment, which contained no sound bite but had enough teeth in it "to be remembered," was Farrakhan's redefinition of mainstream:

But I stand here today, knowing, that you are angry, that my people have validated me. I don't need you to validate me. I don't need to be in any mainstream. I want to wash in the river of Jordan. And the river that you see, and the sea that is before us and behind us and around us is validation. That's the mainstream. You're out of touch with *reality* [italics added]. A few of you in few smoke-filled rooms, calling that the mainstream, while the masses of the people, white and black; red, yellow and brown; poor and vulnerable, are suffering in this nation. . . . All of these black men that the world sees as savage, maniacal and bestial, look at them. A sea of peace. A sea of tranquility. A sea of men ready to come back to God, settle their differences and go back home to turn our communities into decent and safe places to live.<sup>372</sup>

A final statement of Farrakhan's "to be remembered" deals with his apparently fearful power to unify:

In spite of all that divisiveness we responded to a call. And look at what is present here today. We have here those brothers with means and those who have no means; those who are light and those who are dark; those who are educated, those who are uneducated; those



who are business people, those who don't know anything about business; those who are young, those who are old; those who are scientific, those who know nothing of science; those who are religious, and those who are irreligious; those who are Christian, those who are Muslim . . . Baptist . . . Methodist . . . Episcopalian, those of traditional African religion.... And why did we come? We came because we want to move toward a more perfect union.

Now, brothers, there's a social benefit of our gathering here today, and that is that from this day forward we can never again see ourselves through the narrow eyes of the limitation of the boundaries of our fraternal, civic, political, religious, street organizations or professional organizations. We are forced by the magnitude of what we see here today that whenever you return to your cities and you see a black man, a black woman, don't ask him what is your social, political or religious affiliation, or what is your status? Know that he is your brother and if he needs help, you are obligated to help your brother because he is your brother. You must live beyond the narrow restrictions of the divisions that have been imposed upon us....

So my beloved brothers and sisters, here's what we would like you to do . . . when you go home. . . . We must belong to some organization that is working for, and in the interest of, the uplift and the liberation of our people. Go back, join the NAACP if you want to. Join the Urban League. Join the All-African People's Revolutionary Party. Join us; join the Nation of Islam. Join PUSH. Join the Congress of Racial Equality. Join SCLC, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. . . .

Now, brothers, moral and spiritual renewal is a necessity. Everyone of you must go back home and join some church, synagogue, temple or mosque that is teaching spiritual and moral uplift. . . . Brothers, when you go home, we got to register 8 million eligible but unregistered brothers, sisters. . . . If you're an independent, that's fine; if you're a Democrat, that's fine; if you're Republican, that's okay . . . but what we want is not necessarily a third party, but a third force . . . we're no longer going to vote for somebody just because they're black. We've tried that. . . . We got a vote for you if you are compatible with our agenda.<sup>373</sup>

The "phrases" of Farrakhan's "to be remembered" are longer than "Four score and seven years ago," "Ask not what your country can do for you" and "I have a dream."<sup>374</sup> But one summarizes many of his statements and is very applicable to mainstream media: "The power and the arrogance of America makes you refuse to hear a child of your slaves pointing out the wrong in your society."<sup>375</sup>

Undoubtedly, the Million Man March contributed significantly to Farrakhan's popularity—and to his legitimacy as well. Contrary to the assumptions of a vast number of writers and newspaper

columnists, a survey conducted on the day following the march indicated that “Farrakhan is more popular than other prominent black political figures, including Jesse L. Jackson and Gen. Colin Powell. He was far more popular than President Clinton who was elected in 1992 with the overwhelming support of black voters.”<sup>376</sup> A story published in the *New York Times* story reported,

What was clear was that the event—which, the Park Police said drew a throng of 400,000 to the nation’s capital—captured the attention of much of the country. Officials of the Cable News Network said today that 2.2 million households tuned in to Mr. Farrakhan’s . . . speech—meaning that more people watched the 2-hour-long address on CNN than any other special this year, including Mr. Clinton’s State of the Union Message and the Pope’s address to the United Nations. “We got the kind of numbers that basic cable only sees from first-run movies,” said Howard Polskin, a vice-president of CNN.<sup>377</sup>

