

## The Order of Hate

*The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, by Harold Cruse (Morrow, 594 pp. \$8.95), *Negro and Jew: An Encounter in America*, edited by Shlomo Katz (Macmillan, 141 pp. \$4.95), and *Protest and Prejudice: A Study of Belief in the Black Community*, by Gary T. Marx (Harper & Row, 228 pp. \$8.95), focus on the Negro's perceptions of himself and his role in American society, as well as on the problems of relating to the white population. Bernhard E. Olson, director of Interreligious Affairs for the National Conference of Christians and Jews, is author of "Faith and Prejudice."

By BERNHARD E. OLSON

OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS especially, clashes between a few Negroes and Jews have been aired in the public press. The anguish provoked by these episodes is reflected in Aryeh Neier's observation in *Negro and Jew*, "Perhaps the cruellest trick of a prejudiced society is to make the victims of prejudice quarrel among themselves."

It is clear that Negroes are increasingly perceiving Jews more as part of the white power structure than as a persecuted minority. One may offer as evidence of this trend Harold Cruse's book, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, which contrasts American Jewish affluence and influence with the black community's poverty and helplessness. To be sure, Cruse's book differs from *Negro and Jew* and *Protest and Prejudice* in its primary objective, which is to establish by means of a lively historical critique the ideological foundations for a new intellectual movement among Negroes, leading to some resolution of the dilemmas of black people living in white America. Cruse finds Jewish-Negro relations a particularly troublesome aspect of the

interracial crisis; his lengthy discussions of them touch the key questions raised by *Negro and Jew*—questions that are in turn illuminated by the research findings of *Protest and Prejudice*.

One of the great virtues of Cruse's eloquent polemic against every kind of Negro intellectual is that it discusses all problems important to the black community. He thinks of America's various ethnic, racial, and religious groups separately or in combination as "national" groups. In this constellation—save for Anglo-Saxon Protestants—Negroes comprise the largest national group in the United States. Yet the Negro is uncertain of his identity, confused in his goals and tactics, unorganized and powerless. Taking Harlem as his point of departure, Cruse argues that the intellectual "class" of the American Negro community has failed to understand the historical and social forces underlying the Negro's subjugation. Therefore the projected solution to the problem of Negro advancement advocated by Negro intellectuals—be it neo-Carveyism, black nationalism, "black power," separatism, integrationism, etc.—is found wanting.

In the course of his analysis the author makes incisive (and, to this reviewer, fascinating and informative) thrusts at other Negro spokesmen and organizations. On the issues of separatism and integration, persons of such diverse views as James Baldwin, LeRoi Jones, Paul Robeson, Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, as well as many others, fail to escape Cruse's pointed barbs. Replies are best left to Negroes themselves, which is the way Cruse would want it to be. But his main thesis—that white society is basically organized for the exploitation of black people, and that the black intellectual (whether he is an artist, writer, musician, actor, businessman, professional, or civil rights leader) is trapped into dealing with Negro problems on the white man's terms—is most probably true.

Although integration furthers the assimilation of the Negro and his culture into white society, it permits the white middle class to continue to dictate solutions to the problems of Negroes and to dominate Negro reform or revolutionary movements. Cruse charges that white capitalists and Marxists alike have exploited and directed Harlem-based organizations and programs that should have been the province of Negroes.

What Cruse has in mind is to build an Afro-American nationalist movement that will be neither separatist nor integrationist and will advocate neither black superiority nor white hatred; democratic in its ethos, it will create enclaves of power for black people simultaneously and on all fronts—cultural, economic, and political. The author is thinking particularly of a Harlem movement, which will spread, for "as Harlem

goes, so goes ail black America." Negroes have been consumers, renters, employees; now let them be owners, landlords, employers, producers. Negroes have been the prey of laissez-faire entrepreneurs or the victims of welfare-state paternalism; now let them work out viable economic "cooperative" alternatives. Negroes have been controlled from the top down; what is now needed is "autonomous, self-directed social change from the bottom up." The perceptive white observer can hardly quarrel with the argument that such self-determination is psychologically and economically dictated. But the reader fails to find any clear statement about the ultimate kind of society that Cruse envisions.

WHAT stands out as unfair in Cruse's analysis is his depiction of the Jewish role in Negro affairs. Jews have been in the forefront of programs to advance the position of Negroes in the arts and in labor unions; they have fought on the Negroes' behalf for better housing, schooling, and merit employment. At the same time, Jews (including Jewish businessmen in Harlem) have operated within American social structures—structures that have exploited and demeaned Negroes. Apparently because Jews are involved in these structures they are looked upon as more exploitative and sinister than other whites.

Cruse accuses "Zionists" (he recognizes that not all Jews are Zionists) of strategically abetting "integration (assimilation)" among Negroes while repudiating it for Jews. He rejects "the myth that the Negro's best friend is the Jew," and appeals to that unfortunate strain in Dostoevsky's writings which depicts American Jews as mass exploiters of Negroes. Cruse seems to approve of General Grant's order of 1862 by which Jews were expelled from the area of the South then under his control. He fails to note that Dostoevsky was indulging in pure Russian anti-Semitic fantasy, and that Grant's order was countermanded by none other than Abraham Lincoln himself.

The clue to what Cruse calls the Negro's "Jewish problem" is found in passages which imply that Negroes and Jews are really competing for power. Although he asserts that the "role of American Jews as political mediators between Negro and Anglo-Saxon must be terminated by Negroes themselves" because "this intergroup arrangement is fraught with great danger to all concerned," it is abundantly clear that Cruse actually admires the strategies for survival the Jews have developed over the centuries of their oppression and that his all-consuming desire is that the Negro community copy them. "Much more important than developing a critique on Jews," he admits, "is the challenge of learning the methods and techniques that the Zionists

have developed in the art of survival against all kinds of odds."