Moreover, the tendency of various writers to separate the marchers from Farrakhan, as if they attended the March in spite of its “controversial originator,” is not supported by a survey conducted by *The Washington Post*. The newspaper’s polling sample of 1,047 marchers found that “the black men who came to Washington . . . were younger, wealthier and better-educated than black Americans as a whole, and . . . were far more willing to see Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan assume a more prominent leadership role in the African American community.”<sup>378</sup> The survey also found that “a third of those interviewed said a major reason they came to the Mall was to ‘demonstrate support for Louis Farrakhan’ but only 5 percent said Farrakhan was the biggest reason they made the trip. Still,” the report continued, “Farrakhan was clearly the star of yesterday’s march—and perhaps an emerging force in national politics, the survey suggests. *Nearly nine in 10 participants said they had a favorable impression of Farrakhan and a favorable view of the Nation of Islam*” [italics added].<sup>379</sup>

It was also reported that “even some of Farrakhan’s critics praised his success in attracting hundreds of thousands of black men for a peaceful rally that called for renewal in the black community.”<sup>380</sup> His appeal to marchers to join organizations in their communities when they returned

home received an enthusiastic response. Three days after the March, Earl Shihoster, interim director of the NAACP, was reported to have said that his organization “has received hundreds of calls from people wanting to join the group—an outpouring he attributed to Farrakhan’s speech.”<sup>381</sup> Thus, in response to Farrakhan and Rev. Benjamin Chavis’ call for the reconvening the following month of the National African American Leadership Summit, Shihoster was quoted as responding, “The NAACP welcomes the call by Minister Louis Farrakhan for a meeting within the African American leadership to implement the call outlined in his eight-point address during the Million Man March.”<sup>382</sup> The NAACP had refused to endorse the March and to attend previous meetings of the National African American Leadership Conference. In fact, it was assumed that “the Chavis-brokered alliance with Farrakhan was one of the issues involved in his dismissal . . . as executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.”<sup>383</sup>

Farrakhan’s plan to register 8 million new voters “got an unusual greeting from several mainstream political organizations, which in the past have routinely denounced any effort with which Farrakhan was associated.”<sup>384</sup> Don Fowler, Chairman of the National Democratic Committee, was quoted as saying, “We in the Democratic Party applaud efforts to get people registered. . . . We believe that this broadens the base to democracy, and the more democracy the better.”<sup>385</sup> Haley Barbour, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, stated, “Republicans believe in increasing voter registration and participation among all Americans.”<sup>386</sup> And “Alex Herman, an assistant to President Clinton, said, ‘Any time we have more of our citizens involved in the process of voting and making their voices count, it is a good thing for the nation.’”<sup>387</sup>

Farrakhan appeared to take on the aura of a reigning celebrity. It was reported that he announced the “aggressive national voter registration drive” at a news conference “as hundreds of

people waited on the sidewalk just outside . . . to get a glimpse of Farrakhan or snap his picture. As he emerged from the building, surrounded by Nation of Islam bodyguards, Farrakhan threw a kiss and waved to the cheering crowd.”<sup>388</sup>

*The Washington Post* survey may have come as a shock to then Republican presidential candidate Robert Dole who was quoted as saying, “There are probably a lot of well-intentioned people coming to Washington. . . . And I like the talk about self-reliance, about picking yourself up, cleaning up our cities and getting kids off drugs. But I don’t think Farrakhan should be the leader of the march. He spreads suspicion, separation and hate *wherever he goes* [italics added].”<sup>389</sup>

Farrakhan, the originator of the March, who looked at all those Black men and saw “a sea of peace,” did not “spread suspicion, separatism and hate” on the Washington Mall. *New York Times* writer Michel Marriott reported,

From dawn to dusk, there was no evidence of drug deals and drive-by shootings or crack pipes and gang colors. The throng was as good natured as a church meeting. Police made only one arrest at the rally: for disorderly conduct. What much of America witnessed on the evening news was the sight of hundreds of thousands of black men, respectful and responsible, in search of solace and solutions.<sup>390</sup>

*Washington Post* staff writers Michael A. Fletcher and Hamil R. Harris reported that “the crowd on the Mall and adjoining streets . . . [was] basking in a day of peaceful solidarity. . . . It was a day of spontaneous embraces, public tears and straight-in-the-eye greetings—the opposite of the nervous, sidelong glances that some men said they customarily employ to avoid confrontation.”<sup>391</sup> Another *Washington Post* news story reported, “At one point, two lines of buses stretched for blocks, said a police officer, who marveled at how polite and upbeat marchers were despite waits of two hours or more to depart.”<sup>392</sup> The story also stated, “Most of downtown” Washington was reported “as empty as a summer Friday” partly because of the fear of Black marchers: “A few said

they went to work even though friends and relatives, urged them to stay at home. 'People in D.C. were concerned about the traffic, and everybody else—my parents and my sister—were concerned about violence,'<sup>393</sup> said a 28-year-old woman who works for an investment company.

The peaceful behavior of the marchers and contrasting fear of them are reported by *New York Times* writer Karen De Witt.<sup>394</sup> She wrote,

By midafternoon, the crowd stretched from the west steps of the Capitol to the Washington Monument and was, by and large, somber, disciplined, relaxed and friendly. . . . "It's been very peaceful," said Quintin Petersen, a public information officer for the Metropolitan Police Department here. "It's been very good. No problems. No incidents. We've been handling traffic, and it's been very good, very smooth."

Despite what appeared to be a peaceful crowd, skittishness about possible conflict prompted several downtown office buildings to issue notices that the buildings would be locked as if it were a weekend as a precautionary measure, and that occupants should use special security keys for entry. One jewelry store closed; one white businesswoman wondered whether it was safe to walk three blocks to her office.

Wendy Bader, a lawyer with the Federal Labor Relations Authority, two blocks away from the march site, said her mother, who lives in New Jersey, had told her to stay home from work. "She was afraid of violence because she thought the crowd was going to be a lot of young black males, the kind of people who would be followers of Farrakhan and anti-white," said Ms. Bader, referring to Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader. . . .

Another lawyer, hurrying to her office, said: "This is even lighter than on a Saturday. I think a lot of people just didn't come in." But the woman, who was white and spoke only on condition that her name not be used, offered another reason for the lack of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. "I think a lot of people were afraid for their safety," she said. "The women in my office, they thought there was a potential for a violent outbreak—a kind of K.K.K. showing."<sup>395</sup>

Another *New York Times* story reported, "Even by the agency's [National Park Service] own accounting, the Million Man March, which won praise from police for being peaceful and orderly, ranked as one of the largest demonstrations in the capital's history."<sup>396</sup> The National Park Service apparently sought to prevent the Million Man March from becoming "one of the largest

demonstrations in the capital's history." It was as if the Park Service joined forces with the media: the count of those attending the rally became another way by which the media sought to downplay the impact of the March and thus of Farrakhan's influence. The National Park Service's estimate of 400,000 participants was widely reported rather than the number estimated by the March organizers that far exceeded their goal of one million marchers. Two computer-studies of the turnout by Farouk El-Baz, director of Boston University's Center for Remote Sensing and "who is not affiliated with the Nation of Islam,"<sup>397</sup> were more supportive of the organizers' estimate than that of the National Park Service. Using aerial photographs provided by the Park Service, the Center's first study "concluded that 870,000 attended the rally . . . [with] a margin of error of about 25 percent—largely because of the poor quality of the color photographs—which means the actual size of the crowd could have been as low as 600,000 or as high as 1.1 million."<sup>398</sup>

The second study, requested by the National Park Service in the wake of a threatened lawsuit by the Nation of Islam for its low count, "estimated . . . that 837,000 people attended the Million Man March." The researchers at the Center for Remote Sensing noted that "their findings had a 20 percent margin of error, meaning that the size of the crowd fell between 670,000 and 1,004,000. As a result, the Boston researchers said it is '*quite possible*' [italics added] that the assembly numbered more than 1 million."<sup>399</sup>

The White-controlled media repeatedly quoted, rather than questioned, the National Park Service's low count of 400,000 marchers. The "sea of black men" a number of writers reported seeing amounted to "400,000," or "hundreds of thousands" which were used interchangeably to estimate the number present. The only headline stating that a million men may have attended the March appeared in *The Boston Globe* four days after the March: "BU analysis says Washington

march may have drawn 1.1. million.”<sup>400</sup> Certain columnists downplayed the importance of the count by pitting the spirit of those present against their number.

*Washington Post* columnist Ken Ringle made a joke of Farrakhan’s count of over one million and his threatened lawsuit against the U.S. Park Service. In a column entitled, “Farrakhan’s Figures: Did He Count the Crowd From a UFO?,” Ringle stated that he obtained a copy of the “Million Man March Home Study Guide Manual,” in which Farrakhan described “a vision of being abducted . . . by . . . a UFO” during which he visualized the Million Man March.<sup>401</sup> “Obviously,” Ringle wrote, “Farrakhan got his crowd count while overhead in the UFO visualizing the march—a variation on the old-fashioned Park Police method which relies on taking photographs from helicopters.”<sup>402</sup> If Farrakhan counted over 1 million marchers on the Washington Mall from a UFO, it would seem that the Park Police counted “400,000” from a submarine in the Potomac River. Perhaps the March headlines of certain Black-controlled newspapers are more to the point: “White Men Can’t Count.”<sup>403</sup> It appears that the National Park Service’s count of “400,000” was used by the media to shrink the size of the reality created by the marchers on the Mall and thus to lessen the influence and power of Minister Louis Farrakhan.