America's unique Negro-Jewish confrontation is a phenomenon of this generation. The twenty-seven essays in *Negro and Jew* originally appeared in the December 1966 issue of *Midstream*. Except for C. Eric Lincoln, Floyd McKissick, and William Stringfellow, the voices speaking are Jewish. Lincoln, a Negro, flatly denies the basic assumption of the book, that "there exists a pronounced anti-Jewish sentiment among Negro masses in this country." Lincoln expresses gratitude to Jews for their contributions to the Negro's freedom and to his own. He contends, moreover, that the black masses esteem the Jew more highly than they do other whites.

Jacob Cohen, among others, agrees: "There is no evidence," he says, "of categorical, systematic anti-Semitism of the Christian or racist variety." But Roland Gittelsohn suggests that "considerable antagonism exists in both directions." Paul Jacobs conjectures that the only anti-Jewish sentiments expressed by Negroes have been economic ones, and that "Jews are *not* the primary target of the Negroes' frustration." He would guess that "the order of hate" runs from white people first, through the police and merchants, to the Jews last.

Most Jewish contributors believe that Negro anti-Semitism exists, though they differ widely on the nature and the causes of it. The greatest number would concur with Howard Fast that "the Negro by and large is a Christian, and anti-Semitism is a Christian way of life." But, he continues, "if among them there is anti-Semitism, this is less important in the scheme of things than the enormous, over-all fact of their oppression." Few would go as far as Horace M. Kallen, who sees anti-Semitism as a "Christian sentiment attached to the New Testament image of the Jew as the villain of the Christian drama of salvation," an "article of faith communicated and preserved by Christian teaching," and shaping the attitudes of Negroes as well as anti-Christian "agnostics, humanists, and infidels." However, for others, such as Ben Halperin, "the basic Negro-Jewish conflict is the same as the basic Negro-white conflict, in specific application." What the Jew now has, he says, is what the Negro really wants.

This theme runs through the book in various disguises. "In a sense," says Gus Tyler, "to assail the Jew is almost an acceptable way of attacking the white man without offending the white man. The Negro anti-Semite can be a bad boy with papa's blessing." In sum, then, in the Negro mind it is likely that "Mr. Goldberg" is a subsidiary likeness of "Mr. Charlie." But this perception runs counter to those contributors who are convinced that the Negro image of the Jew is exacerbated by endemic Ameri-



can scapegoat anti-Semitism, alleged Christian teaching and, finally, economic factors.

As if they had been reading Cruse, a surprisingly large number of Jews conjectured that Negroes were more prejudiced against Jews than against the white population as a whole. On this and other points Gary T. Marx's study, *Protest and Prejudice*, makes a tremendous contribution. First and foremost, the book demonstrates the risks one takes in making judgments upon the presumed attitudes of members of other communities without adequate empirical evidence, such as this study provides us. More than 1,100 Negroes in a large sampling of communities in the United States were interviewed in depth through the Survey Research Center of the University of California, with the assistance of the National Opinion Research Center of Chicago. Negro interviewers were employed. Marx himself poses the key question as to how valid the 1964 findings are in America today. May not Negroes have changed greatly in their views since then? He thinks not, primarily on the basis of other studies made in 1965 and 1966. If Marx is correct, then the mass media and the white community itself have seriously misjudged the attitudes and beliefs of the black community.

First of all, Negroes are slightly more favorably disposed toward Jews than are non-Jewish whites. They manifest less anti-Semitism than the population of the United States as a whole. What anti-Jewishness there is among Negroes relates more to the economic behavior of Jews than to religious factors and hardcore anti-Semitism. The stereotypes of supposed Jewish "clannishness" and the notion of the Jew as "conspiratorial" are rejected more by Negroes than by whites (although 60 per cent of the interviewed Negroes, asked whether they thought Jews were more willing than others to use shady practices, answered affirmatively). These findings support those who

in *Negro and Jew* held that the high economic participation of Jews in the Negro ghettos really determines the Jewish image.

The Marx study further reveals that there is much less anti-white ferment among Negroes than white people imagine. The vast majority of Negroes see others of their race as neither hating nor loving white people. But most surprising of the findings is the lack of militancy among Negroes as a whole—militancy being defined rather mildly as being willing to take part in demonstrations, to want more demonstrations to take place, to protest that "the government in Washington [is] pushing integration too slow." This reviewer finds himself more militant on the basis of his own replies to the eight questions in the study's Index of Conventional Militancy.

While *Protest and Prejudice* covers a fairly wide field, its original intent was to examine Negro anti-Semitism. Bayard Rustin, in his foreword, complains that on this issue the producer of an unnamed TV program went "fishing for sensationalism in troubled waters" and found some anti-Semitic militants to interview, thus giving the public and the Jewish community a wrong impression. But he asks that we go beyond "appeals for brotherhood and denunciations of prejudice." More meaningful, he says, "is the recognition that unfair business practices and some forms of anti-Semitism are endemic to the ghetto. Ghetto thinking by Negroes who live there and Jews who work there is a product of the social and economic deprivations that exist in its confines. And those that live outside its borders are also victims of the illusions and prejudices common to that larger ghetto. It is the ghetto, the social and economic walls between the races, that must be destroyed if real tolerance and brotherhood are to exist."

Jews and Christians who put their shoulders to the task of breaking down those walls will be fulfilling the vocations of both Judaism and Christianity.