The extent to which Farrakhan has been turned into a pariah is seen in *New York Times* writer Frank Rich’s column called “Fixated on Farrakhan.”<sup>404</sup> He began,

At a time when white Americans can’t agree among *ourselves* [italics added] on anything, here at last is one opinion that unites us all, liberal and conservative, Democrat and Republican, rich and poor: Louis Farrakhan is a hate-filled demagogue with a divisive, separatist ideology, and an appalling record of racism, sexism, anti-Semitism and homophobia.

This judgement is to my mind as indisputable as it is unoriginal, and nothing happened at Monday’s march to alter it. Mr. Farrakhan’s efforts to strike a benign pose were fatally compromised by his speech’s lunatic digressions into crypto-mysticism and self-deification.

His offer to open a dialogue with Jews was cynical and meaningless, given his refusal to acknowledge his history of hate speech, let alone apologize for it. His retinue of brownshirts injected the chilling trappings of fascism into an event otherwise resplendent in spirituality and peace.

So white America agrees: Louis Farrakhan is up to no good. *But now that we've all said that as loud as we can* [italics added], where do we go next?<sup>405</sup>

Why has Farrakhan been branded a pariah by mainstream media? This writer believes it is because he represents a serious threat to America's racial hierarchy. The hierarchy cannot control or buy his accommodation or "integration" as a Black leader. He dares to point out and challenge the "white supremacy" of the "founding fathers," forcing White America to recognize and deal with the fact that many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, which declared freedom and equality for all, were themselves slave holders, and that even "Honest Abe" had a racist "wart" or two that can no longer be covered up.<sup>406</sup> Farrakhan also has the power to initiate a call that led at least twice, and possibly three or more times as many African American men to respond as the U.S. Park Police counted—in spite of all the print aimed at discrediting the Nation of Islam leader and derailing the March.

Furthermore, Farrakhan and all other Black men—and Black women—share the reality of an oppression about which he especially has clarity, an oppression that far transcends any anti-Semitism or other bias of which he may be guilty; an oppression which certain European Jewish-Americans, no matter how few, participated in as owners of enslaved Africans, and continue to participate in by virtue of *their whiteness* being their invisible means into the mainstream of America's hierarchical life.

The threat Farrakhan poses to the White-favored hierarchy of access and power is seen in the United States government's refusal in 1996 to allow Farrakhan to receive a \$250,000 prize "as winner of the Moammar Khadafy International Human Rights Award . . . for orchestrating last October's



Million Man March.”<sup>407</sup> Nor was it a surprise that the United States government prevented Farrakhan, at the same time, from accepting a donation of \$1 billion from Col. Quaddafi of Libya. The government believes Libya to be a supporter of terrorism and thus bars “the transfer of any money between Libya and the United States.”<sup>408</sup>

Farrakhan was quoted as defending the \$1 billion gift: “We are not terrorists. . . . We are not trying to do anything against the good of America. What we want to do is good for our people and ultimately good for our nation.”<sup>409</sup> The good that Farrakhan wanted to do, he reportedly said, was to “use the money for voter registration drives, charitable contributions and economic development for black people.”<sup>410</sup> The first person to receive the Human Rights Award, established in 1989, was “President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. Other winners include American Indians and the children of the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation.”<sup>411</sup>

One billion dollars would give Farrakhan tremendous economic and political power and make him that much more of a unifying force among Black persons and other people of color. America’s White-dominated hierarchy is against any such threat to the racial status quo. The hierarchy probably fears, and for good reason, that the money would be used to change the balance of power between White and Black persons. Farrakhan himself was quoted as saying “that he was not allowed to accept the \$1 billion gift from Libyan leader Moammar Khadafy because Washington was afraid of the power it would bring.” He stated at a news conference,

There is fear first of a black man who is gaining influence and is a man they do not control. Second, if we have accomplished what we have accomplished so far without money then they are afraid of what we can accomplish if we did have money. . . . The American people are captive to those in power who manipulate them by falsehood. With \$1 billion we could effectively affect the thinking of all of the American people.<sup>412</sup>

What Farrakhan believes may be “good for our people” is not good for the hierarchy of race, wealth, access and power. In fact, Farrakhan is consistently portrayed as being “empty” of any good whatsoever. The extent to which the media has demonized him, and the Nation of Islam, is seen in a cartoon that followed his receiving the Human Rights Award and being offered the donation of \$1 billion by Khadafy. Appearing on the editorial page of *The Boston Globe*, the cartoon depicts a sinister-faced Khadafy with a Satan-like tail, wearing a skeleton-head-and-cross-bones-labeled Napoleon-like hat, giving a big bag of money marked “\$1 Billion” to a smiling Farrakhan, and saying, “Minister Farrakhan, You Are An Agent of God. . . . Now Get Out There & Do The Devil’s Work!”<sup>413</sup> Farrakhan is the spiritual leader of the Nation of Islam, a legally recognized Muslim religion with some 10,000 members. The cartoon violates the sacred beliefs of Nation of Islam members—and the sensitivities of many other African Americans and of certain White persons, in the same way that a cartoon demonizing Pope John Paul II would outrage not only Catholics but most Protestant and Jewish persons as well. The freedom of religion of a small Muslim group was publicly desecrated on the editorial page of a prominent “free press”—and apparently no one objected.

President Clinton’s speech the morning of the March revealed that he was not in touch with the reality of the marchers. He, too, should have read the March’s mission statement before assuming that “the people marching in Washington today are right about one fundamental thing. At its base this issue of race is not about government, or political leaders. It is about what is in the heart and minds and life of the American people. There will be no progress in the absence of real responsibility on the part of all Americans.”<sup>414</sup> The mission statement’s section on “The Challenge to the Government” reveals that Clinton was wrong “about one fundamental thing”:

[We] call on the government to stop undoing hard won gains such as affirmative action, voting rights and districting favorable to maximum Black political participation; to provide universal, full and affordable health care; to provide and support programs for affordable housing . . . to stop blaming people of color for problems created by ineffective government and corporate greed and irresponsibility . . . to stop pandering to white fears and white supremacy hatreds and illusions and help create a new vision of human and societal possibilities. . . . Finally, we call on the government and the country to recognize and respond positively to the fact that US society is not a finished white product, but an unfinished and ongoing multicultural project and that each people has both the right and responsibility to speak their own special cultural truth and to make their own unique contribution to how this society is reconceived and reconstructed.<sup>415</sup>

Clinton's denial of the existence of the White-favored hierarchy, over which he presides, is especially seen in his perception of "a simple truth" that "in recent weeks every one of us has been made aware of;" he said, "*white Americans and black Americans often see the same world in drastically different ways*" [italics added].<sup>416</sup> In classic racism of equality thinking, Clinton continued, "The two worlds we see now each contain both truth and distortion. Both black and white Americans must face this, for *honesty* [italics added] is the only gateway to the many acts of reconciliation that will unite our worlds at last into one America."<sup>417</sup> Clinton then did a litany of "the roots of black pain . . . white America must understand and acknowledge" and of "the roots of white fear in America . . . blacks must understand and acknowledge."<sup>418</sup> His denial of the differing and contrary realities of Black and White Americans enabled Clinton to blunt the ingrained racism of the White-favored hierarchy and to place a major responsibility for the "rift between blacks and whites" on their "still [not having] learned to talk frankly, to listen carefully *and to work together across racial lines*" [italics added].<sup>419</sup> Clinton's ability to turn black into white—a primary grievance of Black persons is the discrimination in employment that denies them the opportunity "to *work* [italics added] together across racial lines"—is seen in his placing equal blame on Black and White persons for the "rift". Thus, as President, he can safely allude in passing to the obvious role of the government in creating

and addressing the “rift,” while only becoming specific in asking “every citizen . . . to take personal responsibility for reaching out to people of different races.”<sup>420</sup> Here he turned night into day:

And, to be sure, this great divide requires a public response by democratically elected leaders, but today we are really dealing, and we know it, with problems that grow in large measure out of the way all of us look at the world with our minds and the way we feel about the world with our hearts. And therefore while leaders and legislation may be important, this is work that has to be done by every single one of you. And this is the ultimate test of our democracy, for today the house divided exists largely in the minds and hearts of the American people. And it must be united there—in the minds and hearts of our people.<sup>421</sup>

If “the house divided exists largely in the minds and hearts of the American people,” there is no need for another Kerner-like bipartisan commission on race to study, and make recommendations to address the still-widening gap between America’s two separate and unequal Black and White societies. Thus, Clinton ignored the request of a bi-partisan group of six members of Congress to appoint such a commission to study racial relations since the 1960s and recommend programs to address the worsening divide.

The “house divided” in which Clinton lives requires more individual and less government responsibility; therefore, he would sign a new historic welfare bill that ended guaranteed federal assistance, reduces benefits and requires recipients to work. In Clinton’s “house divided” the emphasis is apparently on the virtue of hard work more than on providing jobs that offer the opportunity to work hard. Contrary to Clinton’s perception, white and black Americans do not “see the same world in drastically different ways.” As the Kerner Commission report revealed in 1968 and the Milton S. Eisenhower study disclosed again in 1993, they do not live in the same world. They continue to live in “separate and unequal” societies.

While White and Black Americans live in very different and opposing worlds, the world they often see is the one that mainstream media want them to see. The media seek to define the nature

and limits of reality for them. And the boundaries of reality set by the media are determined by their role as guardians of the White-dominated racial hierarchy. Ultimately, reality consists of what is good or bad for the hierarchy. Much reality lies between and beyond the lines of the printed page, but is ignored as if it *does not* exist, denied as if it *could not* exist, or attacked as if it *should not* exist.

The Million Man March represented the reality of African Americans that mainstream media ignored, denied and attacked. But no matter how constant and varied the criticism of Farrakhan and the questioning of the March, the media could not define or distort the reality of that “sea of black men” who streamed into the nation’s Capitol from across the country. Not even the President of the United States could impose limits on their reality with “One million men are right to be standing up for personal responsibility. But one million men do not make right one man’s message of malice and division.”<sup>422</sup> Their presence seemed to indicate that one million critics do not make wrong one man’s message about “white supremacy.”

## Conclusion

A primary role of mainstream media is to protect and maintain the White-favored hierarchy of access, wealth and power. The Million Man March represented a threat to the hierarchy: it was conceived by a Black leader whom the media could not intimidate, seduce or otherwise control; a Black leader critical of the “white supremacy” pervading the very hierarchy the media is committed to denying and maintaining; a Black leader who could spearhead the unifying and empowering of one million African Americans in the common cause of creating a level political and economic playing field. Contrary to the media’s focus on the “controversial originator”<sup>423</sup> of the March, this writer

believes that Farrakhan *is feared as a unifying, more than a divisive force*. Thus *The Washington Post*, *New York Times* and *The Boston Globe* “rained” on Farrakhan’s “parade.”

These print media portrayed Farrakhan as a pariah in an attempt to select for African Americans their rightful leaders. To march in Farrakhan’s “parade” would be to associate with his “anti-white,” “anti-Semitic,” “sexist,” “anti-gay,” “separatist,” “hate-mongering,” message. A double standard was used to demonize Farrakhan: the media emphasized his “homophobic,” “sexist,” “anti-Semitic” message while ignoring the homophobia, sexism and anti-Semitism of far more powerful groups in American society. Moreover, Farrakhan was associated with White supremists and disassociated from traditional and revered Black leaders. Select Black male and female leaders were enlisted and elevated in the campaign to discredit Farrakhan and undermine the March. Those leaders opposing the March and those supporting it became a continuing feature of a “controversial” and “divisive” “parade”—the former given positive and prominent coverage and the latter subjected to criticism. When the “fiendizing” of Farrakhan did not discourage an incredible outpouring of Black men on the Washington Mall, the media proceeded to the flip-side of the coin: they separated “the message” of the marchers from “the messenger.” Marchers portrayed by certain writers as a mindless mass to be “summoned” by Farrakhan were described by other writers as having minds of their own that differed from Farrakhan once they arrived on the Mall. This attempt to undermine Farrakhan’s prominence and power is also seen in the coverage of his speech: his “message” to all those Black marchers was repeatedly trashed, ignored or replaced by a now-revered Black leader dead for more than two decades. In raining on the Million Man March’s “parade,” the White-controlled media revealed an inability or intent not to understand the reality of African Americans.

This analysis reveals that there appears to be no real commitment on the part of the White-dominated racial hierarchy to create a level and fair economic and political playing field. The media and President Clinton stressed the seriousness of the “racial divide” and Farrakhan’s assumed role as a “racist” and “separatist” in widening the “gulf.” But neither the mainstream newspapers nor Clinton responded to the six bipartisan and biracial House members’ call following the Million Man March for the President to appoint a commission to study the widening “racial divide” and make recommendation for bridging it. It appears that “the racial divide” is a public relations problem to be finessed across with words when it can no longer be covered up, not an ingrained problem that requires in-depth study and commitment of resources to uncover and address its root causes.

During the 1996 presidential campaign, Clinton repeatedly called on people to join him in “building a bridge to the 21st Century” for all Americans. Evidently the bridge he plans to build across “the racial divide,” with the help of mainstream media, consists primarily of “talk.” The bridge he is apparently proposing will be built on the foundation of *the racism of equality*: the belief that “the great divide” has been created “in large measure” by individual “minds and hearts” and “must be united there”—by Black and White people “all across America . . . tak[ing] personal responsibility for reaching out to people of different races, . . . taking time to sit down and talk . . . honestly . . . and then . . . to listen quietly with an open mind and heart as others do the same.”<sup>424</sup>

This study reveals that the White-controlled hierarchy’s political leaders and dominant press believe “in large measure” that equal access and opportunity already exist in our society. Black and White people are believed to compete on a level playing field, with equality of movement up and down, like two children at each end of a seesaw—as if White people do not control the playground or the school or the neighborhood or the community.

The Million Man March represented the powerful unifying force of African Americans that shook the foundation of the nation's racial hierarchy. The March transcended every bias the guardian media rained down on its "parade." Interests benefiting from racial hierarchy feared not a divisive force, but a unifying one. The hierarchy thrives on divisiveness and is threatened by unity—hence the polarizing role of its guardian media's coverage of the March. The unifying power of the Million Man March will be seen in the extent to which, as Farrakhan said, African Americans go back home and transcend differences, join organizations, register voters and work together for the common good—"committed to the ongoing struggle for a free and empowered community, a just society and a better world."<sup>425</sup> In America's racial hierarchical society, a level political and economic playing field is not created by access *to* power but by the access *of* power. It is hoped this research paper contributes to that end.



## Endnotes

1. The U.S. Park Police estimated that 400,000 persons attended the Million Man March, and that number was constantly interchanged with “hundreds of thousands” by mainstream newspapers in their coverage of the March. March organizers insisted that over one million people were present and March originator Minister Louis Farrakhan, who threatened to sue the Park Police over its low count, attributed the failure to recognize the full number present to “racism” and “white supremacy.” (Sari Horwitz and Hamil R. Harris, “Farrakhan Threatens to Sue Park Police Over March Count,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 18, 1995, p. A8).
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3. Ibid.
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9. Edward Walsh, “Chavis Backs Farrakhan on D.C. March,” *The Washington Post*, Dec. 12, 1994, p. A12.
10. *The Nation of Islam: The Relentless Record of Hate* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1995), p. 1. The literature of Jewish groups on Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam surveyed also include: Kenneth S. Stern, *Farrakhan and Jews in the 1990’s* (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1994); *Louis Farrakhan: In His Own Words—1994* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1994); *Federal Funds for NOI Security Firms: Financing Farrakhan’s Ministry of Hate* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1995); Areyh Meir and Reuven Firestone, *Islam in America*, (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1992); A. James Rudin, *Muslim-Jewish Relations in North America* (New York: The American Jewish Committee), paper presented at an Islamic-Jewish conference at the University of Denver in October 1993; and Harold Brackman, *Ministry of Lies: The Truth Behind The Nation of Islam’s “The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews”* (New York/London: Four Walls Eight Windows, The Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1994).

11. The term “mainstream media” refers to the dominant, White-controlled print and electronic media in the United States.
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14. From “The Declaration of Independence,” *Great Companions, Vol. 1*, compiled by Robert French Leavens and May Agnes Leavens (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1927), p. 578.
15. Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith and Cornel West (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History* (New York: Simon & Schuster McMillan, 1996), pp. 2469-2470.
16. From “The Declaration of Independence,” op. cit.
17. “Rift Between Blacks, Whites Is ‘Tearing at the Heart of America,’ ” op. cit.
18. Todd S. Purdum, *The New York Times*, Oct. 17, 1995, p. A20.
19. John Aloysius Farrell, *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 17, 1995, p. 1.
20. Address on race relations delivered by President Clinton yesterday at the University of Texas, *The Washington Post*, Oct. 17, 1995, p. A13.
21. “A Question of American Identity,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 13, 1995, p. A25.
22. Editorial, *The Washington Post*, Oct. 17, 1995, p. A16.
23. “America’s Oldest Teenager,” Oct. 22, 1995, p. C1.
24. “A Clear Day, A Cloud of Contradictions,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 17, 1995, p. A19.
25. “Fixed on Farrakhan,” *The New York Times*, Oct. 18, 1995, p. A23.
26. “He Filled a Vacuum,” *The New York Times*, Oct. 17, 1995, p. A25.
27. Steven A Holmes, “After March, Lawmakers Seek Commission on Race Relations,” *The New York Times*, Oct. 18, 1995, p. B9.
28. Ibid, pp. A1 and B9. In 1968, the Kerner Commission, established by President Lyndon Johnson to investigate the causes of the widespread urban riots in 1967, found that, “Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans. What white Americans have never fully understood—but what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.” The Commission concluded: “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.” In his “Introduction” to the

Kerner Commission's report, *New York Times* journalist Tom Wicker wrote that the findings of the report "can only be a beginning because, patently, until the fact of white racism is admitted, it cannot conceivably be expunged." See, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), pp. 1 and 2.

29. "Farrakhan's Tour de Force," Oct. 19, 1995, p. A23.

30. Michael Kranish, Oct. 18, 1995, p. 13.

31. Reuters, Oct. 18, 1995, p. A8.

32. Sari Horwitz and Hamil R. Harris, Oct. 18, 1995, p. A8

33. Steven A. Holmes, op. cit.

34. Ibid.

35. "We Must Accept the Responsibility That God Has Put Upon Us," Following are excerpts from the Nation of Islam Leader Louis Farrakhan's speech yesterday at the Million Man March, *The Washington Post*, Oct. 17, 1995, p. A24.

36. Susan Young, "US Cities Seen to Resegregate: Findings of 1967 Revisited in Report," *The Boston Globe*, March 1, 1993, p. 3. Also see, "Report Faults U.S. in Handling Riots," *The New York Times*, March 1, 1993, p. A10.

37. Ibid.

38. John Aloysius Farrell, "Clinton Asks Party to Heed Call of 'Angry White Males,'" *Boston Sunday Globe*, April 9, 1995, pp. 1 and 15.

39. "Rift Between Blacks, Whites 'Is Tearing at the Heart of America.'", op. cit.

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45. "Social Principles," *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, op. cit., p. 92.
46. "Bishops Oppose Same-Sex Nuptials," Religion Notes, *The Boston Globe*, July 27, 1996, p. B3.
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48. Donna Britt, *The Washington Post*, Aug. 8, 1995, pp. B1 and B5.
49. Hamil R. Harris, *The Washington Post*, Oct. 1, 1995, p. B1.
50. Meg Greenfield, *The Washington Post*, Oct. 2, 1995, p. A19.
51. Julianne Malveaux, *The Washington Post*, Oct. 8, 1995, p. C3.
52. Ellen Goodman, *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 12, 1995, p. 15.
53. Marc Fisher, *The Washington Post*, Oct. 16, 1995, p. D1.
54. Michel Marriott, *The New York Times*, Oct. 14, 1995, p. 8.
55. Amy Alexander, *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 15, 1995, p. 81.
56. Harlon L. Dalton, *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 15, 1995, p. 87.
57. Patricia Smith, *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 16, 1995, p. 17.
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65. Oct. 8, 1995, p. C3.
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72. Ibid.
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76. *Jews in Germany: Under Prussian Rule* (Berlin: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1984). The pages of the book are unnumbered. The photograph covers two pages. The one page contains a statement by Adolph Hitler in "Mein Kampf": "So I believe to act in the spirit of the almighty God: By defending myself against the Jew I am fighting for the work of the Lord." On the other page appears a quote of Paul the Apostle in Romans 13: "Every Person Must Submit To The Supreme Authorities."
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100. Brackman, *Ministry of Lies*, op. cit.
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103. Ibid., pp. 3-10.
104. *The Nation of Islam: The Relentless Record of Hate*, op. cit., pp. 1-22.
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107. Ibid., pp. 11-17.
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109. "Introduction," *Louis Farrakhan: In His Own Words—1994*, op. cit., pp. 1-2.
110. *The Nation of Islam: The Relentless Record of Hate*, op. cit., p. 17.
111. *Louis Farrakhan: In His Own Words—1994*, op. cit.
112. "Introduction," *Federal Funds for NOI Security Firms: Financing Farrakhan's Ministry of Hate*, op. cit., p. 2.
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152. "Just Say No To Farrakhan," Oct. 12, 1995, p. A25.
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